

A Quick Reference Helping an Adult Victim of Family Violence

Nothing will serve you better in a moment of crisis than advance preparation.

Know the network of resources available in your community. Become acquainted with personnel and procedures you will likely encounter when the need arises. Here's how:

- A. Contact your local conference domestic violence in families taskforce resource people.**
- B. Check inside the front cover of the white or yellow pages of your telephone book for telephone numbers of local crisis intervention lines or hotlines.**

Within Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, there is a range of services and resources available for victims of violence and abuse that can be utilised by those seeking help for families and individuals.

It would be extremely useful and important to compile a list of both local and more general resources and services. The compilation could include:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Police (usually 24 hour emergency service)
- Medical assistance
- 24 hour phone counselling services (eg Lifeline, KidsHelp)
- Professional persons skilled in DV counselling (eg Counsellors, Psychologists, GPs)
- Men's and women's refuges
- Department of Community Services offices
- Family support services
- Local Chamber Magistrate
- Legal support services (legal aid, community legal centre, court support, DV hotlines)
- Neighbourhood and information centres
- Multicultural resource centres
- Any other support and network services for men, women, youth and children
- Any other information and counselling services

C. Things you can do Immediately to Help

- Believe there is a problem that needs to be addressed.
- Listen and affirm her feelings without judging her.
- Help her understand that:
 - she does not cause the abuse
 - she is not to blame
 - she is not crazy
 - she cannot change her partner's behavior
 - apologies and promises apart from treatment will not end the violence
 - things do not improve without intervention; they usually get worse
 - abuse is not a loss of control, it is a means of control
 - violence is never justifiable.
 - her safety and that of her children is your first priority.



- Help her plan for the safety of herself and her children.
- Make her aware of key community resources.
- Support her in practical ways, i.e. transportation, babysitting, etc., to help her take advantage of all the resources available to her.
- Respect her need for confidentiality.
- Give her time and space to make her own decisions.

D. Things That Do Not Help

- Telling her to leave or not to leave, when to leave, or how to leave.
- Telling her to go back to the situation and try a little harder.
- Offering short-term solutions.
- Suggesting that you try to straighten things out with her partner.
- Telling her she should stay for the sake of her children.
- Telling her to simply pray that she will be a “good” Christian in her circumstances.
- Telling her she will break a marriage vow by leaving—or that it is her responsibility to keep the family together at all costs.
- Making her feel responsible for her husband’s professional, social, physical, emotional or spiritual well-being.

* Note: Though most victims of domestic violence are women this resource recognizes that men may also be subjects of violence.