

# RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY

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A guide for family violence Contact People at the University  
of Auckland

**EQUITY OFFICE - TE ARA TAUIKA**

[www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/itsnotok](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/itsnotok)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**AUCKLAND**  
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau  
NEW ZEALAND

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# PROVIDING SUPPORT

An outline for Contact People

When a University member discloses their experience of family violence, there are two key messages to convey.

## 1. “Are you OK? I am concerned for you and I support you.”

SHOW EMPATHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a climate of trust, letting them disclose when they are ready.</li> <li>• Allow time and private space to disclose.</li> <li>• Listen carefully and sensitively, avoiding any intrusive personal queries.</li> <li>• Let them know you are concerned and there to support them.</li> <li>• Do not pre-judge, trivialise or tell them what they should do.</li> <li>• Accept what they say and reinforce that abuse is NOT OK.</li> <li>• Understand it is likely to be difficult to talk about.</li> </ul>
ASSESS RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any immediate danger? If yes, call the Police on 111.</li> <li>• Are they safe to go home? If not, encourage them to contact Shine at 0508 744 633 or another <a href="#">expert organisation</a></li> <li>• See “Assessing risk” on page 8 of our <i>Responding effectively</i> guide.</li> </ul>
LET THEM KNOW IT’S CONFIDENTIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure them you will keep the information in confidence as far as possible and if you do need to discuss with a third party you will let them know.</li> <li>• Reassure them that they will not be victimised for disclosing.</li> <li>• Ensure you safeguard any written or recorded information.</li> </ul>

## 2. “There is support available.”

EXPLORE WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAPPEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some may want someone to talk to, others may need some practical assistance at the University, and others may need assistance in leaving an abusive relationship or advice on expert organisations.</li> </ul> <p>Let them know that there is <a href="#">legal protection</a> available and that they have an option to make a complaint to the Police.</p>
ADVISE ON UNIVERSITY SUPPORT (AND ASSIST IF YOU ARE A DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSON)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a <a href="#">campus personal safety plan</a> which could include removing their contact details from directories and planning for safe travel or emergency situations.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Flexible work or study arrangements</a> such as changes to timetables, attendance hours or locations or alternative provision of access to course materials.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Compassionate consideration</a> such as for exams or assignments.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Special leave</a> (for staff) to attend to matters relating to family violence, including attending court, getting medical assistance, moving house or organising childcare.</li> </ul>
ADVISE ON OTHER INTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These include the <a href="#">University Health and Counselling Service</a>, the <a href="#">Proctor</a> and <a href="#">AUSA Welfare Officers and Advocates</a> for students, or <a href="#">Human Resources</a>, the <a href="#">Equity Office – Te Ara Tautika</a>, and <a href="#">EAP</a> for staff.</li> <li>• See our <a href="#">contact list for students and staff</a></li> </ul>
ADVISE ON EXTERNAL EXPERT SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many <a href="#">expert organisations</a> that can assist with counselling, personal safety planning, places of refuge, or exploring legal options such as protection orders.</li> <li>• Some of these organisations specialise in assisting particular communities, including Māori, Pacific, migrants, refugees or people who are LGBTI.</li> </ul>
FOLLOW THROUGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take any appropriate actions in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Refer appropriately.</li> <li>• Monitor and review.</li> </ul>

It is important that the student or staff member affected by family violence remains in as much control of the process as possible, and makes the decisions and appropriate contacts themselves.

# University support provisions

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The most common responses to family violence by those who experience it are embarrassment, shame, fear, and desire to protect their family or partner. The University can provide support for people to move from secrecy and shame toward a plan of action.

The University of Auckland is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students and where practicable taking action to reduce the potential of recurrence of violence within the University.

## REASONABLE CONSIDERATION

Staff or students who experience family violence may leave their course, job or home to escape from the perpetrator. They may request support through reasonable consideration of flexible study or work arrangements; leave or other appropriate considerations to attend medical or legal appointments; counselling; seek safe housing, or reorganise child-care or other appointments or matters as a result of family violence. See the [Family Violence Policy](#) and [Family Violence Prevention and Management Guidelines](#) for details.

The needs of the individual staff member or student will be taken into account when undertaking these considerations and it would be expected that an application for flexible arrangements under family violence circumstances will be verified and considered positively and not reasonably refused.

University provisions for staff members or students experiencing family violence are aimed at protecting confidentiality, providing appropriate support and preventing staff members or students from being treated less favourably if they disclose to the University.

For detailed information on support available through reasonable considerations, confidentiality and protection for disclosure read the [Family Violence Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#)

## CAMPUS PERSONAL SAFETY PLANNING

A campus personal safety plan may need to be developed with the staff member or student's consent which will include actions to make the University environment safe. This could involve an assessment of physical workplace security, communications, and plans to respond to emergencies. The safety plan may need to be developed in consultation with University Security and/or IT Services. See the [Campus personal safety planning guide](#)

## ADVICE

The [Equity Office – Te Ara Tautika](#), [Human Resources](#), the [University Health and Counselling Services](#) and [the Proctor](#) are able to provide support and advice to faculties, service divisions and other work units on the local implementation of appropriate parts of the policy and guidelines if required.

As much as possible, contacting agencies or services which are external to the University should remain the responsibility of the staff member or student concerned. This is important for many reasons, including that the person remains in control of decisions that affect them.

Staff or students who wish to access the support outlined in the policy and related guidelines are advised to contact one of the designated contact persons outlined in the [Policy](#).

# Receiving disclosures

Disclosure of concerns related to family violence may be made by:

- a. A student or staff member who is currently experiencing family violence or who has previously experienced family violence and who continues to be adversely affected by it; or
- b. A student or staff member who is concerned about a colleague or friend or about safety on campus because they are aware of a family violence situation.

It is important that disclosure is dealt with sensitivity and in confidence.

## BARRIERS TO DISCLOSURE

Staff members or students experiencing violence by someone close to them may be reluctant to disclose due to fear, shame, low confidence or self-esteem, and depression or anxiety. Commitment to being sensitive and responsive may make it easier for those seeking help and may therefore reduce the impact and costs, both real and intangible, of family violence on the individual and the University.

Supervisors, managers and support staff and advisers may feel ill-prepared or unable to assist due to a mix of factors if:

- They may have a limited awareness of the breadth and impacts of family violence;
- Family violence may be a low priority for them professionally or personally;
- A lack of training or preparation in supporting staff members disclosing family violence (or any other serious health or emotional concerns);
- Their own anxiety about dealing with staff members disclosing serious concerns;
- Their own exposure to issues of this nature;
- A lack of confidence in their own ability to manage such disclosures effectively with the required sensitivity and confidentiality;
- Their own direct experience with family violence.

The University aims to support those seeking to assist people who experience abuse with greater information and confidence through implementing the policy and guidelines and through provision of training for contact people.

Anyone who is approached with a disclosure of family violence should be aware of the vulnerability and safety of the person disclosing and the need for a sensitive and appropriate response.

Those who are contacted and feel unable to manage a disclosure should immediately and supportively refer the person on to someone who is in a better position to assist.

People who experience family violence should be advised of available legal protection and their option to make a complaint to the Police.

# Strategies for responding

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The response you give to people experiencing family violence can have a profound effect on their willingness to open up or to seek help. Some responses which can assist successful communication include:

## ACTIVE LISTENING

- Being listened to can be an empowering experience for a person who has been abused.
- Give them time to tell their story.

## COMMUNICATING EMPATHY

- “That must have been very frightening and difficult for you.”

## VALIDATING THE DECISION TO DISCLOSE

- “I am glad you were able to ask for help.”
- “I am concerned about your safety and well-being.”

## EMPHASISING THE UNACCEPTABILITY OF VIOLENCE

- “You deserve to be safe.”
- “That sort of behaviour is Not OK.”
- “You do not deserve to be hit or hurt, no matter what happened.”

## WHAT DO THEY NEED?

- Ask open-ended questions about how they are and what support they need.
- “What sort of support do you need right now?”
- “How can I help?”

## WHAT NOT TO SAY

- “Why do you stay with a person like that?”
- “What could you have done to avoid the situation?”
- “Why did he hit you?”

## ONLINE OR CYBER ABUSE

Ways of responding to various forms of online or cyber abuse are detailed in [Online harassment and cyber abuse](#)

## CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

It is important that Contact People and others who receive disclosures of family violence are aware of and respond sensitively to cultural differences.

Further advice can be obtained from the University [Equity Office – Te Ara Tautika](#), [Māori Liaison Officer](#), [Pacific Equity Adviser](#), and [Shakti](#) - a not-for profit organisation which provides specialist support services for Asian, Middle Eastern and African women and children.

# Confidentiality and record keeping

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Any disclosures of family violence will be kept confidential as far as possible with only people who need to know being involved or where safety, security or legal obligations need to be met. Refer to the [Family Violence Policy](#) and the [Family Violence Prevention and Management Guidelines](#) for more information.

As a general rule, keeping records of sensitive and personal information regarding family violence matters would not be advised. However, evidence of signs of abuse, including evidence of distress and of abusive phone calls or emails, can assist the person who is affected by family violence in obtaining a family violence protection order and in proving that a breach of the protection order has occurred.

Where records of safety plans, details of unwanted calls, or security procedures have been made, care should be taken that they are stored on a confidential basis within the local area and with the consent of the person involved.

Documentation should not be put on the HR or student file unless requested by the affected person.

# Assessing risk

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Family violence is an abuse of power. Without intervention it can increase over time, becoming more serious and frequent. There are also a number of indicators of increased risk for victims. This is a time when expert help and emergency personal safety planning is most needed.

Indicators of increased risk for victims include:

- Threats to kill or suicide
- Increasing frequency or intensity of violence
- Choking, strangling, stalking
- Availability of weapons
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Times of change in the relationship such as a new pregnancy or new baby
- When the abusive person is losing their power in the relationship, including when the violence has been disclosed, when the victim leaves, when a protection order is taken out, when the victim starts a new relationship

When these indicators are present, the person experiencing violence should be advised to seek immediate expert help.

## WHEN TO CALL THE POLICE

If you or others are in immediate danger, call 111.

For example, if:

- a. A weapon is present
- b. Threats of violence or intimidation are being made
- c. Property is being damaged
- d. Harassment, stalking or acts of actual violence are taking place.

For any non-urgent or historic matter, phone or visit your nearest Police station. You are welcome to bring a support person. For more information visit <http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/family-violence>

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Any disclosures of sexual violence should be immediately referred to an expert organisation such as [HELP](#) (24 hour HELpline: +64 9 623 1700). This is due to the seriousness, sensitivity and particular legal issues around sexual violence.

Support or Contact People can assist the person experiencing sexual violence to contact HELP.

## REFERRAL

Offer information about local specialist services who may be able to help them work through their situation and present other options.

Ask if they have friends or family who can offer support.

Remind them about safety – is it safe for them to have family violence brochures? Ask them where they will be kept.



## Further help

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The University offers training to Contact People on a regular basis. Contact the Staff Equity Manager for more information: [cathie.walsh@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:cathie.walsh@auckland.ac.nz)

A number of organisations offer face-to-face training, online training, and provide print or online resources about how to manage disclosure of family violence.

- Shine (a national organisation for violence-free homes) delivers training on awareness of and how to manage disclosures of family violence to a wide range of audiences. [Shine training](#)
- The Women's Refuge Te Kōwhai's one-day education programme *Family Violence Awareness* is available to individuals and organisations. [Women's Refuge training](#)
- Written resources and video training at [Supervisors can make a difference: Workplace impact of domestic and sexual violence and stalking](#) (Susan Quintanar, Workplaces Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center, USA, 2 October 2013, 21min)
- [Students in Distress](#) are Guidelines written for University staff by the Health and Counselling Service
- [I Want to Help](#) is a resource from the Ministry of Social Development's family violence [It's Not OK](#) campaign.
- [How to talk to an employee who might be experiencing domestic violence](#) is a short animation that provides an example of how to start a conversation with an employee who you think might be experiencing domestic violence. Produced by WorkSafeBC, Canada.
- [Sexual Politics Now](#) is a website by University of Auckland researchers that raises questions about the sexism, misogyny and racism that shape portrayals of women and men in popular pornography as well as in wider media and culture.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR MANAGING DISCLOSURES

- Domestic Violence in the workplace: guidelines on support for staff at the University of Melbourne University [DV Guidelines University of Melbourne](#)
- Domestic Violence: What can nurses do? By Charmaine Power. 2011
- Domestic and Sexual Violence, Stalking and Dating Violence in the Workplace: A Guide for Supervisors. Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence. [Workplaces Respond](#)

# Expert organisations

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Where there is a real or imminent threat, call the Police on 111.

If you see any suspicious behaviour, report it to University Security (0800 373 7550) immediately, no matter how minor it appears.

The following agencies can provide advice, support, emergency housing, personal safety planning or advocacy for those experiencing family violence. Many also have extensive resources and information available.

## Shine

Helpline: 0508 744 633 (9am-11pm everyday)

Email: [enquiries@2shine.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@2shine.org.nz)

Web: [www.2shine.org.nz](http://www.2shine.org.nz)

Shine provides confidential support and information for anyone, female or male, living with domestic or family violence. The service also supports people who are worried about a friend, family member, colleague, or a child. SHINE can also offer short term accommodation at a Women's Refuge, and it has a service for children affected by family/domestic violence. SHINE also advocates for victims of family/domestic violence, and it offers a programme on how to stop using violence.

## HELP

Helpline: +64 9 623 1700 (24 hours)

Email: [info@helpauckland.org.nz](mailto:info@helpauckland.org.nz)

Web: [www.helpauckland.org.nz](http://www.helpauckland.org.nz)

HELP provides professional and specialised support services to sexual abuse and assault survivors. HELP is the first point of contact for sexual assault.

## Family Violence Information Line

Helpline: 0800 456 450 (9am-11pm everyday)

Family Violence Information Line provides self-help information and, where appropriate, connects people to services. It operates an after-hours message redirecting callers to the appropriate service in an emergency.

## Lifeline

Helpline: 0800 543 354 (24 hours)

Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)

Web: [www.lifeline.org.nz](http://www.lifeline.org.nz)

Lifeline New Zealand's telephone counselling service provides counselling and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Face-to-face counselling is also available.

# Agencies offering specific services

## WOMEN AND CHILDREN

### Women's Refuge

Crisis line: 0800 733 843 (24 hours)

Web: [www.womensrefuge.org.nz](http://www.womensrefuge.org.nz)

Women's Refuge provides emergency housing, advocacy and support. Women's Refuge also provides a Māori Women's Refuge, as well as and offering Māori support workers and services aimed specifically at [children](#), [young people](#), Pasifika women and [migrant and refugee women](#). They also assist [lesbian women](#), [older women](#) and [women with disabilities](#)

## MĀORI

### Tū Wahine Trust

Phone: +64 9 838 8700

Email: [admin@tuwahine.org.nz](mailto:admin@tuwahine.org.nz)

Tū Wahine Trust provide counselling, therapy and support to Māori women, children, and families affected by violence and abuse.

### Hohourongo

Phone: 0508 744 633

Web: [www.tehononga.org.nz/services/hohourongo](http://www.tehononga.org.nz/services/hohourongo)

Hohourongo is a Whānau Ora service for Auckland whānau affected by family violence. Hohourongo kaiāwhina (advocates or support people) works alongside Shine advocates.

## PACIFIC

### Fale Lalaga Pacific Women's Health & Social Services

Crisis line: +64 9 828 4317 (phone counselling)

Office phone: +64 9 828 4307

#### Web

Fale Lalaga provides counselling and support for Pacific women in the North Shore, Rodney and Waitakere regions.ices

## ASIAN, AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN AND CHILDREN

### Shakti

Crisis line: 0800 742 584 (24 hours)

Web: [www.shakti-international.org/shakti-nz](http://www.shakti-international.org/shakti-nz)

Shakti provides culturally specialist, confidential support services to women and their children of Asian, African and Middle Eastern origin facing any form of family violence.

## YOUTH

### Youthline

Helpline: 0800 37 66 33 (24 hours)

Free TXT: 234 between 8am and midnight

Email: [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz)

Face to face counselling also available.

## LGBTI

### Rainbow Youth

Phone: +64 9 376 4155

Web: [www.ry.org.nz](http://www.ry.org.nz)

RainbowYOUTH is a national organisation providing support, information, advocacy for young queer and trans\* people up to the age of 28.

### OUTline

Phone: 0800 OUTLINE (688 5463)

Web: [www.outline.org.nz](http://www.outline.org.nz)

OUTline provides confidential and gay-affirming GLBT telephone support and face to face counselling.

## PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

**HELP** (contact details above) is the first point of contact for sexual assault.

## PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Contact [Shine](#) or the [Family Violence Information Line](#) (contact details above).

### Rape Prevention Education

Phone: +64 9 360 4001

Web: [www.rpe.co.nz](http://www.rpe.co.nz)

Rape Prevention Education works to prevent sexual violence through education and provides information for those affected by sexual violence.

## PEOPLE EXPERIENCING ONLINE OR CYBER ABUSE

### Netsafe

Phone: 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723)

Email: [queries@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:queries@netsafe.org.nz)

Web: [www.netsafe.org.nz](http://www.netsafe.org.nz)

## PEOPLE WHO WANT TO STOP USING VIOLENCE

### No Excuses (Shine)

Phone: 0508 744 633

[No Excuses](#) is as positive change programme run by Shine for men who have used family violence.

### Pave (Inner City Women's Group)

Phone: 09 360 4933 or 09 279 8727

[Pave](#) is a prevention and violence education programme run by Inner City Women's Group for women who have used family violence.

### National Network of Stopping Violence - Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Patunga

Web: [www.nnsvs.org.nz](http://www.nnsvs.org.nz)

A national network of services and programmes for living without violence

For more resources, see [I want to stop using violence](#)