

A black and white photograph of a person's hands holding a smartphone. The person is wearing a ring on their left hand. The phone is held over a desk with some papers. The background is blurred.

**INSIGHT  
EXCHANGE**

# **WORKPLACE SCENARIOS KIT**

**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE  
WORKPLACE RESPONSES TO EMPLOYEES**

## INSIGHT EXCHANGE

**Insight Exchange** centres on the expertise of people with lived experience of domestic and family violence and gives voice to these experiences.

**Insight Exchange** is designed to inform and strengthen social, service and systemic responses to domestic and family violence.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work and services operate and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend this respect to all First Nations peoples across the country and the world. We acknowledge that the sovereignty of this land was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

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Launched in November 2017, Insight Exchange was designed by Domestic Violence Service Management (DVSM), in collaboration with Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade from Centre for Response-Based Practice, Canada.

Insight Exchange has been established, developed and is governed by Domestic Violence Service Management (DVSM) a registered charity (ABN 26 165 400 635).

Insight Exchange has been sustained through the generous donations of individuals and a silent donor for the benefit of many.

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Insight Exchange is for all people. Insight Exchange respects the diversity of all sexualities and gender identities including but not limited to; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and A-Sexual + identities as well as Heterosexual and Cisgender identities.

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There are people who believe domestic and family violence happens to **'others'**, and there are people who know domestic and family violence can happen to **'anyone'**.

'Lethal Indifference' (2018), Playwright Anna Barnes.

## What is the purpose of the Workplace Scenarios Kit?

This Workplace Scenarios Kit is designed to provide practical support to organisations as they assess their existing and potential responses to experiences of domestic and family violence. It complements the [Futures Framework](#) and other Insight Exchange materials designed to inform and support responders.

The Kit brings together extracts from lived experience narratives (as a possible proxy for employees) with real world scenarios to reveal what is (and is not) in place in your workplace to support the needs of individual employees who may seek support.

It will guide organisations to establish their [essential mechanisms](#) for responding to domestic and family violence through listening, language and policies.

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The Workplace Scenarios Kit covers content and examples of violence and abuse. If you need to adjust your participation, or talk to someone, national, state and territory support services are listed in Follow My Lead, My Safety Kit, My Dignity resources. For people using violence and abuse support services are listed in the I am I can landing page. These resources are available on [www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)

# RESPONDING TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

## Workplace Scenarios: Logic & analysis

A series of workplace scenarios have been developed to support teams to have structured conversations about what is in place, and what can be improved.

The scenarios use the lived experiences of individuals (published de-identified examples using a pseudonym) with questions set against the 6 themes that emerged from the [Insights Paper](#).

People with lived experience of domestic and family violence who contributed to the Insights Paper told us what they most wanted to see changed in workplaces.



Read the instructions for the group, and instructions for the facilitator. ([Page 6](#))

Scenarios:

- Allannah ([Page 7-8](#))
  - Amira ([Page 9-10](#))
  - Belinda ([Page 11-12](#))
  - Adam ([Page 13-14](#))
  - Brianna ([Page 15-16](#))
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# Supporting extract from Insight Exchange *Insights Paper: Experiences and perceptions of workplace responses to DFV*



In Feb 2020 Insight Exchange published the [Insights Paper: Experiences and perceptions of workplace responses to domestic and family violence \(DFV\)](#).

The paper holds important insights for workplaces and gives voice to hundreds of people with lived experience of domestic and family violence who share their experiences of workplace responses.

### **Wish for influence**

Three hundred and ninety-four respondents provided answers to the final open text question of the survey, “If you could wish for [Insight Exchange (DVSM)] to influence anything about workplace responses to DFV, what would that be?”

Thematic analysis of open text responses highlighted six key themes, listed below.



## **Key themes**

1. Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
2. More, or better, tangible supports
3. Improved understanding of domestic and family violence
4. Better visibility of help
5. Improved skills for managers
6. Importance of confidentiality



# Using the hypothetical scenarios

## Instructions for the group

In the next section, you will find practical scenarios outlined in minimal detail. The scenarios are hypothetical but based on a real life person, with the idea being that the person works within your organisation. They could be in any role, in any team.

Read each scenario together then work through the 6 questions. Each question maps to one of the [6 themes](#) that emerged from the Insight Exchange Workplace Insights Paper, in which people with lived experience of domestic and family violence told us what they wanted to see change in the workplace.

For each scenario, under each theme there is a question for the group to reflect on and talk about.

<b>Theme:</b> Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	<b>Theme:</b> Improved skills for managers	<b>Theme:</b> Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
Q1	Q2	Q3
<b>Theme:</b> More, or better, tangible supports	<b>Theme:</b> Better visibility of help	<b>Theme:</b> Importance of confidentiality
Q4	Q5	Q6

All of the themes are important, and often overlap, we encourage teams to work on all 6 questions to make progress across the most commonly identified concerns of people with lived experience.

## Instructions for the facilitator

- ✓ **Before starting** the scenario discussion [View the Follow My Lead Animation \(4min\)](#)
- ✓ **At the end** of the group discussion record as a summary whether the theme is understood and established in your workplace, or where refinement is needed, or is a priority area. This analysis can inform work within the team and across teams. See example below.

**EXAMPLE - Overall Reflections** | ● Understood and established | ● Refinements identified | ● Priority Area

<b>Theme:</b> Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	<b>Theme:</b> Improved skills for managers	<b>Theme:</b> Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
●	●	●
<b>Theme:</b> More, or better, tangible supports	<b>Theme:</b> Better visibility of help	<b>Theme:</b> Importance of confidentiality
●	●	●

In each scenario there is a hyperlink to a de-identified published example of the person's lived experience of domestic and family violence. Reading the narrative is not essential to engage in the scenario because workplace responders may never know this amount of detail about what is going on for someone. The challenge is how you develop an improved readiness to respond as a workplace and as colleagues, without all that detail?



Background: [Allanah](#) has experienced domestic and family violence from two different partners. She has been concerned about not being able to provide for herself or her children. The last partner didn't want her to work and insisted she hand over her government benefits. Allanah has started a new job at head office in your organisation. She knows that violence and abuse can happen to anyone and that the new partner may take her earnings. She is wondering how she will protect these earnings.

Imagine that Allanah now works here in your workplace. Explore the questions under each of the 6 key themes. Share your reflections and next actions.

## Reflections and Actions

THEME	Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	Improved skills for managers	Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
SCENARIO	Allanah's manager is really aware of all the media about experiences of domestic and family violence, particularly the examples of physical violence and surveillance.	Allanah asks her manager about what happens to her earnings, where her payslips are sent to, and what her options are.	Allanah is in a junior role having not been allowed to work previously as her ex-partner forbade it. She is embarrassed about her inexperience. She tells her manager about her former partner not letting her work. The manager says "Oh I would have told him to move out and move on. No one can stop you working – not these days."
QUESTION	<b>Q1: What options are available to employees to work from different locations? How does the organisation let new employees know about this possibility?</b>	<b>Q2: How informed are workplace managers about financial abuse and ensuring their staff know about their payroll options? Both when an employee starts and if circumstances change?</b>	<b>Q3: How might the response of the manager influence Allanah sharing anything more or with anyone else?</b>

## Reflections and Actions (continued)

THEME	More, or better, tangible supports	Better visibility of help	Importance of confidentiality
SCENARIO	Allanah has a lasting injury and visible scar from the violence. She doesn't want to talk about her physical needs in detail in a workplace assessment.	Allanah has had to shut down her social media presence to mitigate some of the stalking from her former partner. She doesn't know whether the workplace offers the chance to use work IT to privately look for supports.	Allanah has had to provide her personal address for some of the forms at work and she doesn't know if that means some information will be posted to her home or emailed to the account her former partner has hacked. She is worried that he might intercept her information.
QUESTION	<b>Q4. Can the workplace support her with what she needs without asking her to disclose details of her injuries?</b>	<b>Q5. How or when will she find out what IT access is available to her while she is at work?</b>	<b>Q6. Who can she ask about this, in confidence?</b>

## Overall Reflections | ● Understood and established | ● Refinements identified | ● Priority Area

THEME	1. Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	2. Improved skills for managers	3. Workplaces to show compassion not judgment	4. More, or better, tangible supports	5. Better visibility of help	6. Importance of confidentiality
STATUS						
ACTIONS						





Background: [Amira](#) is experiencing domestic and family violence. Looking back she says, “I wanted to leave Grant for probably about a year before I did. But it was impossible because he wasn't going to allow me to leave. I only saw two options, he either gets arrested and taken away by the police or I flee with nothing.” If Amira was in this situation today and in this workplace, would she have known about, and been able to access, support to have more than these two options.

Imagine that Amira now works here in your workplace. Explore the questions under each of the 6 key themes. Share your reflections and next actions.

## Reflections and Actions

THEME	Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	Improved skills for managers	Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
SCENARIO	<p><i>“Grant’s violence was extreme. If he assaulted me, he would say to me the next day “I don’t think you should go to work like that.” I would say, “well... I’m going to lose my job if I don’t go to work”. Then he would say “make sure you don’t tell anyone what happened.”</i></p>	<p>HR has provided Amira with a number to contact a counsellor, the HR person is wondering how Amira is going.</p>	<p>Amira notices the workplace messages about domestic and family violence responses often assume the victim of violence will, and can, leave the abusive partner. Amira knows the abuse can continue and increase after leaving, through technology, finances, court, family law, or other family members.</p>
QUESTION	<p><b>Q1. How well does the workplace understand that even if Amira wants to tell someone she may be in more danger if she does?</b></p>	<p><b>Q2. In what ways could the HR person follow up with Amira to see if the support was useful or if she would like different options or support?</b></p>	<p><b>Q3. How well does the workplace understand that being safe is no simple or single decision or task?</b></p>

## Reflections and Actions (continued)

THEME	More, or better, tangible supports	Better visibility of help	Importance of confidentiality
SCENARIO	Amira knew her options were limited and didn't feel like 'options' at all. But she was also aware of how victims of domestic and family violence are judged for their 'choices.'	Amira had no idea that the workplace relocated people to different states or territories. She thought that leaving town would mean having to leave her job too.	Amira has previously experienced being the subject of gossip, with hurtful assumptions made about her culture. She is concerned about who will find out if she discloses her experience of domestic and family violence.
QUESTION	<b>Q4. How does the workplace support other options or resources for Amira? How would she know about these supports before desperately needing them?</b>	<b>Q5. Are transfers a real option? Who is eligible and how would Amira have known that?</b>	<b>Q6. If she discloses to a manager or HR, how many people (end to end) will know something about her lived experience?  Is there any way to reduce that number of people?</b>

## Overall Reflections | ● Understood and established | ● Refinements identified | ● Priority Area

THEME	1. Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	2. Improved skills for managers	3. Workplaces to show compassion not judgment	4. More, or better, tangible supports	5. Better visibility of help	6. Importance of confidentiality
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Background: [Belinda](#) is experiencing domestic and family violence. *“I had to rely on donations from charities. I had no money for food, my older kids were buying the food. I didn’t eat for six weeks. I lost 30 kilos and this starvation nearly shut my kidneys down. My daughter said “get with it Mum we’ve only got you,” because we have no other family or friends. I would go and do cash-in-hand jobs.”* Imagine if there was part-time work in your workplace that Belinda could do in school hours. Before applying, could she see what the organisation says and does about domestic and family violence?

Imagine that Belinda works here in your workplace. Explore the questions under each of the 6 key themes. Share your reflections and next actions.

## Reflections and Actions

THEME	Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	Improved skills for managers	Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
SCENARIO	Belinda has managed the violence for years and corralled many resources to survive. It doesn’t mean she accepted the violence and she didn’t ‘let it happen’.	Belinda’s manager notices changes in Belinda’s physical health, wellbeing, and availability. She didn’t know where to start in expressing her concern.	<i>“A lot of people say “why don’t you get up and go?” Well, I tried that several times and nobody could help me and my three kids. I have no family support. So, where the hell do I go with three kids?”</i>
QUESTION	<b>Q1. What sort of imagery and wording does the workplace use when talking about domestic and family violence? Is the victim always portrayed as passive, helpless and cowering? Something else?</b>	<b>Q2. What sort of workplace supports are in place for managers to explore concerns about the safety and wellbeing of their team?</b>	<b>Q3. What response might Belinda receive from the workplace if she disclosed the domestic and family violence as a long term employee? Or while still on probation?</b>

Reflections and Actions (continued)

THEME	More, or better, tangible supports	Better visibility of help	Importance of confidentiality
SCENARIO	<p><i>“I was in Court for about two and a half years, it's only just finished this year.”</i></p> <p>How does Belinda hold down a job and make careful use of leave entitlements to attend all the court sessions and related appointments, manage the school holidays and attend the counselling sessions involving her son?</p>	<p>Belinda has no spare time, minimal credit on her phone and little privacy. She doesn't have the safety and resources for detailed searches for information. She has everything to lose if she is misunderstood or if her partner can subpoena everywhere she has talked to someone.</p>	<p>Belinda's kids go to the same school as her new colleague, the one she had to explain the court situation to access leave to attend court. The colleague is really concerned about Belinda because she sees some of what is going on outside of work. She wonders if anyone else knows how difficult Belinda's situation is.</p>
QUESTION	<p><b>Q4. When the limitations of domestic violence leave fall short of what an employee needs, what happens next?</b></p>	<p><b>Q5. How many steps would Belinda have to take to reach a specialist response from the workplace, if she wanted to?</b></p>	<p><b>Q6. How can the colleague express her concern to Belinda, follow Belinda's lead and not overlook how serious the situation is?</b></p>

Overall Reflections | ● Understood and established | ● Refinements identified | ● Priority Area

THEME	1. Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	2. Improved skills for managers	3. Workplaces to show compassion not judgment	4. More, or better, tangible supports	5. Better visibility of help	6. Importance of confidentiality
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Background: [Adam](#)\* is experiencing domestic and family violence perpetrated by his boyfriend Dennis. The violence used by Dennis included coercive control, isolation, physical and sexualised violence and financial abuse. Dennis constrained Adam's capacity to work and engaged in systems abuse to compromise the financial assistance Adam was receiving. Dennis also claimed to be a victim and told friends and family that Adam was a perpetrator of domestic and family violence.

Imagine that Adam now works here in your workplace. Explore the questions under each of the 6 key themes. Share your reflections and next actions.

## Reflections and Actions

THEME	Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	Improved skills for managers	Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
SCENARIO	Adam is a young cisgendered male. He may not 'look' like a typical victim of domestic violence and may not open up about his personal life.	Responding to domestic and family violence can be especially challenging in the workplace when perpetrators, like Dennis, pose as the victim. Perpetrators often utilise workplaces and systems to gain further control over victims.	Adam has experienced years of domestic and family violence, and this has constrained his career goals and options over the years.
QUESTION	<b>Q1. How can the workplace best support LGBTIQ+ identifying people experiencing domestic and family violence?</b>	<b>Q2. How well informed is the manager about the potential for perpetrators to use and manipulate workplaces to gain further control over the victim?</b>	<b>Q3. How can workplaces work with employees such as Adam to best support their career development, progression and other goals whilst providing workplace flexibility to support Adam as a victim of domestic violence?</b>

Source: ACON, *Tales from Another Closet*. p 16

## Reflections and Actions (continued)

THEME	More, or better, tangible supports	Better visibility of help	Importance of confidentiality
SCENARIO	Adam knew the abuse perpetrated by his partner was wrong. However, Adam chose not to reach out to any services within the LGBTIQ+ community as Dennis had told multiple services and community groups that he was a victim of Adam's abuse. Adam's workplace was the safest space for Adam to get support.	As part of International Women's Day, Adam sees events and communications about the workplace response to domestic and family violence featuring women. As a man, he's not sure if he'd be eligible for any of the support on offer and is too embarrassed to ask.	Adam is committed to his new career. However, because he had shared contacts and colleagues with Dennis, he still feels <i>"fearful of things blowing up in my face and losing everything again."</i> Confidentiality is critical from the time of Adam's disclosure to maintaining safety throughout Adam's life and in his new career.
QUESTION	<b>Q4. How well does the organisation understand the supports needed by LGBTIQ+ victims of domestic and family violence? Does the organisation provide a range of options for victims to select from?</b>	<b>Q5. How does your workplace show that you understand and support the needs of LGBTIQ+ victims?</b>	<b>Q6. How do managers maintain confidentiality if they also belong to, or are connected to, the same LGBTIQ+ communities as the employee?</b>

**Overall Reflections** | ● Understood and established | ● Refinements identified | ● Priority Area

THEME	1. Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	2. Improved skills for managers	3. Workplaces to show compassion not judgment	4. More, or better, tangible supports	5. Better visibility of help	6. Importance of confidentiality
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Background: [Brianna](#) is experiencing domestic and family violence. The abuse and violence has been going on for a long time. Brianna has found support in different ways but this time she really needs the support from her employer. Brianna has been listening to and acutely noticing the responses of the organisation to domestic and family violence. She has read about some of the support on offer but what she really needs is something else.

Imagine that Brianna works here in your workplace. Explore the questions under each of the 6 key themes. Share your reflections and next actions.

## Reflections and Actions

THEME	Improved understanding of domestic and family violence	Improved skills for managers	Workplaces to show compassion not judgment
SCENARIO	Brianna has reached out to police and DV support services and experienced a whole range of responses from helpful to harmful. She has every reason to be cautious about seeking support or involving particular services.	Brianna’s manager is new and has only met Brianna virtually due to their locations. He is finding it more challenging to get to know team members and build connection through the virtual format. Her manager doesn’t know what lengths she has to go, to be available as the person abusing her is hovering, monitoring and harming her.	Brianna is exhausted and not thriving in her role because of the violence she is experiencing. She doesn’t want to share why and doesn’t want to be more judged than she already is. She has a review coming up with the new manager, and she knows she is not at her best performance but that this is not reflective of her commitment or skills.
QUESTION	<b>Q1. When the workplace provides information about support services does it provide options in the types of services, and a range of service providers?</b>	<b>Q2. How does the workplace signal support to people who might be unsafe working at home due to domestic and family violence?</b>	<b>Q3. How well does the workplace allow for overall perspective on performance, particularly when a disclosure of domestic and family violence has been made or is anticipated?</b>

Reflections and Actions (continued)

THEME	More, or better, tangible supports	Better visibility of help	Importance of confidentiality
SCENARIO	Brianna might want to conceal her work address from her abusive partner or change locations from time to time to reduce the likelihood of him showing up in person in work hours.	Brianna has looked at the supports available and doesn't want to talk to a counsellor. She needs money, a new phone, and the opportunity for a transfer. She is reliant on her work laptop to do some banking and collecting ID and evidence without the abusive partner noticing.	Brianna doesn't know her new manager well enough to tell him what is going on. She wants to talk to her old manager from before she changed teams.
QUESTION	<b>Q4. Are changes to work location something colleagues can access without disclosure? How would Brianna know that?</b>	<b>Q5. How well does the organisation organise and make clear the kinds of supports that are available outside of psychological services? What security supports are available?</b>	<b>Q6. Does the workplace enable support seeking from people in varied roles/teams? How does the confidentiality between the former manager and new manager work?</b>

Overall Reflections | ● Understood and established | ● Refinements identified | ● Priority Area

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# ESSENTIAL MECHANISMS

How will we develop and evolve our listening mechanisms, language practices and policy functions applying the foundational knowledge and lived experience insights of domestic and family violence (DFV)?

<b>Listening mechanisms</b>	Establish and evolve listening mechanisms.
Where are we listening to lived experiences now?	
Who are we not hearing from?	
How can we be listening differently?	
<b>Language practices</b>	Review and refine our language informed by our stance against violence and the four operations of language.
Where do we communicate about domestic and family violence (DFV)?	
Does the language we use in our communications match our understanding of DFV?	
<b>Policy functions</b>	Align and shape policies informed by our stance against violence, our commitment to human-rights and SDGs #5 & #16, and our foundational understanding of DFV.
What policies are currently in place relevant to our response to DFV?	
What policy changes are needed or desired?	
What new policies are needed or desired?	

## RESPONDING TO PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE

### Supporting extract from *Our Watch Practice Guidance: Workplace responses to staff who perpetrate violence against women*



Just as workplaces are likely to have employees who are experiencing violence, they are also likely to have employees who are using violence.

There are a number of practical, legal and moral dilemmas faced by employers when considering their responses to perpetrators of violence in the workplace. Importantly there is no one-size fits all answer to these dilemmas and workplaces will need to consider the context of each case, in its own right.

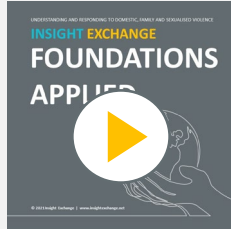
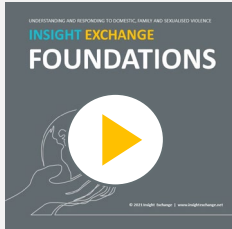
You can read more at [Our Watch](#).

### Key principles

1. Never excuse or minimise violence against women.
2. Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the victim/survivor both within and outside the workplace.
3. Always hold perpetrators to account for their actions.
4. Maintain a safe work environment for victims/survivors, those who have supported them, and staff who have witnessed violence.
5. Respect the rights of perpetrators to fair processes and employment.
6. Support workplace initiatives to address the underlying drivers of violence against women to stop it before it starts.

## FOUNDATIONS & FOUNDATIONS APPLIED

The Foundations and Foundations Applied are designed to build on your understanding of and responses to domestic, family and sexualised violence.



View and reflect on the Insight Exchange [Foundations](#) (45 mins video) & [Foundations Applied](#) (40mins video)

<https://vimeo.com/insightexchange>

## REFLECTIONS KIT



This [Reflections Kit](#) collates the resources featured in the Foundations and Foundations Applied sessions and outlines where to locate and options for using these resources in your work and community.

[www.insightexchange.net/reflections-kit/](http://www.insightexchange.net/reflections-kit/)

## Acknowledgements and thanks

We would like to thank all contributors, critical friends and communities, who have engaged directly or indirectly with this resource.

Most significantly, our thanks go to all people with lived experience of domestic and family violence who have generously shared their insights for the benefit of others.

## EXPLORE INSIGHT EXCHANGE RESOURCES

Scan the QR code to open Insight Exchange. [www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)

Insight Exchange website has a safe exit button.

Privacy: This is a static QR code to eliminate any collection of your data when scanning.





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