

# Family Violence Policies and Procedures

## Family Violence Policies and Procedures Objective

The purpose of the policy is not to 'fix' the problem of domestic violence being experienced by a staff member, as this is beyond what is within the power of the employer and individual staff.

Similarly, it is not within scope for the policy to stop an employee who is using abusive behaviour towards a partner or family member from doing so in future.

Rather, the policy sets out what the employer can and should do to: dissuade employees from perpetrating domestic violence; hold an employee accountable, e.g. if there is evidence they have perpetrated domestic violence during work time or using work resources; and support that employee if they have expressed a desire to change.

- Staff experiencing domestic violence are safe at work and have a supportive workplace environment.
- Domestic violence is not tolerated or excused.
- Staff know what to do if they see or know domestic violence is happening to someone in the workplace, or being perpetrated by someone in the workplace.

## Family Violence Definition Under the [Family Violence Act 2018](#)

### Meaning of family violence

This is the definition of 'Family Violence' under the Family Violence Act 2018, which has been modified from the previous definition of 'Domestic Violence' under the Domestic Violence Act 1995.

"Family Violence" is violence inflicted against a person by any other person with whom that person is, or has been, in a family relationship.

Violence against a person includes a pattern of behaviour made up of a number of acts that are all or any of physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological abuse, and that may:

- be coercive or controlling (done to coerce or control the other person, or with the effect of coercing or controlling the person) and/or
- cause the person cumulative harm
- be dowry-related violence, i.e. relating to gifts, money, property etc. given or received for a marriage or proposed marriage

A single act may amount to abuse. A number of acts that form part of a pattern of behaviour may amount to abuse, even though some or all of those acts, when viewed in isolation, may appear to be minor or trivial.

Psychological abuse includes:

- a) threats of physical or sexual abuse or of any of the following
- b) intimidation or harassment, including watching, loitering near or hindering access to a person's place of residence, business, employment, education or any other place the person visits often
- c) stalking or being on or in anyplace that constitutes a trespass

d) damage to property

e) ill-treatment of household pets or other animals whose welfare is likely to affect a person's well-being

f) financial or economic abuse

g) where a person is unable by reason of age, disability, health or other cause, to withdraw from the care or charge of another person, hindering or removing access to any aid or device, medication, or other support that is likely to affect the person's quality of life.

A person psychologically abuses a child if that person causes or allows the child to see or hear the physical, sexual, or psychological abuse of a person with whom the child has a domestic relationship. However, the person who suffers the abuse as defined above is not regarded as having caused or allowed the child to see or hear that abuse.

Psychological abuse may be or include behaviour that does not involve actual or threatened physical or sexual abuse.

## Meaning of family relationship under the Family Violence Act

- spouse or partner
- family member
- ordinarily shares a household (e.g. flatmates)
- close personal relationship
- relationships not covered under the Act:
  - landlord-tenant
  - employer-employee
  - people who occupy a common 'dwellinghouse' if they do not ordinarily share a household.

# Policies

## 1. Statement of Principle

- 1.1. Our business is committed to doing all we reasonably can to support employees who are victims of family violence.
- 1.2. Our employees who are victims of family violence will not be discriminated against. Wherever possible, we will maintain the confidentiality of employees who are victims of family violence.
- 1.3. All requests for family violence leave or short-term safety measures at work will be considered urgently.

## 2. Leave provisions

- 2.1. An employee seeking leave due to domestic violence is entitled to up to 10 days of paid annual leave. Additional Unpaid Leave may be granted on a case-by-case basis (at the discretion of the manager).
- 2.2. An employer may request supporting documentation from the police, government departments, a health professional or a family violence support service. This will be at the discretion of the key/designated staff member or manager
- 2.3. Carer Leave or Unpaid Leave will be available for employees who are supporting a victim of family violence to go with them to court, to hospital or to mind children (at the discretion of the manager).
- 2.4. Carer Leave or Unpaid leave will be available for users of violence who are committed to rehabilitation (at the discretion of the manager).

## 3. Staff training

- 3.1. All of our staff will be trained to become aware of the support available for family violence issues.
- 3.2. The Human Resources and Health and Safety team leads in our organization will have specialist training to provide appropriate referrals to staff experiencing family violence.
- 3.3. We will encourage and enable all staff to take intranet-based training such as Shine's ["Working Together" module](#).
- 3.4. We will continue reinforcement of the training and awareness of family violence at all levels of our organization
- 3.5. Key staff in our organisation are identified as a "crisis team" and will be trained to provide appropriate referrals and support to victims of family violence.

## 4. Short-term safety provisions

- 4.1. A workplace safety plan will be developed between the employee who is concerned about their safety at work due to family violence, a specialist agency (such as Shine or Women's Refuge), and a key staff member. This might cover areas like:
  - 4.1.1. Stopping the perpetrator from contacting the victim at work
  - 4.1.2. Giving the employee a car park close to the workplace door

- 4.1.3. Flexibility in work hours
- 4.1.4. Flexibility in work location
- 4.1.5. Re-routing payslips and deposits if needed
- 4.1.6. Designating a person to monitor attendance and follow up in the event of unplanned absences, including an appropriate emergency contact or potential code word to use in the event of danger
- 4.1.7. Change of work phone number and email address
- 4.1.8. GPS turned off on work cell phone.
- 4.2. If the victim and perpetrator of family violence are both employed in the organisation, we will create a “safe zone” to ensure there is limited contact between the two at work.
- 4.3. Employing a security guard to be on site if required.

## **5. Longer-term safety provisions**

- 5.1. An employee who is a victim of family violence is entitled to request flexibility in their work hours and/or a change in the location of their work to ensure their safety.
- 5.2. An employee who is a victim of family violence is entitled to request a permanent change to their working hours.
- 5.3. An employee who is a victim of family violence is entitled to request a permanent change in their work location to another office, location, site or city (if possible).

## **6. Referrals to support services**

- 6.1. Our employees will know what the key support services for victims of family violence are, and the appropriate services for those employees who want to stop using violence. This will be included in our induction

for all new employees.

- 6.2. Our organization will build relationships with specialist support service providers and will use their training for staff.
- 6.3. Our business is working towards being fully accredited by Women’s Refuge, a family violence support service.

## **7. Education and awareness**

- 7.1. All of our staff are made aware of our family violence policy.
- 7.2. Our organisation supports the financial independence of employees. Wages will not be paid into a bank account that does not include the name of the employee, in order to ensure employees are not subjected to financial coercion and control.
- 7.3. Training enables all staff to identify possible victims of family violence.
- 7.4. A toll-free hotline or other secure, private means for colleagues to raise concerns about a fellow employee.
- 7.5. Family violence policies are incorporated into collective agreements and individual employment contracts.

## Procedures

### If you are victim/ think you are victim of family violence

See the “online resource” section at the end of this document to have access to a free and anonymous online tool. You can use it to check if you are unsure that you are victim of family violence. The site will not be tracked by your browser, it is anonymous and even our EP system will not be able to track the traffic to the site.

You can reach to a member of the HR team, by email or in person, on your own or with a support person, during or outside office hours to seek support. Alternatively, you can reach out to a colleague and ask them to contact someone in the HR team on your behalf.

During your meeting with a HR member, they will assist you finding out what next step you could be taking, and discuss how EP can support you. This includes the work safety plan (see family violence policy for examples of what can be included in the safety plan), asking for domestic leave, and any other options available at the time, including recommending external help.

### If a colleague approaches you about family violence

Encourage them to talk to someone in HR. If they do not wish to talk to anyone in HR about it, you can offer to talk to HR on their behalf, with their authorisation, so we can discuss how EP can best support them. If they only want you to know or to help, see some resources below to assist the person. Remember that you are not a professional and moral support may be all you can offer.

### If you are or worried you may be a perpetrator of family violence

**See the “online resource” section at the end of this document to have access to a free and anonymous online tool.** You can use it to check if you are unsure that you are a perpetrator of family violence. The site will not be tracked by your browser, it is anonymous and even our EP system will not be able to track the traffic to the site.

Here are some resources that can help. If you have not accrued enough annual leave and are committed to get help and attend family violence prevention courses, unpaid leave can be used.

### Phone support

- Women’s Refuge crisis line 0800 733 843 – free from any phone, 24 hours, every day.
- Shine Helpline 0508 744 633 – free from any phone, 9am to 11pm every day.
- It’s Not OK info line 0800 456 450 – free from any phone, 9am to 11pm every day.
- [Family violence information line](#) 0800 456 450
- Shakti – for women from migrant and refugee communities 0800 742 584 - 24 hours, every day
- [National network of stopping violence](#) 03 391 0048
- Elder Abuse Helpline 0800 32 668 65 - 24 hours, every day
- [Gandhi Nivas](#) 0800 426 344

## Online support

You can ask for help online through the Women's Refuge Shielded Site service — available on popular New Zealand websites.

The service is private and won't show up in your browser history, so you can get help without anyone finding out.

1. Go to a New Zealand business website that offers the service, such as [The Warehouse](#), [Countdown](#) and [Trade Me](#).
2. Click on the Shielded Site logo, usually at the bottom of the website:



3. You can ask the Women's Refuge for help, make a plan to leave and learn how to stay safe online.

## Counselling services

[It's Not OK](#) can help you access support if you are experiencing or witnessing family violence.

[The Family Services Directory](#) has contacts in your area that can help if you're dealing with family violence: