

WHAT NOT TO DO

Important things to remember when dealing with a member who is experiencing domestic violence are:

- ◆ **Don't become personally involved.**

Your role is not to fix the domestic violence but to help your member at work.

- ◆ **Don't be judgmental or ask questions about why the violence is occurring.**

Your responsibility is to ensure the member can get to work and do their job safely.

- ◆ **Don't ask for any more information than is necessary to protect the member at work.**

Refer them to someone who can assist (1800 RESPECT).

- ◆ **Don't ask "why don't you leave?"**

These situations are often complicated and difficult. Do not judge their decision.

- ◆ **Don't tell them what to do.**

You are not a domestic violence expert. After you have informed them of the Union's role and what we can do to assist, let them make their own decision.

- ◆ **Don't condemn the member for deciding not to do anything.**

Your role is to provide the contact number for a domestic violence expert – 1800 737 732.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SECRETARY, BARBARA NEBART



The SDA is fully committed to supporting initiatives aimed at removing domestic violence from our society.

The SDA recognises that domestic violence is a workplace issue and can have a significant impact on our members at work.

The SDA is committed to improving the rights and entitlements for members who may be experiencing domestic violence or those assisting family members experiencing domestic violence.

The SDA has been successful in negotiating to include Domestic Violence provisions in our Enterprise Agreements and will continue to negotiate to achieve this in every SDA Enterprise Agreement.

The SDA also advocates for improvements in legislative rights and entitlements for employees experiencing domestic/family violence.

If you are approached by a member who is experiencing domestic/family violence, please contact your Organiser or the Union office immediately.

TO CONTACT THE SDA:

✉ Postal address: PO Box 118, Hamilton NSW 2303

☎ Phone: (02) 4961 4694

📠 Fax: (02) 4962 2598

🌐 Website: www.sdan.org.au

✉ E-mail: secretary@sdan.org.au



**For expert support and advice, including counselling,
please refer members to 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) or
www.1800respect.org.au**

Authorised by Barbara Nebart, Branch Secretary, Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, Newcastle & Northern Branch, PO Box 118, Hamilton NSW 2303. 11/14096

SAFE AT HOME SAFE AT WORK

YOUR ROLE AS AN SDA DELEGATE OR HSR

For those experiencing domestic/family violence, maintaining paid employment and financial independence is vital to providing choices to deal with their situation and successfully breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

The impact of domestic violence on an employee's attendance and performance can seriously jeopardise their employment.

If you or someone in your workplace is affected by domestic violence, the SDA can help in various ways. This leaflet explains how.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A WORKPLACE ISSUE

Domestic/family violence is an abuse of power by a partner, ex-partner or family member which can take many forms including intimidation, control, isolation and emotional, physical, sexual or financial abuse.

Domestic violence not only impacts the home, it impacts all aspects of our community, including workplaces.

In a survey of over 3,600 union members, **30% reported they had personally experienced domestic violence**. It is likely that all workplaces have people who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence.

For those experiencing domestic/family violence, maintaining paid employment and financial independence is vital to providing choices to deal with their situation and successfully breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

The impact of domestic violence on an employee's attendance and performance can seriously jeopardise their employment.

Domestic/family violence can affect a member's:

- ◆ Wellbeing and safety at work, and the wellbeing and safety of co-workers. Violence can occur in the workplace, including harassment in person or by abusive phone calls, texts and emails;
- ◆ Ability to attend work;
- ◆ Capacity to get to work on time;
- ◆ Work performance, potentially leading to disciplinary action and the loss of their job;
- ◆ Ability to juggle work and family responsibilities.

ROLE OF THE SDA DELEGATE OR HSR

As a Delegate or HSR, you are an important point of contact for Union members.

It is not your role to seek out incidences of domestic violence. However, if a member comes to you for assistance, if they are experiencing domestic violence, you do need to know what to do.

If you or someone in your workplace is affected by domestic violence, the SDA can help with:

- ◆ Information about and access to entitlements;
- ◆ Negotiating flexible working arrangements;
- ◆ Speaking with management about the impact of domestic violence at work;
- ◆ Advice, representation and support if a member faces disciplinary action or dismissal as a result of the impact domestic violence has had on their work performance;
- ◆ Developing a safety action plan with management in their workplace if necessary.

For expert support and advice, including counselling, please refer members to 1800RESPECT.

This is the national 24 hour sexual assault and domestic, family violence counselling service. Qualified and experienced counsellors can provide information and refer members to support services that can help.

Members can access this service by calling 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or by going to www.1800respect.org.au

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- ◆ Contact your Organiser or the Union office **immediately**.
- ◆ Strict **confidentiality** and discretion is vital. It will be difficult for a member to disclose information regarding domestic violence.
- ◆ Refer them to an **expert** - 1800 RESPECT. Advise your member that you are not an expert but strongly advise them to call this confidential, free, 24/7 hotline to put them in touch with the someone who is trained to assist them.
- ◆ Focus on the facts relating to the impact domestic violence is having on your member's work.
- ◆ Check your Enterprise Agreement for a Domestic or Family Violence Clause or provisions.
- ◆ Ask the member what they would like the Union to do for them; but be aware that the Union can only provide information and assistance with accessing rights and entitlements or advocate on their behalf regarding workplace matters,
- ◆ Provide information about their rights and entitlements.

HOW SHOULD YOU HANDLE MEMBERS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic Violence is a very challenging issue.

It is essential that you treat it with compassion, confidentiality and discretion.