

Recognise



Have you noticed something that raises your concern about a colleague? They may be affected by domestic and family violence.

Possible signs of domestic and family violence can include:

- Changes in behaviour
- Bruising or injuries
- Irritability
- Erratic behaviour
- Arriving late or leaving early
- Absenteeism
- Change in work performance
- Working longer hours
- Changes in appearance

Recognising the signs of domestic and family violence is the first step towards being able to offer support.

If you suspect someone is using or experiencing domestic and family violence, approach the person with an open mind and avoid judgement.

Domestic and family violence is often complex. The indicators can be difficult to recognise and may be signaling an issue other than domestic and family violence. But trust your instinct. If it's telling you something may be wrong, or there's been a noticeable change in your colleague, it's worth following up in a sensitive and respectful way.

See our 'Respond' and 'Conversation Starters' guides to support you to have a respectful conversation with your colleague.

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DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

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Respond



Has a colleague told you they're experiencing or are impacted by domestic and family violence? Are you concerned a colleague is using domestic and family violence? Consider the following ways to respond appropriately.

1. Start with an open question to avoid making assumptions. For example:
 - "I've noticed you haven't been yourself. How are you going?"
 - "You've seemed distracted lately. Do you want to talk?"
2. If someone discloses a personal experience with violence, it's vital to listen and believe them. Express empathy and be respectful. You could say:
 - "That sounds really difficult. Thank you for sharing."
 - "I'm sorry you're going through this. How can I help?"
 - "I'll support you however I can."
3. Follow up and check in later. Your colleague may not be ready to talk in that moment. Consider saying:
 - "My door is always open if you want to have a chat."
 - "I will support you in whatever choice you make."
 - "How are you doing since last time we talked?"

It's also important to think about the environment in which you have sensitive conversations. Choose an area that is safe, comfortable for your colleague, and private. Set aside enough time to devote to the person you're talking with.

If the person doesn't respond in the way you hoped, don't take it personally. Let them know you'll be there for them if or when they need support.

See our 'Conversation Starters' guide for more information.

Refer



The goal of this stage is to support your colleague by ensuring they know the options available to them and by referring them to professional services, if required.

What you can do:

- Help the person identify what support they need
- Offer information about different services that exist within your organisation and externally
- Support them to self-refer or offer to make the referral on their behalf
- Check in at a later time to see how they're going and if they need any further support

You can offer to connect a willing colleague with internal supports such as:

- A manager or supervisor
- The human resources team or representative
- The employee assistance program or scheme
- Your organisation's domestic and family violence policies and procedures, usually available on the intranet

If the person is not safe, call the police immediately.

Remember, you should not refer someone, or the details of their situation, without their consent. Ask yourself:

- Do I have my colleague's permission to refer them to support services?
- What are the internal support services within my organisation and how can they be accessed?
- Do I know who I can talk to if I need support myself?