



## **Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse**

**All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop.**

1. The primary focus of this Policy is abusive or intimidating behaviour inflicted by an adult against a current or former spouse or partner. (Abuse involving children should follow child protection procedures.) Domestic abuse includes but is not limited to emotional, verbal, social, economic, psychological, spiritual, physical and sexual abuse. Such behaviour often seeks to control, humiliate, dominate or instil fear in the victim.

### **2. We are committed to safe places which –**

- Recognise equality amongst people
- Promote a culture of healthy relationships of mutual responsibility in marriages, families and congregations
- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse
- Strive to follow good practice in protecting those experiencing domestic abuse
- Refuse to condone any form of abuse
- Enable concerns to be raised and responded to clearly and consistently

### **3. We uphold *Faithfulness in Service* as our national code of conduct for clergy and church workers, specifically its affirmations that –**

- Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and in the community. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. Sometimes abuse will be a one-off event and at other times it will be a pattern of behaviour (6.2)
- It is important for clergy and church workers to be good citizens and to obey the laws of the community, except where those laws conflict with Christian convictions (6.4)
- You are not to abuse your spouse, children or other members of your family (6.6)

### **4. We recognise that domestic abuse requires a serious and realistic response –**

- All forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the victim and are wrong
- Domestic abuse can occur in all communities, including churches
- Domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of child abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour
- Working in partnership with vulnerable adults and children, statutory authorities and specialist agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse
- Clergy and lay ministers need to obtain advice from those with professional expertise when faced with situations of domestic abuse
- Where mistakes in caring for people in difficult situations are made, an apology should be offered

## **5. We respect people who come to us for help by –**

- Valuing, listening to and respecting both victims and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse, while appreciating the need to ensure a distance is kept between the two and refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse.

## **6. We uphold Scripture and its abhorrence of abuse in our words and public statements by –**

- Clearly teaching that domestic abuse is wrong and that the Bible should never be used to justify or excuse any form of abuse
- Clearly teaching that the Bible should not be used to demand a spouse tolerate or submit to domestic abuse
- Raising awareness of domestic violence agencies, support services, resources and expertise

## **7. We ensure safety first by –**

- Ensuring that those who have experienced domestic abuse can find safety and informed help as a first priority
- Taking it Seriously – Ensuring that any disclosures of abuse are taken seriously and not dismissed
- Getting help from outside – Working with the appropriate statutory authorities during an investigation into domestic violence, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community
- Keeping it confidential – Respecting the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good Safe Ministry practice
- Challenging with Care – Carefully challenging inappropriate behaviour, but only in a way that does not place any individual, especially a victim, at increased risk

## **8. We offer support to those in our care by –**

- Offering informed care – Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any adult, child or young person who has suffered domestic abuse
- Going at the victim's pace – Never pressuring any victim of domestic abuse to forgive, submit to, or restore a relationship with an offender
- Understanding that reconciliation comes with conditions – Understanding that any reconciliation between victim and offender is dependent principally upon genuine repentance and reformation of the offender, and also upon the willing grace of the victim
- Coordinating the care – Identifying the appropriate relationships of those with pastoral care responsibilities for both victims and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse

**By resolution of the Wardens and Parish Council  
September 2019**

# Domestic Abuse Flowchart

A person discloses domestic abuse:

## RESPECT & LISTEN

- Listen with acceptance
- Don't ask for proof
- Assure the victim it's not their fault
- Be honest about your ability to help
- Reassure normal confidentiality will be maintained, but explain its limits

Is there an **immediate** risk of harm?

Yes

## SAFETY FIRST

- Discuss with the victim, but call the Police 000

No

Are there children involved?

Yes

## CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

- Call the Child Protection Helpline 132 111
- Remind the victim that domestic abuse harms children

No

Is the victim or accused in a ministry family?

Yes

## KEEP PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS INFORMED

- Call the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) 9265 1504

No

Has further help been requested?

Yes

No

## ACTION

- Advise that any intervention needs care and can heighten risk
- Be guided by what the victim wants
- Outline realistic options: Police, AVDOs, DV services, safety planning, GP, counsellor, refuge...
- Supply appropriate information, phone numbers, websites, Aurora app (be careful of storage)
- Encourage the victim to consult a service, or make a referral on their behalf
- Record what was disclosed and your safety concerns, note your actions, and from whom you received advice. Date the record and keep it confidential.

## NO FORMAL ACTION

- Your time was well spent. A victim knows they have been believed, is not in the wrong, and can return to you for further help.
- You can't make a victim of domestic abuse take any action. The most you may be able to do is listen and provide information (note earlier obligations regarding immediate danger or if children are involved)
- You may be able to offer other chances to meet and talk.
- You may be able to suggest referring more generally to a GP, psychologist or counsellor.
- You could supply appropriate information, phone numbers, websites, Aurora app (be careful of storage).
- Record what was disclosed and your safety concerns, note your actions and/or advice. Date the record and keep it confidential.

Debrief with a domestic abuse professional.



# Domestic Abuse – key telephone numbers and websites for help

AGENCY	CONTACT DETAILS
<p><b>1800 Respect national helpline</b> 24 hour national number for sexual assault, family and domestic violence counseling and advice.</p>	<p><b>1800 737 732</b> <b>1800respect.org.au</b></p>
<p><b>Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser</b> Advice to clergy and lay ministers in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney especially for domestic abuse in a church-related setting.</p>	<p><b>0438 826 556</b> (business hours)</p>
<p><b>Aurora App</b> The Aurora domestic and family violence app is for people experiencing domestic abuse or for those worried about their relationship. The app contains useful information including emergency contacts, the kinds of behaviour considered to be domestic abuse, vital links to support services available in NSW. Importantly, the app allows the user to message their trusted friends and family members or call emergency services immediately. The Aurora app has been built with numerous safety features that allow people to use it discreetly and seek assistance without risk of “tipping off” a perpetrator and endangering themselves. It was developed in consultation with NSW Police and experts from the domestic violence sector.</p>	<p><b>Free to download from iPhone App Store &amp; Android Google Play</b></p>
<p><b>Child Protection Helpline</b> Contact this helpline if you think a child or young person is at risk of harm from abuse.</p>	<p><b>13 111</b> <b>reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg</b></p>
<p><b>Daisy App</b> Australia-wide alternative to the Aurora app.</p>	<p><b>Free to download from iPhone App Store &amp; Android Google Play</b></p>
<p><b>Lifeline</b> 24 hour telephone crisis line.</p>	<p><b>131 114</b> <b>www.lifeline.org.au/get-help</b></p>
<p><b>NSW Domestic Violence Line</b> 24 hour number for comprehensive information and referrals to nearby support services, for all categories of domestic violence.</p>	<p><b>1800 65 64 63</b> <b>domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/get-help</b></p>
<p><b>NSW Rape Crisis Centre</b> Counseling service for <b>anyone</b> in NSW – men and women – who has experienced or is at risk of sexual assault.</p>	<p><b>1800 424 017</b> <b>www.nswrapecrisis.com.au</b></p>
<p><b>No To Violence: Men’s Referral Service</b> Telephone counselling, information and referral service for men using violence in families, male victims, and for their friends or relatives.</p>	<p><b>1300 766 491</b> <b>ntv.org.au</b></p>
<p><b>Professional Standards Unit</b> Advice about abuse involving clergy or church workers in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.</p>	<p><b>9265 1604</b> <b>safeministry.org.au</b></p>



N.B. Addresses for local refuges are generally not made public for security's sake. Current as at May 2018.