

Responding to Family Violence Disclosures

When someone shares that they have experienced family violence, this is called a disclosure.

Disclosures can happen at any time, and the person disclosing their experience may not always label it as 'violence' or 'abuse'.

Tips for responding to disclosures appropriately

Do:

- ✓ Empower: let them decide / control what they share
- ✓ Acknowledge: affirm their bravery in opening up
- ✓ Be honest about your qualifications and offer information on where to seek specialised support
- ✓ Assist: let them make their own decision about next steps
- ✓ Listen without judgement, criticism or blame

Do not:

- × Tell them what to do or try "fix" the problem on their behalf
- × Blame them and suggest they could have done something
- × Speak negatively about the person using violence
- × Dismiss their experience and discuss your own experiences
- × Probe and ask lots of questions

Helpful phrases

- *"Thank you for sharing your experience with me."*
- *"What you choose to do with this information is up to you, but I can provide you with contact details for free and specialised support."*
- *"Are you feeling safe at the moment? You can contact the police in an emergency or 1800 737 732"*

Support is available for you

Hume-Merri-Bek Orange Door: 1800 271 151
inTouch: 1800 755 988

For more information and support visit
hume.vic.gov.au/community-safety