

Domestic and Family Violence Organisational Policy

More than just leave

What is domestic and family violence, and why is it a workplace issue?

Welcome

- Zoom etiquette
- This workshop might bring up strong feelings for you
 - Sharing of stories is welcome, but please de-identify if the story is not your own
 - This workshop will have a few gear shifts, going from heavy content to process/policy thinking
 - Please make use of the resources sent in the pre-event email if it is helpful
 - We are happy to talk to you after the workshop if you require further support
- Let's settle in



Overview of the day

- Examine the effect of DFV on the worker and workplace, and specifically our workforce
- Understand what is considered a good response to DFV in the workplace
- Look at employer roles and responsibilities
- Consider what makes good DFV policy and where current policies could be strengthened
- Examine some sample policies
- Have a go at drafting or updating a policy for our own workplaces

Setting the scene

About DFV Work Aware (<https://dfvworkaware.org/>)

- Basic Rights Queensland (BRQ) – a statewide community legal centre
 - Help with Centrelink
 - Disability Discrimination Assistance
 - Working Women Queensland
- Working Women’s Centres in Australia
- Workplace training & resources
- Funded by the Queensland Government
- In partnership with The Services Union



A definition

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is when one person behaves towards another person in a way that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, economically abusive, threatening and/or coercive.

It is when the behaviour of one person in any way controls or dominates another person or causes that other person to fear for their safety or the wellbeing of someone else.

Adapted from the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (Qld), s8

The stats: Prevalence in the community

- Domestic and family violence is a gendered issue
- Prevalence in the community
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS):
<https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/violence-against-women-accurate-use-of-key-statistics/>
- Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW):
<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/behaviours-risk-factors/domestic-violence/overview>



The stats: Prevalence in the workforce

Employees who experience domestic and family violence (victim-survivors)

- Employees can experience domestic and family violence
 - 62% of women subject to intimate partner violence are employed (ANROWS)
- Domestic and family violence can follow employees into the workplace
 - 1 in 5 Australia workers (UNSW)
- Gender pay inequality
 - A woman faces an increased risk of violence from a male partner when she earns more than him (IZA Institute of Labor Economics)
- Disclosure in the workplace
 - More likely to disclose to a colleague than to a manager/supervisor/workplace leader (UNSW)

The stats: Prevalence in the workforce

Employees who use or may use domestic and family violence

- Canadian research is leading the way
- Use of work resources to perpetrate domestic and family violence:
 - Time, vehicles, phones, internet

“Canberra public servant... sent explicit photos to
[his wife’s] work colleagues during years of ‘degrading’ abuse”

By Jordan Hayne

Posted Wed 23 Dec 2020 at 9:43am, updated Weds 23 Dec 2020 at 11:01 am

ABC News

Domestic and family violence in the workplace

Recognising domestic and family violence in the workplace

- Examples of domestic and family violence in the workplace
 - Threats, harassment, assault, stalking, homicide
- Signs
 - Lateness, absenteeism, presenteeism
 - Physical and mental wellbeing
 - Impacts on work performance and productivity

“...police believed Ms [Jasmeen] Kaur was taken unwillingly from the car park at the... aged care home... where she worked as a carer”

Posted 11 March 2021 at 1:135 pm, updated 11 Mar 2021 at 1:56 pm

ABC News

Questions

- Do you have any questions about the information shared so far?
- Let's get moving!

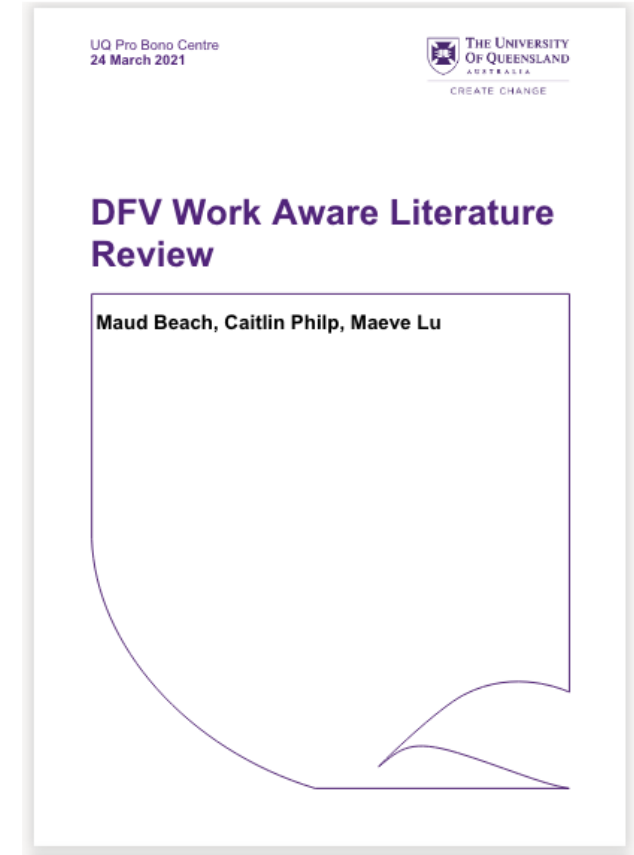
Domestic and family violence & community services workplaces

What is unique about our work in community services?

- Nature of work
- Stigma
- Burnout, vicarious trauma & compassion fatigue
- Female dominated industry
- Gender inequity
- Isolation
- Variation between community services organisations

UQ Pro Bono Centre

- Literature review – research gaps and opportunities
- Work as a safe have
- Impacts of stress of domestic and family violence on work performance
- Lived experience as a facilitator of higher levels of care



Why are community services developing a policy response to this?

- Our values
- Our obligations
 - National – Fair Work Act 2009 – National Employment Standards
 - State – Work Health and Safety Act
 - Modern award obligations
 - Enterprise agreement
- Leading the way
- Staff retention

Questions

- **A couple of questions for you...**
 - What else do you think is unique about domestic and family violence & community services workplaces?
 - What other reasons might there be for community services organisations to develop a policy response to domestic and family violence in the workplace?
- **What questions do you have?**

There's policy, and then there's good policy

What is policy?

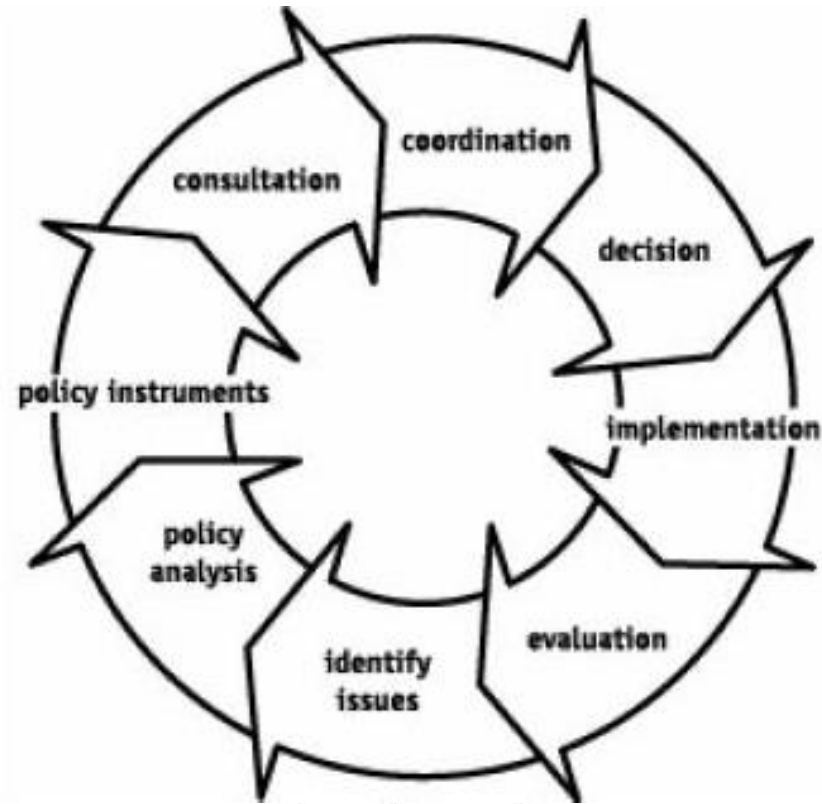
- Plan of what to do
- Agreed to officially by a group of people
- Mandatory statement of principles guiding an organisation's operations and decision-making
- Binding statements that apply across the organisation and support the organisation's course of action for the foreseeable future

Good policy

- States principles and outcomes
- Focused on action - states what is to be done and by whom
- Makes administration easier
- Enables organisation's core business to be more efficient and effective

The Policy Cycle

- Key steps to policy development- in theory
- Logical and sequential stages of problem solving
- Heuristic to answer the question “what do I do now”



Source:

Bridgman, P & Davis, G 2004, *The Australian policy handbook*, 3rd edn, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, N.S.W., p. 26.

Policy versus Procedure

| Policy | Procedure |
|---|--|
| Guiding principles - reflects principles, vision, mission | Specific way of doing things - practical application of policies |
| Why? What? | How? When? Who? |
| Identifies issues and scope | Establishes proper steps |
| Not hard and fast rules | Stricter in nature and follows a specified set of rules |
| Policies and procedures are complementary | |

Workplace - Policy checklist

- ✓ Consistent with the values of your organisation
- ✓ Comply with employment and other associated legislation
- ✓ Demonstrate organisation is operated in an efficient and business-like manner
- ✓ Ensure uniformity and consistency in decision-making and operational procedures
- ✓ Add strength to the position of staff if any legal action arises
- ✓ Save time when a new problem can be handled quickly and effectively through an existing policy
- ✓ Foster stability and continuity
- ✓ Maintain direction of the organisation even during periods of change
- ✓ Framework for business planning
- ✓ Assist in assessing performance and establishing accountability
- ✓ Clarify functions and responsibilities

Key elements of a workplace response to domestic and family violence

- Lead with prevention
- Support those affected by DFV
- Foster a workplace environment that supports employees to stop using violence and abuse
- Recognise, respond and refer employees who use DFV



What to include in a good organisational domestic and family violence policy?

- Staff consultation
 - S47, *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- Policy statement
- Scope
- References
 - Policies, e.g. Code of Conduct, Privacy and Confidentiality
 - Industrial instruments, e.g. Enterprise agreement
- Definitions
 - S8, *Domestic Violence Protection Act 2012 (Qld)*
 - S106B(2), *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*

Key policy components

1. In an emergency, employees are encouraged to call 000
2. Confidentiality and disclosure
 - Practical guidance
 - Dignity & self-determination
3. Prevention, awareness raising and capability development
 - Gender equity audit
 - Training, e.g. DFV Work Aware
 - Workplace safety review
4. Support options available to employees who are experiencing DFV
 - Leave
 - Work performance and attendance
 - Flexible work arrangements
 - Workplace support and role adjustments
 - Evidentiary requirements
 - Contact persons
 - Counselling

Additional policy components

5. Employees who use or may use DFV – a separate policy?
 - Safety of the victim-survivor is paramount
 - Use of work resources and disciplinary action
 - Where employee also claims to be a victim-survivor
 - Leave and/or flexible work arrangements?
 - Legal advice and advice from domestic and family violence services
6. Safety in the workplace
 - Preparing the workplace to respond if there is an incident of domestic and family violence

Final policy components

7. Responsibilities

- Queensland Government model policy template
- Workplace leaders/managers/supervisors
- Employees

8. Supporting documents

- Fair Work Ombudsman templates <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/templates>

Questions?



DFV Work Aware

qcross

Communicate your policy

- Communicating
 - Staff newsletter, meeting agenda item
- Embedding
 - E.g. induction, training (including refresher) training
- Promoting
 - E.g. Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month (May)
- Accessing
 - How can this policy be made easily accessible by staff? e.g. staff intranet
- How does this policy link with other policies and initiatives?
 - Mental health and wellbeing policies and initiatives
 - Bystander training, e.g. MATE Bystander, No to Violence

Break time



Examining sample policies

At your tables, discuss:

- What are the strengths of this policy?
- What is missing?
- Is there anything you would change?

(10 min discussion, 5 min feedback)

Your own workplace policy

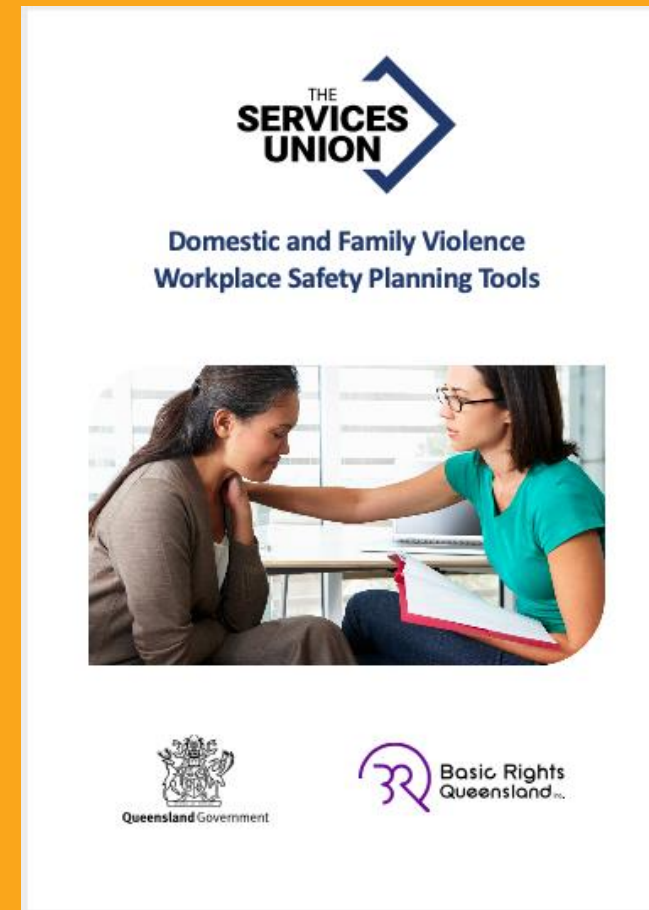
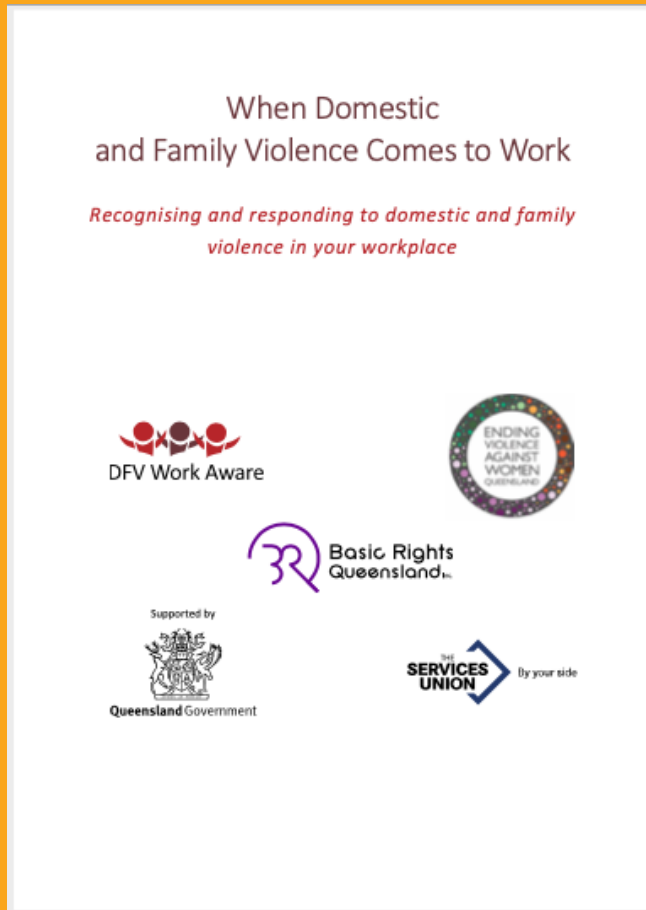
Consider the template provided or the organisational policy you have brought along

Think about your workplace and what support you would like the policy you have to provide.

- What are the strengths of this policy?
- Is anything missing?
- What needs tweaking?
- What intersecting policies or procedures do we need to address?
- How would we go implementing a policy like this?

More than just a policy

– How to use the DFV Work Aware Workplace Safety Tools



Part 1: Workplace & emergency contact details (p. 11)

- You don't have to do this alone!
- Quick guide (p. 31)
- Trauma-awareness
- Explain the tool – clear, transparent, respectful
- Consent: informed, ongoing process
- Support person, e.g. union representative, Health and Safety Representative
- Straightforward section... And very important



Part 2: Workplace safety assessment questionnaire (p. 13)

1. Specialist DFV support
2. Confidentiality
3. Establish the risks and discuss strategies to minimise them
4. Domestic violence order (DVO)
5. Name & details of the person using violence
6. Employee & workplace communications
7. Contact officers

Part 2: Workplace safety assessment questionnaire (p. 19)

8. Employee access to entitlements or other support at work
9. Safety at work
10. Travelling to & from work
11. Observations & assessment of additional risk factors
12. Other issues for consideration
13. What if the victim/survivor & person using violence are both employees?

Part 3: Documenting agreed actions (p. 26)

- Immediate actions
- Short-term safety measures
- Longer-term strategies
- Referrals offered
- Review & collate
- Signatures

Template: Individual DFV Workplace Safety Plan (p. 32)

- Draft plan
- Consult with victim/survivor
- Finalise
- Implement
- Feedback and review mechanism



Questions

Resources for you

Policy support and resources

QCOSS HSQF support <https://www.qcoss.org.au/human-services-quality-framework-hsqf-support-request/>

Queensland Government Workplace Support Package <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/workplace-package-domestic-and-family-violence>

Industrial support and resources

Working Women Queensland <https://brq.org.au/working-women-qld/> (and policy support)

The Services Union <https://www.theservicesunion.com.au/>

Fair Work Ombudsman, e.g. <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/templates>

Training

DFV Work Aware <https://dfvworkaware.org/>

WorkHaven <https://workhaven.com.au/> (and policy support)

MATE Bystander <https://matebystander.edu.au>

No to Violence <https://ntv.org.au/sector-resources/>

Prevention support and resources

Our Watch – Workplace Equality and Respect <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/>

Women’s Health Queensland – Equity Audits <https://www.womenshealth.org.au/equity-audits/> (and training)

Find your local domestic and family violence service:
<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/domestic-family-violence>

Questions and final thoughts

The evaluation survey we have just posted in the chat box will help us improve this workshop. We'd appreciate your feedback!

The post-event email you will receive will contain the contact details of a number of services, should you feel you need support.

Please call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) for 24/7 support



Contact

www.dfvworkaware.org or <https://brq.org.au>

Siân Tooker and Kathryn Rendell brq@brq.org.au
with DFV WorkAware as the subject line

www.qcross.org.au

Stacey De Calmer staceyd@qcross.org.au
Gayatri Ramnath gayatrir@qcross.org.au

(10 min discussion, 5 min feedback)

Thank you!

