

## Domestic and Family Violence Assistance Policy

Title	Domestic and Family Violence Policy
Creation Date	June 2018
Version	1.0
Last Revised	
Approved by	
Approval date	

## Introduction

Uniting Resources (UR), (the employer), recognises the devastating impact Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) can have on the lives of those who experience it, including their work and financial security. UR is committed to supporting our employees in Uniting Resources, Uniting Financial Services, Uniting Mission and Education and the Secretariat who experience DFV. In addition, UR seeks to create a supportive work environment where our staff are comfortable in requesting assistance for DFV related concerns and supported by the Synod's EAP provider.

The aim of this document is to detail how employees who are experiencing or escaping violence can be supported. DFV, for the purpose of this policy, includes physical, sexual, financial, verbal, psychological, spiritual, or emotional abuse of a person by an immediate family member, or who has been, or is, in a continuing social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, or who is or has continually or at regular intervals lived in the same household as the victim.

Employees who are experiencing or escaping DFV are encouraged to advise their manager or a member of the Human Resources team so that appropriate support is provided wherever possible.

## Definitions

DFV is an abuse of human rights, perpetrated within past or current relationships. A central element of DFV is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at obtaining power and control through fear. DFV takes a number of forms, including physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, psychological, emotional and social abuse and economic deprivation.

Paid work plays a critical role in providing the financial stability to enable employees to leave abusive relationships and to recover from abuse. The workplace also has a key role to play in supporting employees and providing the flexibility whilst maintaining their employment.

## Leave and Flexible Working Conditions for Employees experiencing Domestic and Family Violence

The employer recognizes that employees who are affected by DFV may be impacted in regards to their attendance or performance at work. The employer is committed to providing leave and other support to staff that experience DFV. Permanent or fixed term employees personally experiencing DFV may access up to five (5) days paid leave per annum of Domestic Violence Leave for the purposes of attending to:

- Medical appointments;
- Legal proceedings;
- Accommodation matters including relocation;
- Childcare and education matters;
- Counselling; or,
- To make other safety arrangements which are related to domestic and family violence.

Leave may be taken in units of one hour, half days, and full days. Full time staff are eligible for up to 5 days per annum.

In addition to Domestic Violence Leave, staff members can make an application for additional leave. The amount and type of leave provided will be determined by the individual's situation through consultation between the employee, their manager and the Head of Human Resources. Domestic Violence Leave is non-cumulative.

Managers and/or Human Resources can discuss options for flexible working arrangements that may assist the employee to address health or personal matters related to their experience of violence. Employees will need to talk to their manager to negotiate flexible work arrangements. If for any reason they are uncomfortable speaking to their manager about their reasons for applying for leave, they can seek advice and assistance from their Human Resource team.

When returning to work after leave due to DFV related issues, employees are encouraged to talk to their manager or a Human Resource team member regarding any ongoing safety concerns they may have.

## Leave for Employees supporting a person experiencing Domestic and Family Violence

An employee who provides support to a person experiencing DFV is entitled to access Domestic Violence leave for the purpose of:

- accompanying that person to legal proceedings, counselling, appointments with a medical or legal practitioner;
- assisting with relocations or other safety arrangements; or
- other activities associated with the family and domestic violence including caring for children.

Leave may be taken in units of one hour, half days, and full days. Full time staff are eligible for up to 5 days per annum. Part-time staff are eligible for up to 3 days per annum.

## Notice and Notification

While notice is not strictly required prior to taking the leave, an employee should notify their manager as soon as reasonably practicable of their intention to take or remain on Domestic Violence or other leave for this purpose.

Proof of DFV may be required and can be a document issued by the Police Service, a Court, a Doctor, a Domestic and Family Violence Support Service or Lawyer, or a statutory declaration.

To apply for Domestic Violence Leave, requests must be in writing and may ask for a variety of flexible arrangements that could be negotiated with the cooperation of the employer.

## Individual Support

In order to provide support to an employee experiencing DFV and to provide a safe work environment, the employer may approve any reasonable request from an employee for changes to their span of hours or pattern or hours and/or shift patterns; job redesign or changes to duties; changes to their telephone number or email address to avoid harassing contact; or any other appropriate measure including those available under existing family friendly or flexible work arrangements.

### Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are encouraged to:

- Offer support to staff members who may require assistance as a result of experiencing the effects of DFV;
- Remind staff members about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP);
- Seek advice from the EAP, to support staff members who may require assistance as a result of experiencing the effects of DFV;
- Seek advice as necessary from Human Resources; and
- Approve the staff members leave application form.

## Employees

Employees are encouraged to:

- Consider seeking support from the EAP provider;
- Seek support from their Manager or Supervisor;
- Seek advice from Human Resources;
- Complete a leave application form and submit it to their supervisor for approval; and
- Update their manager of changes to their situation or safety

## Resources

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides counselling and support to any employee or their immediate family member seeking assistance with a challenging issue or to improve their health and wellbeing. The Employee Assistance Program provides timely intervention to help employees deal effectively with any difficulties, and assists them with referral to other professionals or agencies if longer-term assistance is needed. Contact details for EAP providers can be found on the intranet

<https://nswact.uca.org.au/staff-intranet/employee-assistance-program-eap/>

## Confidentiality

An employee experiencing DVF may raise the issue with their supervisor or the relevant human resource team member. The supervisor may seek advice from human resources. All personal information concerning DFV will be kept confidential.

The employer will work collaboratively with the employee to develop protocols to restrict access to the employee's personal information and contact details.

There may be times, however, when there is an inherent safety risk to either the affected employee or other employees (for example, if there is a risk the perpetrator might come into the workplace). In these instances, disclosure of the situation will be kept to a minimum and on a 'needs to know' for the purpose of maintaining safety in the workplace.