



Chief Victims Advisor  
to Government

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### Employers can Support Employees to be Free from Family Violence

#### Press Release

3 September 2021

Free specialist advice is available for employers on communicating safely with employees who are experiencing violence in their homes during lockdowns.

“Family violence is a huge problem across Aotearoa New Zealand and any medium to large size employer, whether they are aware of it or not, will have some employees struggling with violence in their homes. For some employees, work is their only safe place to get a break from abuse,” says Chief Victims Advisor to Government Dr Kim McGregor.

During lockdowns, many employees will need to work from home which means some may be trapped 24/7 with an abusive partner, family member or other close relationship such as a flatmate.

Because employers are usually communicating with their staff during lockdowns, they have the rare opportunity to assist employees trapped by an abusive partner or household member to know that there is free, specialist help available that can be accessed by phone or webchat available 24/7.

Helping staff in these situations is not straightforward and to communicate safely with employees is vital. I encourage employers to view the free practical advice developed specifically for employers during lockdown: <https://www.dvfree.org.nz/news/advice-for-nz-employers-during-lockdown/>, which includes a number of specialist domestic violence and sexual harm national helpline, chat, and text services, for those being harmed and for those who are causing the harm.

Employers can also download Shine’s free DVFREE guidelines that provide practical advice tailored for employers about how to safely communicate and support staff during lockdowns who are – or who may be - experiencing domestic violence during lockdown. These guidelines have been endorsed by Women’s Refuge.

“Longer term, I encourage employers to be proactive about putting in place policy, procedures and training for key staff that will enable employees experiencing domestic violence to feel safe and supported in their workplace,” Dr McGregor says.

The DVFREE Guidelines also have guidance on appropriate responses for employees who perpetrate domestic violence.

DVFREE has free Guidelines for employers with very detailed and practical advice that can be downloaded from the DVFREE website ([www.dvfree.org.nz](http://www.dvfree.org.nz)).

For more information contact Holly Carrington, DVFREE Lead, 021-979-331 or [hollyc@2shine.org.nz](mailto:hollyc@2shine.org.nz)

### Specialist Helplines:

For women experiencing family violence:

- **Women's Refuge** – 24/7: **0800 733 843**, 24/7 [www.womensrefuge.org.nz](http://www.womensrefuge.org.nz)
- **Help via online chat through Women's Refuge Shielded Site without leaving a browser history**– click on this icon in the footer of [stuff.co.nz](http://stuff.co.nz), [thewarehouse.co.nz](http://thewarehouse.co.nz), [bunnings.co.nz](http://bunnings.co.nz) and many other websites



For anyone experiencing family violence, worried about their own abusive behaviour, or supporting someone else in these situations:

- **Shine Helpline** – 24/7: **0508 744 633** OR chat online with Helpline staff at [www.2shine.org.nz](http://www.2shine.org.nz)
- **Are You OK** – 9am to 11pm, every day: **0800 456 450** [www.areyouok.org.nz](http://www.areyouok.org.nz)
- **Shakti** – for migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence phone **0800 742 584** – available 24 hours
- **Te Whare** – Call 0800 TEWHARE (**0800 94273**)
- **Victim Support** – 0800 842 846 (24hr service) for all victims of serious crime including family violence.

For anyone who experiences sexual harm:

- **Rape Crisis Centres** – Call **0800 883 300** for contact details of your local centre, provides support for survivors of rape and sexual abuse, their families, friends and whānau
- **Safe to Talk**–24/7 (sexual harm helpline): 0800-044-334 OR text 4334 – 24/7. Chat online at [www.safetotalk.nz](http://www.safetotalk.nz)
- Male Survivors Aotearoa New Zealand – Call **0800 044 334** Offers one- to-one, peer and support groups for male survivors of sexual abuse and their significant others

For men worried about their own abusive behaviour:

- **0800 Hey Bro: 0800 439 276** – 24/7 (for men who feel they're going to harm a loved one or whanau member) [www.hewakatapu.org.nz/services/0800-hey-bro](http://www.hewakatapu.org.nz/services/0800-hey-bro)
- **Safe to Talk**–24/7 (sexual harm helpline): 0800-044-334 OR text 4334 – 24/7. Chat online at [www.safetotalk.nz](http://www.safetotalk.nz)