

Remember not to blame or threaten

- Don't issue an ultimatum about when the person should leave, or what they should do. Don't say to someone "I can't be your friend or be around you if you won't leave." It can take many times to leave; be there to support them.
- Don't blame them for their perpetrator's actions. Don't excuse the behaviour of the perpetrator by saying they don't know what they are doing.
- Do not make comments or give the impression that they should be grateful for having a partner.

Remember not to judge the person's response

- Women experiencing FDV react and respond in many ways. Don't expect them to behave in a certain way or respond in the way you might.
- People may have a fight, flight, or freeze response. They may flop in a heap or behave in unusual ways. They may appear to be friendly with the perpetrator or act as though things are fine. Many women use befriending strategies to prevent harm.

If you need help or advice, contact **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732**.

If the person needs help, they can call these numbers 24 hours a day, seven days a week:


 Women's Domestic Violence Helpline: **1800 007 339**

 1800RESPECT: **1800 737 732**

In an emergency, contact the police on 000

This information was developed by people with disability and parents of children with disability. It is based on their own direct experiences of family and domestic violence.

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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

Information for Family and Friends



A guide for supporting women with disability and mothers of children with disability who have experience of family and domestic violence.



PATRICIA GILES
Centre for
Non-Violence



MODIFIED
SERVICE
DELIVERY

It can be difficult to know how to support a person with disability who is experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV).

People with disability and parents of children with disability shared their experiences and offered the following support.

Believe

- Always believe what the person is telling you and validate their experience.

Listen and be supportive

- Let the person do the talking and listen without judgement.
- Not everyone is ready to talk about their experiences of FDV. Build trust and let them know you are available to talk when they are ready.
- If someone needs help to identify inappropriate behaviour or recognise if they are in immediate danger, kindly and clearly explain it to them.

Monitor wellbeing

- Keep a list of evidence or note concerning behaviours. This might help the person later.
- Discuss your concerns for their wellbeing and what you have noticed. If you're not the right person for this conversation, think about who could be and speak with them.
- Let the person know that what they are experiencing is not their fault. Ask if they want help, tell them they have options, and you are there to support them.

Stay connected

- Stay in touch with them. If suitable, set up a code word for when they need help.
- Be patient and don't give up on the person. If they don't respond to calls or messages, that could be a sign of FDV.
- Let them know that you are available to support them. Once someone has help in place, keep in touch with them to see how they are going and ensure that their disability needs are being met.

Information, not advice

- The person with disability is the expert on their own life and experiences. It is important to support the person to make their own decisions and choices.
- Only share your own experiences if you are asked and if you want to.
- Instead of offering solutions or telling the person what to do, ask if you can supply information and brainstorm the options together.

Confidentiality

- Acknowledge the person's right to privacy without promising to keep a disclosure secret, particularly if the person is in imminent danger.
- Let the person know they are not alone, and you are there for them.

