Domestic and Family Violence

INFORMATION FOR MANAGERS DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Macquarie is committed to preventing domestic and family violence and supporting staff who are affected by it.

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is conduct that is violent, threatening, coercive, controlling or intended to cause the family or household member to be fearful. People affected by DFV may live in fear for themselves and their family, even when they have left a violent relationship. DFV can include:

- physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or psychological abuse
- neglect
- financial abuse
- stalking
- harm to an animal or property
- restricting your spiritual or cultural participation
- exposing children to the effects of these behaviours

In addition to the already challenging home environment that some staff and or their relatives might be facing, staying home due to the COVID-19 pandemic could have an additional set of stress for staff members affected by DFV.

The University understands it can be challenging for managers and supervisors working with staff in these situations and has developed this information sheet to provide additional information about the support and resources available during this time.

COVID-19 SCENARIO

- Governments are asking/recommending everyone to stay home for their own and others’ safety. But “home” might be an unsafe environment for some.
- For some people, going to work may be their only reprieve from emotional abuse and violence. Now they have been told to work from home.
- For others, the only place their children are safe is at school. Now those children have been told to study at home.
- If a staff member suffering abuse was planning to leave, they may have been preparing their safety plan which may no longer be feasible.
- The online environment puts people who are experiencing domestic violence at increased risk - see Digital safety advice from the Australian e-safety commissioner.

MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS ROLE IN SUPPORTING STAFF

Managers and supervisors have an important role to play in supporting staff who are experiencing DFV. We encourage you to access the advice and support available described in this document and take a supportive and flexible approach wherever possible:

- You might not be aware of someone in your team experiencing DFV and they might not be ready or equipped to disclose this information to you. It is important that managers proactively invest time in the well-being of team members including through regular check-ins, proactive communication of MQ well-being strategies and access to professional support services such as MQ Employee Assistance Program.
- Be aware that staff affected by DFV might be in a very delicate position. Treat any disclosure as confidential and check that the platforms to communicate with your staff member are safe for them.
- Where appropriate, encourage staff to contact you or your HR Client Team Manager, the Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Manager or the Director of Human Resources for a confidential conversation. If the staff member is unable or uncomfortable to make contact, consider taking this step on their behalf.
- Be familiar with the Domestic and Family Violence support available at Macquarie and related entitlements.

RECOGNISE SPECIFIC SIGNS

Possible signs to look for during COVID-19 include:

- In a virtual world, if an employee is suddenly hesitant to use video chat functions, it might be worth reaching out by other means to find out why.
- Inappropriate clothing for season. Turtlenecks in hot weather, for example.
- Constantly joining meetings late/calling in sick.
- A change in job performance, such as more errors, slowness, or inconsistent quality of work.
- The person stops calls when a partner enters the room.
- Their partner seems overly attentive and often appears by their side.
• The individual appears to be more depressed, frightened, exhausted or quiet than usual, or has lost their confidence.
• Person says their partner wants them to leave their job.
• They seem to lack access to money.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE AT MACQUARIE
There is general information on the MQ website about preventing and responding to DFV (for staff who are affected, their managers and colleagues) however below are some specific points related to Covid-19:

• **Employee Assistance Program services** include specialist support for staff (and their family members) who are experiencing DFV, as well as their managers and colleagues.
• **DFV Leave.** Macquarie University offers up to twenty days paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave. This can be booked via HR Online in the same way as other forms of leave.
• Other leave. Although DFV leave is confidential, if a staff member doesn’t want to access DV leave there are Personal Leave options that they could access.
• **Flexible work arrangements.** For example, considerations may include allowing the staff member to work from their office at MQ under special arrangements.
• Safety Planning. The HR Client team can help with safety planning rearrangements that take into consideration the new COVID-19 environment. New considerations may include:
  - Allowing the staff members’ child to attend childcare on campus
  - Assistance from IT to address online risks (see e-safety commissioner advice above), including access to work-provided phones and laptops/computers to enhance their autonomy and digital security.
  - Regular check in contact with the staff member (we can find an institutional excuse to make the calls if needed, e.g. the staff member is required for a work meeting etc.)
• If there is a threat or harm to any individual when present on campus as a result of a DFV matter, call Security on ext. 9999 or (02) 9850 9999
• Security escorts, help points and personal safety plans are also available from Security on Campus services.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800 Respect</td>
<td>1800 737 732</td>
<td>Counselling delivered by qualified, experienced professionals 24/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>1800 658 463</td>
<td>Telephone counselling, information and referrals for women and same-sex partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violence Line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifeline</td>
<td>13 11 14</td>
<td>Online, phone and face-to-face crisis support and suicide prevention services.</td>
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Members of the LGBTIQ community who are experiencing domestic and family violence may be uniquely affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, facing additional risks to their safety and barriers to help and support. Rainbow Health Victoria has developed a [tip sheet](#) to help all professionals provide safe and inclusive services to LGBTIQ clients during the course of this pandemic.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

- Domestic and Family Violence Website
- Domestic and Family Violence Guide
- Managing Flexible Work
- Enterprise Agreements
- Workplace responses to domestic and family violence during COVID-19, MCC