

FROM WORKPLACE SABOTAGE TO EMBEDDED SUPPORTS:

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY
VIOLENCE ACROSS AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES



October 2022

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we come together to conduct our research and recognise that these lands have always been places of learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders — past and present — and acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and their ongoing leadership in responding to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Funding Acknowledgement

This project is part of the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre's Safe and Equal @ Work program, funded as part of the Victorian State Government's Victorian Higher Education State Investment Fund (VHESIF).

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the victim-survivors who shared their lived experience of domestic and family violence and expertise with us in completing the survey. Without them, this research would not have been possible. We are extremely grateful for their time and generosity in trusting our research team with their experiences.

We are grateful to the Victorian State Government for their support of our program of research and the opportunity to undertake this project.

Thank you to our copy editor Thomas Beecher for his meticulous editing as we finalised this report.

Thank you to our colleagues in the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre — particularly Harshita Rupanagudi, Jasmine Mead and Dr Jasmine McGowan — who have provided invaluable support throughout this project. We are grateful to our colleagues across the centre whose input and collegiality we have benefited from on a day-to-day basis while undertaking this study.

Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon contributed to this project in her capacity as Director of the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre. The Report findings are wholly independent of Kate Fitz-Gibbon's role as Chair of Respect Victoria.

Recommended Citation

McNicol, E., Fitz-Gibbon, K., and Brewer, S. (2022) From workplace sabotage to embedded supports: examining the impact of domestic and family violence across Australian workplaces. Monash University, Victoria, Australia. DOI: 10.26180/21268686

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Acronyms	4
List of Tables.....	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	8
Research Design.....	10
Part 1: The Impact of Domestic and Family Violence on Employees	15
Impact of DFV on victim-survivors' ability to undertake their job	15
Impact of DFV on ability to attend work	18
Impact of DFV on meaningful participation in the workplace environment.....	19
Impact of DFV on career progression and opportunities	19
Impact of DFV on employment status.....	22
Impact of DFV on seeking new employment.....	26
Part 2: Experiences of Domestic and Family Violence during Work Hours	27
Perpetrator workplace interference strategies.....	27
Types of perpetrator workplace interference	28
The impact of perpetrator workplace interference	30
The experiences of victim-survivors who work alongside their abuser	31
Part 3: Disclosing Domestic and Family Violence at Work.....	33
Rates of disclosure in the workplace.....	33
Who victim-survivors disclose to in the workplace	36
Workplace responses to disclosures of domestic and family violence	37
Negative workplace responses to disclosures of domestic and family violence.....	38
Positive workplace responses to disclosures of domestic and family violence.....	39
Part 4: Workplace Policies and Responses to Domestic and Family Violence	41
Positive experiences of accessing support at work	43
Negative experiences of accessing support at work	44
Desired workplace supports.....	45
Workplace supports identified to support victim-survivors gain new paid employment.....	47
Part 5: Workplace Cultures and the Importance of Cultural Change	50
Conclusion	51
Recommendations and policy implications.....	51
Key avenues for further research.....	53
References.....	54
Appendix A: Survey instrument	57

Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AIHW	Australian Institute for Health and Welfare
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
CBA	Commonwealth Bank of Australia
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DFV	Domestic and family violence
DSS	Department of Social Services (Commonwealth Government)
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
FWC	Fair Work Commission (Australia)
OHS	Occupational health and safety
RCFV	Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria)
TRN	The Research Network
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equality Agency (Australia)

List of Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of survey respondents
Table 2: Employment status of survey respondents
Table 3: Industry employed during experience of DFV
Table 4: The impact of domestic and family violence on work
Table 5: The impact of domestic and family violence on work by type of employment
Table 6: The impact of domestic and family violence on work by location of residence
Table 7: The impact of domestic and family violence on work by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities
Table 8: Impact of DFV on career progression by gender identity
Table 9: Impact of DFV on career progression by location of residence
Table 10: Impact on career progression by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities
Table 11: Impact on employment status by gender identity
Table 12: Impact on employment status by location of residence
Table 13: Impact on employment status by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities
Table 14: Where the abuser is employed at the same workplace
Table 15: Rates of disclosure by security of employment
Table 16: Rates of disclosure by gender identity
Table 17: Rates of disclosure by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities
Table 18: Rates of disclosure by area of residence
Table 19: Who victim-survivors disclose to in the workplace by gender identity
Table 20: Who victim-survivors disclose to in the workplace by security of employment

Executive Summary

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is a crisis in Australia (Fitz-Gibbon, 2021; Stott-Despoja, 2020). The last decade has seen increasing recognition that effectively addressing DFV requires whole-of-system responses, within which workplaces are increasingly recognised as sites of both perpetration and potential locations for victim-survivors to seek support (Australian Human Rights Commission, AHRC, 2020, 2021; Breckenridge et al., 2015; Champions of Change Coalition, 2021; Murray & Powell, 2008; KPMG, 2016). Despite increasing understanding of DFV as a workplace issue, as well as mounting awareness of the need for workplaces to introduce policies that support employees experiencing DFV, there have been no large-scale Australian national studies to date that invite victim-survivors to explain how DFV impacted their working lives. Responding to this gap, this study undertook a national survey of DFV victim-survivors who had worked in Australia. The survey was designed to capture victim-survivors' views on how their experiences of DFV impacted their employment, and the workplace response they received, if any.

Foregrounding the voices and experiences of 3,002 victim-survivors who worked in Australia while experiencing DFV, this study significantly advances Australia's evidence base on how best to understand and respond to DFV within the workplace. The findings from this project are organised according to five key themes:

1. The impact of domestic and family violence on employees
2. Victim-survivors' experiences of domestic and family violence during work hours
3. Victim-survivors' experiences disclosing domestic and family violence at work
4. Victim-survivors' experiences of workplace policies and responses to family violence
5. Workplace cultures and the importance of cultural change

The findings and recommendations of this research are not industry specific and are relevant to all Australian states and territories.

Workplace sabotage: understanding DFV and the workplace

The findings of this national study further evidence the myriad ways in which DFV profoundly impacts the working lives of victim-survivors. The results show that DFV impacts victim-survivors' immediate participation in current employment while also impacting future employment prospects. Specifically, the study found that of the 3,002 victim-survivors surveyed, one in four reported that DFV significantly impacted their ability to undertake their job.

Of the 2,515 victim-survivors who reported that their job was impacted by their experience of DFV, the study found that:

- One in two victim-survivors reported that DFV negatively impacted their career progression and opportunities.
- Two in three victim-survivors reported that DFV impacted their ability to concentrate at work.
- Two in five victim-survivors reported that DFV impacted their productivity.
- Two in five victim-survivors reported that DFV impacted their ability to enjoy their job.
- One in three victim-survivors reported that DFV led them to socially withdraw from co-workers.
- One in three victim-survivors reported that DFV negatively impacted their employment status.
- One in four victim-survivors reported that DFV impacted their relationships at work.
- One in four victim-survivors reported that DFV impacted their punctuality for work.

These results reveal the significant impacts of DFV on an individual's capacity to fulfill the expectations of their role. Understanding the link between DFV and reduced work performance is essential to inform workplace support practice and policies, ensuring that victim-survivors are not subjected to performance management or at risk of demotion or employment termination.

The study's findings also uncover the alarming scope of perpetrator workplace interference in Australia. This study found that nearly 50 per cent of the survey respondents had experienced workplace interference strategies at some point during their experience of DFV. The results show that impeding access to employment is a key tactic utilised by DFV perpetrators. The data shows that abusers not only make it difficult for victim-survivors to engage in paid employment, but also tactically impede victim-survivors' abilities to perform, advance career goals and to thrive at work.

Alarming, one in five survey respondents worked in the same workplace as their abuser. Three in five of the victim-survivors who worked alongside their abuser reported that the abuser held a position of power above them in the workplace. This is a particularly concerning finding because of the range of ways in which workplace hierarchies can further reinforce pre-existing power imbalances in relationships and facilitate further opportunities for abuse and control. These findings have important implications for employee safety, duty of care and the provision of supports.

In order to better support DFV victim-survivors, a shift in thinking is required whereby Australian workplaces recognise that DFV and work are entirely inseparable. DFV-informed understandings and assessment of work performance is essential and must be accompanied by a range of workplace supports designed to both support individual victim-survivors and to mitigate the impacts of victimisation on work participation.

Disclosing DFV at work

For victim-survivors of DFV, deciding whether or not to disclose to members of their workplace that they are experiencing DFV is a significant decision. The survey found that only 30 per cent of survey respondents told someone at work about their experience of DFV. This is particularly striking given that a majority of survey respondents reported that DFV impacted their work. The number of victim-survivors surveyed who reported disclosing DFV in their workplace decreased significantly for those in insecure employment. Only 17.5 per cent of survey respondents who were employed casually told someone at work they were experiencing DFV.

For those victim-survivors who did disclose their experiences of DFV at work, they were most likely to share with a close colleague as opposed to a manager or HR representative. One in two victim-survivors surveyed disclosed their experience of DFV to a close colleague. This finding reinforces the need for comprehensive education and training on responding to DFV at all levels of the workplace. Responding to a disclosure of DFV can be a confronting experience for any member of the community, and it is essential that all Australian employees, regardless of their level and management responsibilities, are equipped to respond in a way that ensures the victim-survivor feels believed and validated, and also with an understanding of the support pathways specific to their workplace.

Embedding supports: Responding to DFV in the workplace

This study demonstrates that there remains significant work to be done in improving Australian workplace responses to DFV. Victim-survivors viewed the decision to inform colleagues or supervisors at work that they were experiencing DFV as a choice of great significance, and the majority of respondents did not disclose their experiences to anyone at work. Of the modest number of respondents who did disclose their experience of DFV, one in two described their workplace's response as supportive. More than a quarter of respondents described the workplace response as "neither supportive nor unsupportive" (26.49%, n=214); 8.5 per cent described the response as inconsistent, being "sometimes supportive, sometimes unsupportive" (n=69); and 9 per cent described the response as "unsupportive" (n=75). The way that individuals, and the workplace more broadly, respond to victim-survivors if and when they disclose that they are experiencing DFV is an incredibly important moment. When victim-survivors' disclosures are met with attitudes of disbelief, minimisation or excuses for violence, the opportunity to connect them with referral pathways of support can be lost.

Nearly three in four victim-survivors surveyed either did not know whether their workplace offered DFV supports or believed that it did not. The data highlights the urgent need for improvement in Australian

workplace supports for employees experiencing DFV. Workplaces should educate all levels of the workforce to respond appropriately to DFV disclosures — that is, with a trauma-informed lens.

Only one in four survey respondents were aware that their workplace had a DFV policy. Consequently, nearly three in four victim-survivors surveyed either did not know whether their workplace offered DFV supports or believed that it did not. This is an extremely troubling finding given that since 2018, all Australian workplaces have been required to offer, at minimum, five days unpaid DFV leave. It suggests that the provision of this unpaid leave policy has failed to be embedded adequately in many Australian workplaces. As the Commonwealth, state and territory governments renew their commitment to eliminating violence against women and children as part of the next National Plan, it is essential that they encourage a culture whereby Australian workplaces of all sizes are required to develop and implement DFV policies.

Recommendations

The findings from this research support two key recommendations:

(1) Every Australian workplace prioritises the implementation of a DFV workplace policy.

The policy should identify a suite of workplace supports available to all employees who experience DFV. As the study's findings emphasise, there is no *one-size-fits-all* workplace support for victim-survivors of DFV, and as such the workplace policy should include a suite of available workplace supports that can be tailored to each individual employee's needs. The policy must be easy to follow, widely communicable to staff and accessible to all employees. In order to support the prospect and likelihood of victim-survivors of DFV disclosing their experience at work, and to educate their colleagues on how to respond appropriately, it is essential that the policy is embedded within a compassionate workplace culture.

(2) Australian workplaces prioritise the cultivation of a compassionate workplace culture that is DFV informed.

Workforce education that debunks common myths and educates individuals on the phenomenon of DFV is essential. Education must occur at all levels of the workforce (and not only target a managerial level or HR representatives), given this study's finding that most victim-survivors disclose their experience of DFV to a close colleague rather than a superior. The more members of a workplace who understand the nuances of DFV, the safer victim-survivors are to effectively seek support in that workplace.

Our findings reinforce the critical need for workplaces across Australia to not only view DFV as a workplace issue, but also to embrace the introduction and expansion of DFV workplace supports — alongside the cultivation of a compassionate, trauma-informed supportive workplace culture — as a basic responsibility. As Australia progresses towards a commitment to tackling the national crisis of DFV, workplaces have a vital role to play in supporting the safety and recovery needs of victim-survivors.

Introduction

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is increasingly recognised as a national crisis in Australia (Fitz-Gibbon, 2021; Stott-Despoja, 2020).¹ The statistics illuminate the depth of the crisis: In Australia one in three women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 and one in five women have experienced sexual violence (ABS, 2017). Intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence against women (AIHW, 2018). On average, a woman is killed by an intimate partner every 10 days (Serpell, Sullivan & Doherty, 2022). While this report focuses on the experiences of adult victim-survivors, we acknowledge that DFV significantly impacts children and young people and recognise the importance of identifying young victim-survivors in their own right (see further: Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2022a, 2022b, 2022c).

The impacts of DFV are significant and infiltrate all aspects of victim-survivors' lives. The Australian Burden of Disease Study (2018) found that for women aged between 15 and 44, intimate partner violence is the fourth leading risk factor for total disease burden nationally, accounting for significant long-term health impacts (AIHW, 2022). In Australia, DFV is the leading driver of homelessness for women (Equity Economics, 2021), and there is increasing recognition of the significant financial dimensions, impacts of abuse and tactics that perpetrators employ to diminish a victim-survivor's economic independence. For victim-survivors seeking to leave an abusive relationship, inadequate system supports and the long-term financial impacts of DFV leave them with an impossible choice between poverty or violence. As the recent research by Summers (2022: 77) found, "The system creates, and then perpetuates, poverty and disadvantage, which in turn make women more vulnerable to domestic violence."

The last decade has seen greater political attention and reform activity than ever before (see: Inter alia, COAG, 2016; Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2016; Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015; Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, 2021), culminating most recently in the finalisation of Australia's next National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children (DSS, 2022) — a decade-long strategy that aims to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence nationally.

Domestic and family violence is a workplace issue

Within this climate of burgeoning reform, there is increasing recognition both in Australia and internationally that DFV is a workplace issue and that workplaces can play a key role in supporting employees experiencing DFV (Australian Human Rights Commission, AHRC, 2020, 2021; Breckenridge et al., 2015; Champions of Change Coalition, 2021; Murray & Powell, 2018; KPMG, 2016; McCarthy, 2018; Our Watch, 2018). The costs of DFV to the broader economy and to workplaces are now well established. It is estimated that lost productivity related to DFV cost the Australian economy \$609 million in 2020/21 alone, with \$235 million borne by employers (The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009). The 2016 Australian Personal Safety Survey (ABS, 2017) found that:

- One in five Australian women had taken time off work as a result of a previous partner's violence.
- One in 11 Australian women had taken time off work as a result of a current partner's violence.

These findings build on a body of national and international research that has consistently found that experiences of DFV negatively impact upon an employee's attendance and engagement at work as well as their career progression and performance within the workplace (see: Inter alia, LaVan et al., 2012; McFerran 2011; Swanberg et al., 2006; Rayner-Thomas et al. 2016; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007).

In addition to its impact on the workplace experience, research has increasingly recognised the prevalence of so-called 'work interference strategies' — tactics perpetrators deploy that impede upon a victim-survivor's ability to engage or flourish in the workplace (Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2006). Perpetrators may engage in

¹ A note on language: DFV is used throughout this report to refer to violence perpetrated between intimate partners or family members, including a range of physically abusive, coercive and controlling behaviours. This can include "acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship" (COAG, 2010: 2).

work interference strategies during working hours and/or at the physical work location that impact victim-survivors' safety and ability to focus and flourish in the workplace. Work interference strategies include setting out to deliberately and tactically frustrate the victim-survivor's ability to attend work (Riger, Ahrens & Blickenstaff, 2001; Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2006). This can be achieved via a range of abusive behaviours, including stealing the victim-survivor's car keys or transport money, damaging their car, physically restraining them from attending work, turning off their alarm clock to ensure they are late, refusing to provide childcare and withholding medication (Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Brandwein & Filiano, 2000; Brewster, 2003; Lloyd, 1997; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999; Moe & Bell, 2004; Riger, Ahrens & Blickenstaff, 2001; Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2006). The perpetrator may also ensure the victim-survivor's appearance or welfare is altered to the extent that they feel unable to attend work — for instance by cutting their hair, inflicting visible physical injuries or causing injuries that require hospitalisation (Swanberg & Logan, 2005).

Alongside the growing evidence base on the impacts of DFV in the workplace, there is also increasing recognition of the fact that workplaces have a critical role to play in identifying and appropriately responding to employees affected by DFV (see: Inter alia, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2020, 2021; Champions of Change Coalition, 2021; KPMG, 2016; McCarthy, 2018; Tolman, 2011). In 2016, the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV Summary and Recommendations, 2016) identified the workplace as “an important opportunity to reach people who are affected by family violence, to provide support for them, and to help them take steps to secure their safety”. More recently, stakeholder consultations to inform the next National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children identified opportunities for Australian workplaces to better support safety and recovery needs of victim-survivor employees (Fitz-Gibbon, 2022a).

This study

This study seeks to further Australian knowledge on why workplaces must enhance supports for victim-survivors of DFV. While there has been increasing understanding of the role that workplaces can play, there has been limited research which has engaged directly with victim-survivors across Australia and sought to understand their experiences and how they believe their workplace could have supported their safety and recovery needs. This study seeks to directly address that gap.

This report presents the qualitative and quantitative findings from a national survey of 3,002 victim-survivor views on workplace supports. The key findings are organised into five key themes:

1. **The impact of domestic and family violence on employees.** Including the impact on the victim-survivor's ability to attend work and participate in the workplace, as well as impacts on career progression, employment status and experiences of seeking new employment.
2. **Victim-survivors' experiences of domestic and family violence during work hours.** Including an examination of different types of perpetrator workplace interference strategies and the impacts of victim-survivors.
3. **Victim-survivors' experiences of disclosing family violence at work.** Including a detailed examination of rates of disclosure and who victim-survivors disclose to in the workplace. This section also details victim-survivors' experiences of different workplace responses to disclosures of DFV.
4. **Victim-survivors' experiences of workplace policies and workplace responses to DFV.** Including employee awareness of DFV policies, experiences accessing supports and the supports desired by victim-survivors to support their safety and recovery needs.
5. **Workplace culture and the importance of cultural change.**

Drawing heavily on the voices of the victim-survivors who completed our survey, this report privileges and foregrounds their lived experience and expertise. The resulting study findings are relevant to workplaces across Australia and are not industry specific.

Research Design

This project examines DFV victim-survivors' experiences and expertise to advance Australia's evidence base on workplace supports for employees experiencing DFV. The data collection for this study involved a national survey with 3,002 respondents to allow a breadth of views to be captured. This approach allowed the research to capture victim-survivor employee views and experiences across a range of industries and employment types. The project's key findings are relevant to all Australian states and territories. All data collection for this project was conducted during March and April 2022.



This study sought to be inclusive of the views of a wide range of individuals with lived experience of DFV. This report recognises that women are disproportionately impacted by DFV (ABS, 2017), and by extension the focus of this report and the data drawn upon is likely to be considered more relevant to women employees. Men are also impacted by DFV, albeit at reduced levels (ABS, 2017). This report also acknowledges that there is an undeveloped evidence base capturing how women who identify as having disabilities, First Nations women, and individuals with diverse gender and sexual identities experience DFV in the workplace (Champions of Change Coalition, 2021). The experiences of victim-survivors may also be differently mediated by industry, age, employment type and other structural variables.

National online survey

An online survey was used to gain insight into the workplace experiences of individuals with lived experiences of DFV. The survey included a combination of demographic, multiple-choice and open-ended questions (see: Appendix A for a full copy of the survey instrument). The survey instrument was designed to meet four key objectives:

- Build better understandings of the impact of DFV on the workplace experience, including workplace participation and performance, engagement with colleagues, and career progression.
- Explore victim-survivors' experiences of workplace interference strategies.
- Understand employees' experiences of disclosing DFV victimisation at work.
- Examine employees' experiences of workplace responses to DFV, including leave provisions, support policies and the availability flexible work arrangements.

The survey also included a series of open-ended questions to give victim-survivors the opportunity to identify areas not anticipated by the research team, including ways DFV impacted their workplace experience as well as additional workplace supports that they thought could have been useful in securing their safety and supporting their ongoing engagement in work.

This survey design allowed for victim-survivors' views to be analysed as a whole, as well as by industry group, workplace location, age, gender and/or sexual identity, disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

Ethical considerations

This research received approval from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC),² and the survey was undertaken in a way that was consistent with the ethical principles of informed consent and confidentiality. The survey was administered by The Research Network (TRN), an external market research company. TRN used the software program Survey Monkey to administer the survey. Administration of the survey was carefully designed to minimise any risks to respondents, including the provision of a list of contact details of national support services. The list of support services provided included national and state-specific services, including face-to-face as well as remote-accessible options (including phone lines and web

² Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee project ID: 30972.

chat services). The survey was designed to ensure that respondents could skip over any survey question that they did not want to complete, and respondents could also exit the survey at any time without further follow up from the research company.

Sampling

The survey was promoted by TRN using their own networks. Anyone aged 18 years and over living in Australia who had experienced DFV was invited to participate anonymously in the survey. Questions about demographic information were included at the outset and conclusion of the survey. The survey was only administered in English, and we acknowledge that this will have impacted involvement in the research for some Australians. The sample is not a probability sample, and as such we recognise that the results — while reflecting the views of a substantive number of victim-survivors working in Australia — are not generalisable to the wider Australian population.

Sample characteristics

A total of 3,002 victim-survivors completed the online survey. Survey respondents could choose to answer some or all of the survey questions. The survey included a series of questions that gathered victim-survivor demographic data, including employment profile. Below is a demographic snapshot of the victim-survivors who participated in the survey.

Table 1: Characteristics of survey respondents

Sample Characteristics	n=3,002	
	n	%
Gender Identity		
Men	879	29.3
Women	2,074	69.1
Non-binary/gender diverse	41	1.4
Prefer not to say	6	0.2
Other	1	0.0
Missing	1	0.0
Sexual Identity		
Heterosexual	2,300	76.77
Bisexual	322	10.75
Gay	71	2.37
Lesbian	55	1.84
Pansexual	50	1.67
Queer	28	0.93
Asexual	27	0.9
Questioning	29	0.97
Prefer not to say	80	2.67
Other	34	1.13
Age		
18-24	787	26.2

25-30	694	23.1
31-40	708	23.6
41-50	355	11.8
51-60	220	7.3
61 years or above	238	7.9
Identified as First Nations		
Identified as First Nations	310	10.3
Did not identify as First Nations	2,659	88.6
Prefer not to say	29	1.0
Missing	4	0.1
Number of Disabilities Identified		
0	1,596	53.2
1	808	26.9
2	315	10.5
3	159	5.3
4 or More	74	2.5
Missing	50	1.7
Migrant, Refugee and/or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background		
Yes	624	20.8
No	2,314	77.1
Prefer not to say	63	2.1
Missing	1	0.1
Area of Residence		
Metropolitan	1,810	60.3
Regional	902	30
Rural	270	9
Remote	18	0.6
Missing	2	0.1

Respondents with a disability

As shown in Table 1 (above), more than 53 per cent of survey respondents identified as not having a disability (n=1,596). Of those who identified as having a disability, respondents were invited to select what type of disability they had and could select as many options as applied.

Of the 1,357 survey respondents that identified as having a disability:

- 24.49 per cent identified as having poor mental health affecting day-to-day functioning (n=723)
- 11.38 per cent identified as having a physical disability (n=336)
- 8.81 per cent identified as having a visual disability (n=260)
- 5.45 per cent identified as having a motor/mobility disability (n=161)
- 4.74 per cent identified as having an intellectual disability (n=140)

- 4.27 per cent identified as having autism spectrum disorder (n=126)
- 3.76 per cent identified as having seizures (especially photosensitive epilepsy) (n=111)
- 3.18 per cent identified as having an auditory disability (n=94)
- 2.71 per cent identified as having an acquired brain injury (n=80)
- 3.86 per cent identified as having a learning/cognitive disability (n=114)

State and territory location

The survey was completed by respondents from every Australian state and territory, with the majority of survey respondents living in New South Wales (29.57%, n=887), Victoria (24.73%, n=742) and Queensland (24.57%, n=737). Representation among survey respondents from other states and territories was:

- Western Australia (8.63%, n=259)
- South Australia (7.77%, n=233)
- Tasmania (2.60%, n=78)
- Northern Territory (0.60%, n=18)
- Australian Capital Territory (1.50%, n=45)

Employment details

Given the focus of this study, survey respondents were invited to select the type of employment they had at the time of their experience of DFV, and the industry within which they were employed. 2.47 per cent of survey respondents had multiple jobs while experiencing DFV.

Table 2: Employment status of survey respondents

Sample Employee Characteristics <i>n</i> =3,002		
	n	%
Employment Status during DFV		
Full-time ongoing	1,327	44.2
Full-time contract	167	5.6
Part-time ongoing	424	14.1
Part-time contract	129	4.3
Casual employment	441	14.7
Self employed	113	3.8
I had multiple jobs	74	2.5
A combination of the above	127	4.2
Other	198	6.6
Missing	2	0.1

As shown below in Table 3, survey respondents were employed across a range of different industries while experiencing DFV. Respondents were able to select as many industries as applicable, given the reality that some victim-survivors were likely employed across numerous roles and industries during the time they experienced DFV.

Table 3: Industry employed during experience of DFV

Type of Industry Employed in during Experience of DFV	<i>n</i> =2,995
	<i>n</i>
Retail Trade	742
Healthcare and Social Assistance	330
Accommodation and Food Services	276
Education and Training	246
Administrative and Support Services	234
Financial and Insurance Services	173
Construction	169
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	140
Manufacturing	138
Mining	125
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	101
Information Media and Telecommunication	96
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	93
Electricity, Gas, Water and Water Services	78
Wholesale Trade	73
Public Administration and Safety	71
Arts and Recreation Services	67
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	56

Data analysis

The demographic and multiple-choice survey questions were analysed in Survey Monkey, Microsoft Excel and using SPSS software to facilitate quantitative analysis and identify quantitative trends among survey respondents. Data obtained through the open-ended survey questions was downloaded from Survey Monkey into Microsoft Excel where a thematic analysis was undertaken by members of the research team. Responses provided for each of the open-text question were first analysed in their totality (noting that not all survey respondents responded to each open-text question) to determine key themes and trends in the data. The research team then analysed the thematic open-text responses by respondent gender identity, employment type and other cohort groups. This allowed the research team to examine general trends across the data as well as themes specific to, or absent within, specific cohorts of the survey respondent population.

In presenting the key themes and findings from the survey and interviews, this report draws heavily on the voices of the victim-survivors surveyed. These are captured through the presentation of direct quotes to ensure the voices of victim-survivors are centred throughout the analysis. Any identifying details from the survey responses have been removed to ensure participant anonymity. Where possible, this report notes in the analysis whether a view was held by a majority, minority or mere handful of the survey respondents.

Part 1: The Impact of Domestic and Family Violence on Employees

A central goal of this study was to build on the knowledge base regarding the degree to which DFV impacted the workplace experience and employment status of victim-survivors. The survey invited all respondents to reflect on whether — and if so, to what degree — DFV impacted their ability to do their job. Additionally, the survey included a series of open-ended and multiple-choice questions, which enabled respondents to share ways their experience of DFV impacted aspects of their employment and working lives.

This section presents the findings from this phase of the research, with a specific focus on five key areas of impact:

- Impact on ability to attend work
- Impact on meaningful participation in the workplace environment
- Impact on career progression and opportunities
- Impact on employment status
- Impact on seeking new employment

The following section explores each of these impacts in turn. It is crucial to draw on victim-survivors' expertise and experiences regarding how DFV impacted their working lives when developing DFV-informed and effective workplace policies and training. This knowledge should also underpin performance management, promotions and career progression processes.

Impact of DFV on victim-survivors' ability to undertake their job

Respondents were asked the degree to which their experience of DFV impacted their ability to undertake their job. A total of 2,997 of the total survey respondents completed this question. As shown in Table 4 below one in four survey respondents reported that DFV "significantly" impacted their ability to undertake their job. This included 28 per cent of respondents who identified as men and 24 per cent of respondents who identified as women. Notably, while there were a smaller number of survey respondents who identified as non-binary, that cohort of victim-survivors was significantly more likely to report that domestic and family violence significantly impacted their ability to undertake their jobs. As shown in Table 4 below, more than 40 per cent of non-binary survey respondents reported a significant impact, and just under 30 per cent reported that DFV "somewhat impacted" their ability to undertake their jobs.

Table 4: The impact of domestic and family violence on work

	All respondents n (%)	Men n (%)	Women n (%)	Non-binary respondents n (%)
It significantly impacted my ability to undertake my job	758 (25.3)	491 (23.7)	248 (28.2)	17 (41.5)
It somewhat impacted my ability to undertake my job	1,083 (36.1)	753 (36.3)	317 (36.1)	12 (29.3)
It is difficult to gauge whether it did or not	546 (18.2)	404 (19.5)	134 (15.2)	6 (14.6)
It did not impact my ability to undertake my job	382 (12.7)	274 (13.20)	105 (11.9)	3 (7.3)
Not sure	169 (5.6)	109 (5.3)	55 (6.3)	3 (7.3)
Other	59 (2)	42 (2)	17 (1.9)	0
Missing data	5	1	3	0

The fact that a majority of survey respondents explained that DFV impacted their ability to undertake their job directly contrasts with problematically held assumptions that the workplace has little to do with the *private* experience of DFV.

The extent to which DFV impacts an employee's ability is consistent across different employment types. As shown in Table 5 below, the majority of survey respondents employed on ongoing and casual contracts as well as those who were self-employed reported that their experiences of DFV had either significantly or somewhat significantly impacted on their work. Over 50 per cent of the victim-survivors surveyed who were casually employed reported that DFV either "significantly impacted" or "somewhat impacted" their ability to undertake their job, yet this category of employee is often not eligible to apply for paid leave provisions and may have limited access to wider workplace supports. These findings demonstrate that the impact of DFV does not discriminate — neither should employers in their allocations of DFV workplace supports. It is essential that employees — regardless of the type of employment — have supports made available to them to recognise and remedy the impact that DFV has on an individual's ability to undertake their job.

Table 5: The impact of domestic and family violence on work by type of employment

	Part-time ongoing employees (n=424) n (%)	Full-time ongoing employees (n=1,327) n (%)	Casual employees (n=441) n (%)	Self-employed (n=113) n (%)
It significantly impacted my ability to undertake my job	84 (19.8)	378 (28.5)	80 (18.1)	37 (32.7)
It somewhat impacted my ability to undertake my job	165 (38.9)	511 (38.5)	174 (39.5)	38 (33.6)
It is difficult to gauge whether it did or not	80 (18.9)	241 (18.2)	104 (23.6)	15 (13.3)
It did not impact my ability to undertake my job	76 (17.9)	150 (11.3)	56 (12.7)	12 (10.6)
Not sure	17 (4)	40 (3)	27 (6.1)	11 (9.7)
Other	1 (0.2)	4 (0.3)	0	0
Missing data	1	3	0	0

As shown below in Table 6, the reported impact of DFV on work did not differ significantly by the location of residence of the victim-survivor surveyed. One notable exception to this were the victim-survivors living in remote residences, who were significantly more likely to report uncertainty as to whether their experience of DFV had impacted their work.

Table 6: The impact of domestic and family violence on work by location of residence

	Metropolitan (n=1,810) n (%)	Regional (n=902) n (%)	Rural (n=270) n (%)	Remote (n=18) n (%)
It significantly impacted my ability to undertake my job	449 (24.8)	234 (25.9)	70 (25.9)	5 (27.8)
It somewhat impacted my ability to undertake my job	653 (36.1)	334 (37)	91 (33.7)	4 (22.2)
It is difficult to gauge whether it did or not	339 (18.7)	155 (17.2)	50 (18.5)	2 (11.1)
It did not impact my ability to undertake my job	232 (12.8)	111 (12.3)	38 (14.1)	1 (5.6)
Not sure	97 (5.4)	50 (5.5)	16 (5.9)	6 (33.3)
Other	37 (2)	17 (1.9)	5 (1.9)	0 (0)
Missing data	3 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Specific analysis regarding how DFV impacts work for employees who identify as having numerous disabilities yielded interesting results. As Table 7 below shows, the extent of DFV victimisation increases with the number of disabilities survey respondents identify as having.

Table 7: The impact of domestic and family violence on work by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities

	Identified as having no disability (n=1,596) n (%)	Identified as having one disability (n=808) n (%)	Identified as having two disabilities (n=315) n (%)	Identified as having three disabilities (n=159) n (%)	Identified as having four or more disabilities (n=74) n (%)
It significantly impacted my ability to undertake my job	270 (16.9)	238 (29.5)	115 (36.5)	80 (50.3)	41 (55.4)
It somewhat impacted my ability to undertake my job	593 (37.2)	286 (35.4)	113 (35.9)	48 (30.2)	22 (29.7)
It is difficult to gauge whether it did or not	347 (21.7)	133 (16.5)	44 (14)	12 (7.5)	2 (2.7)
It did not impact my ability to undertake my job	256 (16)	88 (10.9)	23 (7.3)	9 (5.7)	3 (4.1)
Not sure	98 (6.1)	42 (5.2)	17 (5.4)	5 (3.1)	4 (5.4)
Other	31 (9.1)	20 (2.50)	3 (1)	4 (2.5)	1 (1.4)
Missing data	1	1	0	1	1

The victim-survivors who identified that DFV impacted their ability to do their job were asked to provide additional details and identify which specific aspects of their job or performance were impacted.

84 per cent of survey respondents (2,515 of 3,002 total) identified at least one way that DFV impacted their ability to do their job. Of those victim-survivor respondents who reported that their job was impacted, the following impacts were reported:



- Impact on ability to concentrate (66%)
- Impact on ability to enjoy their job (42%)
- Impact on productivity (41%)
- Impact on attendance (37%)
- Impact on performance and quality of work (35%)
- Withdrawal from co-workers (33%)
- Impact on punctuality (26%)
- Difficulty getting to work (15%)
- Impact on career advancement (12%)
- Impact on job security (11%)
- Difficulty travelling for work (8%)

It is in and of itself telling that 42 per cent of survey respondents reported that DFV impacted their ability to enjoy their job (41.72%, n=1,091), and that 18.2 per cent of survey respondents (n=476) stated that their experiences of DFV led them to try and overcompensate to do more than what was required of their role.

These results reveal that the impacts of DFV on an individual's capacity to fulfil the expectations of their role are significant and widespread. Understanding the link between DFV and reduced work performance is essential to inform workplace support practice and policies — to ensure that victim-survivors are not subjected to performance management or are at heightened risk of demotion or employment termination. The more workplace members there are who understand the reality that DFV impacts performance at work, the more victim-survivor employees might encounter compassion and understanding rather than disciplinary action. DFV-informed understandings and assessments of work performance are essential and must be accompanied by a range of workplace supports designed to both support the individual victim-survivor and to mitigate the impacts of victimisation on their work participation.

Combining these results with the findings from the qualitative thematic analysis, three clear trends emerged in how survey respondents reported that DFV impacted their ability to undertake their job. Survey respondents identified that DFV impacted their (i) ability to attend work, (ii) capacity to meaningfully engage in the work and (iii) ability to fulfil their duties and to participate in the workplace environment. Each of these three themes are explored in turn in the following sections.

Impact of DFV on ability to attend work

This research found that DFV impacts victim-survivors' work attendance and punctuality. A significant number of respondents indicated that DFV impacted their attendance at work (36.52%, n=955) and a quarter of survey respondents reported that DFV impacted their punctuality (25.39%, n=664). Numerous victim-survivors described strategies that their perpetrators utilised to impact their attendance or punctuality for work. As four victim-survivors described:

"He would hide my keys so i couldn't go to work."

"Making it difficult for me to work, purposely making me run late. Threatening not to take me to work"

"I was often late 4 work as my ex partner would hide my car keys and phone. I couldn't concentrate and had to hide my bruises"

"Made me look like a bad worker and making me look like slack to other workers. I'd be late to work and it would cause problems with me with management."

For other victim-survivors, their ability to attend work stemmed from their desire to hide injuries inflicted on them. As one victim-survivor explained:

"He would hit me so much I couldn't turn up to work because of all the bruises"

These results lend further support to the connection found between DFV and lowered workplace attendance in earlier research (Franzway et al., 2007; Rayner-Thomas et al., 2016). These findings are important in illuminating ways that DFV can impact employee attendance and should be taken into consideration as part of DFV-informed workplace policies and management practices. Regular lateness and absences might be one way for workplaces to identify whether an employee is experiencing DFV, and that identification phase can be followed by compassionate management practice and, where appropriate, the provision of trauma-informed workplace support. Employees must understand that DFV can be a key reason for an employee's lateness and absence, and guidance must be developed to ensure victim-survivors do not experience punitive action on the part of the employer, including negative performance reviews, demotions, losing shifts and/or the termination of their employment.

Impact of DFV on meaningful participation in the workplace environment

Many respondents reported that DFV led them to socially withdraw at work. 33 per cent of respondents reported that DFV led them to withdraw from co-workers (32.62%, n=853), 24 per cent of respondents reported that DFV impacted their relationships at work (24.28%, n=635), 29 per cent reported that DFV impacted their participation in work social activities (29.48%, n=771) and 11 per cent reported that DFV impacted their ability to partake in team opportunities (11.40%, n=298). Victim-survivors described numerous ways that DFV impacted their engagement with colleagues, in both formal and informal social activities. As three victim-survivors explained:



"He completely isolated me so I was unable to form friendships at work or confide in anyone. I had to rush out of work each shift or he would ring me and abuse me if I was late and if I didn't answer my mobile while I was working he would call my work. I felt unsafe and embarrassed."

"My abuser did not like me interacting with the men in my leadership team, leading me to turn down a promotion to work in the leadership team for fear his controlling and accusations of me flirting with them (untrue) would get worse."

"Depression made it difficult to be myself around others or participate in social activities therefore not really having a connection with anyone at work. This made everything lonelier and stressful, I often acted out. He would come to my workplace and abuse me causing scenes."

These findings capture the workplace isolation impacts of DFV, which may mimic an abuser's broader isolation tactics, as explored through the work of Stark (2007) among others. As the comments from the above respondents reflect, the social withdrawal that follows from DFV can lead to victim-survivors forging less-social connections in the workplace, among other settings. This, in turn, may diminish possibilities for connections and support networks that are key to ensuring a victim-survivor's safety. As such, the social withdrawal from work extends the isolation already experienced by victim-survivors of coercive control. Socialising and engagement in the workforce are important for employee's wellbeing as well as career security and advancement.

Impact of DFV on career progression and opportunities

The impact of DFV on career progression and opportunities has been well-documented (Crowne et al., 2011; Lindhorst et al., 2007). Over half the survey respondents (51%, n=1524) reported that DFV had negatively impacted their career progression and opportunities. 24 per cent of survey respondents reported that DFV "significantly impacted" their career progression and opportunities (23.93%, n=717), and 27 per cent of survey respondents reported that DFV "somewhat" impacted their career progression and opportunities (23.94%, n=807). 18 per cent of survey respondents reported that DFV did not impact their career progression and opportunities (17.66%, n=529), and 31 per cent of respondents selected the responses "I am not sure" (9.75%, n=292) and "It is difficult to gauge whether it did or not" (21.73%, n=651). As shown in Table 8 below, these findings remained relatively consistent when gender identity was considered, with men slightly more likely to report a significant impact on career progression than women. Non-binary survey respondents were less likely than both men and women to report that an impact — either significant or somewhat — upon their career progression and opportunities.

Table 8: Impact of DFV on career progression by gender identity

	Women (n=2,074) n (%)	Men (n=879) n (%)	Non -binary respondents (n=41) n (%)
Significantly impacted career progression and opportunities	465 (22.4)	239 (27.2)	13 (13.7)
Somewhat impacted career progression and opportunities	553 (26.7)	241 (27.4)	9 (22)
Difficult to gauge whether it did or did not	466 (22.5)	170 (19.3)	13 (13.7)
Did not impact career progression and opportunities	393 (18.9)	132 (15)	4 (9.8)
Not sure	195 (9.4)	94 (10.7)	2 (4.9)
Missing data	3	2	0

That one in two survey respondents indicated that DFV impacted their career progression either “significantly” or “somewhat” points to the short- and long-term employment impacts of DFV, including the subsequent financial implications of stymied career progression and reduced opportunities. Women’s financial autonomy is a key enabler to their safety, with research documenting that women who are financially independent are more likely to be able to leave an abuser and maintain that separation. DFV is a key factor impacting women’s low superannuation levels. Further, DFV remains the leading cause of homelessness in Australia (Equity Economics, 2021) — the Australian Journeys Home survey showed that individuals who had recently experienced physical and sexual violence were more likely to experience homelessness (Bevitt et al., 2015; see also: Lindhorst, Oxford & Gillmore, 2007). Women’s engagement in the workforce is instrumental in securing their financial autonomy. Women in secure employment are more likely to safely — and permanently — leave abusers (Williamson, Foley & Cartwright, 2019; Cortis & Bullen, 2015; Hughes & Brush, 2015).

As shown in Table 9 below, there were limited differences in the reported impacts of DFV on career progression among victim-survivors from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas of residence. While a higher percentage of victim-survivors surveyed from remote areas reported uncertainty in the impact that their experience of DFV had on their career progression, this finding is drawn from a significantly smaller total sample size.

Table 9: Impact of DFV on career progression by location of residence

	Metropolitan (n=1,810) n (%)	Regional (n=902) n (%)	Rural (n=270) n (%)	Remote (n=18) n (%)
Significantly impacted career progression and opportunities	407 (22.5)	242 (26.8)	61 (28.9)	7 (28.9)
Somewhat impacted career progression and opportunities	471 (26)	254 (28.2)	81 (30)	1 (5.6)
Difficult to gauge whether it did or did not	410 (22.7)	180 (20)	58 (21.5)	3 (16.7)
Did not impact career progression and opportunities	338 (18.7)	145 (16.1)	43 (15.9)	3 (16.7)
Not sure	181 (10)	79 (8.8)	27 (10)	4 (22.2)
Missing data	3 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	0	0

Victim-survivors utilised the open-text questions to describe how DFV impacted their workplace experiences, career progression and opportunities. As some victim-survivors shared:

"I could not do my job, I quitted. I lost sense of purpose."

"I left my job and he told me I was useless and would never get another job. He rubbished my attempts to apply for other jobs until I just stopped. Then he had control of all the money."

"I changed career path whilst the domestic and family violence was occurring and it made it harder to be re-employed."



The study found that First Nations survey respondents were significantly more likely to report that DFV had significantly impacted their career progression and work opportunities. Of the 310 survey respondents who identified as First Nations and responded to this question, 44 per cent (n=137) selected that DFV had significantly impacted their career progression and opportunities, and a further 24.5 per cent (n=76) selected that DFV had somewhat impacted their career progression and opportunities. As three First Nations survey respondents reflected:

"I was depressed and didn't have the motivation to move on. Felt like I was stuck."

"I still feel anxious when applying for new jobs due to this experience and feel hyper-sensitive when starting new jobs."

"If I were to seek alternative employment my abuser would definitely know as he would always have an eye out for me. Are usually wouldn't be allowed to go outside without him either attending with me or calling me or messaging me within every few minutes. This would make it extremely hard for me to find alternative employment as I usually would not be able to leave the house. Even if I were to get a new job usually my abuser would either decline most job Offers"

The impact of DFV on career progression and opportunities increased substantially dependent on the number of disabilities that survey respondents identified as having. As shown in Table 10 below, as the presence and co-occurrence of disabilities increased, so too did the likelihood that the survey respondents would report a "significant" or "somewhat" impact of DFV on their career progression and opportunities.

Table 10: Impact on career progression by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities

	Identified as having no disability (n=1,596) n (%)	Identified as having one disability (n=808) n (%)	Identified as having two disabilities (n=315) n (%)	Identified as having three disabilities (n=159) n (%)	Identified as having four or more disabilities (n=74) n (%)
Significantly impacted career progression and opportunities	246 (15.4)	225 (27.8)	119 (37.80)	67 (42.1)	51 (68.9)
Somewhat impacted career progression and opportunities	399 (25)	231 (28.6)	82 (26)	61 (28.4)	13 (17.6)
Difficult to gauge whether it did or did not	390 (24.4)	179 (22.2)	53 (16.8)	14 (8.8)	4 (5.4)
Did not impact career progression and opportunities	376 (23.6)	98 (12.1)	35 (11.1)	12 (7.5)	2 (2.7)
Not sure	181 (11.3)	74 (9.2)	26 (8.3)	5 (3.1)	4 (5.4)
Missing data	4 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	0	0	0

The fact that nearly 70 per cent of survey respondents who identified as having four or more disabilities reported that their experience of DFV “significantly” impacted their career progression and opportunities highlights the critical need for workplaces to ensure family violence supports are accessible and tailored to meet the needs of employees with a range of disabilities. While 23.6 per cent of survey respondents with no identified disability reported that DFV “did not” impact their career progression and opportunities, less than three per cent of survey respondents with four or more types of disabilities selected this option. Additional research is required to better understand the specific experiences of employees with co-occurring disabilities, and to ensure that all DFV workplace support packages evolve to best support their needs and ameliorate the significant impact of DFV on their career trajectories.

Impact of DFV on employment status

In addition to DFV’s significant impact on career progression and opportunities, more than one in three survey respondents reported that experiencing DFV negatively impacted their employment status (38.19%, n=1,142). Specifically, in response to the multiple-choice question, “How did your experience of domestic and family violence impact your employment status?”, respondents selected:

- I needed to change jobs and my experience of DFV was an instrumental factor. (14.1%, n=421).
- I was unemployed and my experience of DFV was an instrumental factor. (10.6%, n=317).
- I am unemployed and my experience of DFV is an instrumental factor. (8.3%, n=248).
- I am underemployed and my experience of DFV is an instrumental factor. (5.22%, n=156).
- I maintained employment throughout DFV and remain in the same job. (54.2%, n=1621).



As Table 11 shows, 12 per cent of men surveyed explained that they are currently unemployed and identified DFV as an instrumental factor. Seven per cent of women surveyed reported that they are currently unemployed and identified DFV as an instrumental factor. Interestingly, 51 per cent of men and 56 per cent of women surveyed reported that they maintained employment throughout their experience of DFV and remain in the same job. These findings are important as they lend further weight to understandings of the ways that DFV impacts a victim-survivor's capacity to attend, meaningfully engage in, fulfil the relevant duties of and advance in their career. Victim-survivors' responses to this question confirms the ways in which DFV victimisation can lead to employees having to leave or change jobs or risk employment termination.

Table 11: Impact on employment status by gender identity

	Women (n=2,074) n (%)	Men (n=879) n (%)
I was unemployed — DFV was an instrumental factor	203 (9.8)	110 (12.5)
I am unemployed — DFV is an instrumental factor	140 (6.8)	103 (11.7)
I am underemployed — DFV is an instrumental factor	98 (4.7)	54 (6.1)
I maintained employment throughout DFV and remain in the same job	1,151 (55.5)	447 (50.9)
I needed to change jobs — DFV was an instrumental factor	305 (14.7)	107 (12.2)
Other	172 (8.3)	53 (6.0)
Missing data	5	5

When the victim-survivor's location of residence was taken into consideration, similar impacts on employment status were reported among survey respondents living in metropolitan, regional and rural locations. While the total survey sample of respondents was considerably smaller for victim-survivors living in remote settings, the impacts of DFV on their employment status was heightened. Almost one in three survey respondents from a remote residence reported that DFV was an instrumental factor in their current or prior unemployment.

Table 12: Impact on employment status by location of residence

	Metropolitan (n=1,810) n (%)	Regional (n=902) n (%)	Rural (n=270) n (%)	Remote (n=18) n (%)
I was unemployed — DFV was an instrumental factor	187 (10.3)	102 (11.3)	25 (9.3)	3 (16.7)
I am unemployed — DFV is an instrumental factor	136 (7.5)	78 (8.6)	31 (11.5)	3 (16.7)
I am underemployed — DFV is an instrumental factor	89 (4.9)	46 (5.1)	20 (7.4)	1 (5.6)
I maintained employment throughout DFV and remain in same job	1,022 (56.5)	469 (52)	124 (45.9)	5 (27.8)
I needed to change jobs — DFV was an instrumental factor	229 (12.7)	140 (15.5)	47 (17.4)	5 (27.8)
Other	139 (7.7)	66 (7.3)	22 (8.1)	1 (5.6)
Missing data	8 (0.4)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.4)	0

First Nations survey respondents were significantly more likely to report that their employment status was impacted by their experience of DFV. Only 38 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=118) reported that they had maintained employment throughout their experience of DFV and remained in the same job. 23 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=72) identified that DFV had played a role in past unemployment and 18.4 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=57) selected that DFV was “instrumental” in their current unemployment.

Table 13: Impact on employment status by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities

	Identified as having no disability (n=1,596) n (%)	Identified as having one disability (n=808) n (%)	Identified as having two disabilities (n=315) n (%)	Identified as having three disabilities (n=159) n (%)	Identified as having four or more disabilities (n=74) n (%)
I was unemployed — DFV was an instrumental factor	75 (4.7)	120 (14.9)	58 (18.4)	44 (27.7)	16 (21.6)
I am unemployed — DFV is an instrumental factor	60 (3.8)	91 (11.3)	52 (16.5)	27 (17)	16 (21.6)
I am underemployed — DFV is an instrumental factor	70 (4.4)	44 (5.4)	21 (6.7)	13 (8.2)	6 (8.1)
I maintained employment throughout DFV and remain in the same job	1,014 (63.5)	392 (48.5)	115 (36.5)	53 (33.3)	18 (24.3)
I needed to change jobs — DFV was an instrumental factor	233 (14.6)	107 (13.2)	44 (14)	15 (9.4)	13 (17.6)
Other	139 (8.7)	54 (6.7)	23 (7.3)	4 (2.5)	5 (6.8)
Missing data	5 (0.3)	0	2 (0.6)	3 (1.9)	0

Of the 74 survey respondents who identified as having four or more disabilities, more than one in five reported that DFV was an instrumental factor in their current unemployment, and one in five cited DFV as an instrumental factor in having been unemployed at an earlier time. As a key comparison, fewer than one in 20 respondents who identified as not having a disability cited DFV as an instrumental factor for current or former unemployment. Notably, the likelihood of maintaining employment throughout an experience of DFV reduced as the co-occurrence of disabilities increased, highlighting the critical need to ensure that employees with multiple disabilities are provided with additional workplace supports to maintain their employment. These results highlight that for the First Nations victim-survivors surveyed and for the respondents who identified as having numerous disabilities, DFV had specific implications for their employment status.

In the open-ended survey responses provided below, respondents elaborated on how DFV impacted their employment status. Three key trends emerged. First, respondents emphasised that DFV negatively impacted their mental health, which in turn led to their disengagement from the workforce. As one survey respondent explained:

“I ended up having a total breakdown (later diagnosed as PTSD) and was forced to leave my job.”

Other victim-survivors who responded to this question similarly reflected:

"I chose to leave my job as I felt I wasn't mentally stable enough to complete it the way it needed to be done."

"I could no longer work at all I could not do my job, I quitted [sic]. I lost sense of purpose."

"I lost my job because I was unable to keep working."

"I was feeling so down I just didn't want to work anymore."

A second key theme that emerged from respondents' descriptions highlights the way in which DFV impacted their confidence and sense of self-worth. Numerous respondents outlined how DFV diminished their performance, motivation and faith in their own competency. As two respondents described:

"I left my job and he told me I was useless and would never get another job. He rubbished my attempts to apply for other jobs until I just stopped. Then he had control of all the money."

"I was underemployed and my experience of domestic and family violence was an instrumental factor. I am currently employed full time, however still lack the mental stability to plan for the future."

Thirdly, many respondents emphasised that their experiences of DFV led to long-term exclusion from the workforce. These reflections reveal not only the challenge for victim-survivors to stay in the same job while experiencing DFV, but also the significant challenges they face in retaining or securing employment during and following experiences of DFV. As one survey respondent explained:

"I change[d] jobs and was unemployed for a long time. The experience I had was partially responsible for not finding new employment I changed career path whilst the domestic and family violence was occurring and it made it harder to be re-employed."

This challenge was particularly pronounced for victim-survivors who also had primary caring responsibilities. As these respondents shared, both DFV and caring responsibilities played a role in their initial decision to withdraw from the workplace as well as their ability to re-enter the workplace. As one survey respondent reflected:

"I've had 4 children now and been out of the workforce for 10 years; I'm trying to re-enter but its hard with elevated anxiety now, and of course no recent experience."

It is significant that respondents who identified as First Nations as well as those who identified as having four or more types of disabilities reported that DFV more significantly impacted their employment status than respondents who were neither First Nations nor self-identified as experiencing four or more disabilities. The additional impacts experienced by these cohorts are not produced by a straightforward co-existence of both aspects of their identity (being both a victim-survivor of DFV and First Nations, or being both a victim-survivor of DFV and having four or more disabilities). Further research is needed to ascertain the specific ways in which these multiple aspects of identity intersect to heighten the impacts of DFV on employment status. As American legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989: 140) put it, "The intersectional experience is greater than the sum of its parts."

Impact of DFV on seeking new employment

Building on the analysis above, the survey instrument also invited respondents to describe how DFV impacted their ability to seek new employment. These results are particularly important given the volume of victim-survivors who described having had to leave their employment during their experience of DFV. 40 per cent of survey respondents indicated that DFV impacted their ability to seek new employment, with 20.57 per cent (n=617) of survey respondents indicating that DFV “significantly impacted their ability to seek new employment”, and 19.31 per cent (n=579) indicating that DFV “somewhat impacted their ability to seek new employment”. Of the remaining survey respondents, 21 per cent selected that they were not looking for new employment, and 22 per cent identified that they were “not sure” or “found it difficult to gauge” “whether DFV impacted their ability to seek new employment or not”.



As Australia’s new National Plan to end Violence against Women and Children embeds a focus on supporting the recovery of victim-survivors, these findings are essential to understanding the workplace supports needed to support the financial recovery and autonomy of victim-survivors. Such supports are needed not only during a victim-survivors’ experience, but also critically following their separation from an abuser to ensure that they do not experience exclusion from paid employment moving forward.

Part 2: Experiences of Domestic and Family Violence during Work Hours

Research has shown that perpetrators engage in workplace disruption or *work interference strategies* to further their abuse and coercively control the victim-survivor (Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2006). The survey asked respondents whether their abuser ever used workplace interference strategies. The following behaviours were offered as clarifying examples: “This may include making it difficult for you to get to work, phoning you at work, arriving at your workplace unexpectedly or harassing colleagues at your workplace.” Respondents were also invited to identify specific behaviours perpetrators had used to interfere with their working lives as well as how it impacted them.



This section of the report presents the findings from this component of the survey. The analysis first explores the rate at which victim-survivor respondents reported experiencing workplace interference, then the types of workplace interference they had experienced and, finally, the ways in which they believed the abusive behaviour had impacted them.

Perpetrator workplace interference strategies

Nearly 50 per cent of the survey respondents had experienced workplace interference strategies at some point during their experience of DFV. For 14.4 per cent of respondents, this happened always or often (n=436), and for 34 per cent of respondents, interference strategies had been used by the perpetrator “sometimes” (n=1,020). As one victim-survivor explained:

“By contacting me constantly at work I felt on edge and constant checking my phone which caused prob some in my performance.”

Tellingly, even among those survey respondents who had never experienced workplace interference by their perpetrator, the fear that they may do so was evident. 12 per cent of survey respondents selected that they hadn’t experienced workplace interference strategies but were “worried they would” (n=360).

Though there remains among some employers a misconception that the workplace does not relate to DFV, for almost half the survey respondents, DFV did not incidentally or coincidentally impact their workplace experience. Instead, work was a location of the abuse. These findings illustrate a significant connection between the workplace and DFV, and also build further knowledge on the way in which workplaces can be utilised by perpetrators to extend the realm of their abuse over a partner. There has been minimal research in Australia and internationally exploring the distinct reasons why perpetrators utilise the victim-survivor’s workplace as a site for their abuse. In this study, one victim-survivor described their abusive partner’s utilisation of workplace interference strategies as “sabotage”. This term is useful as it aptly captures a range of ways perpetrator workplace interference might impact a victim-survivor. These tactics can sabotage a victim-survivor’s access to employment, their financial independence, and their reputation and credibility within the workplace.

There were a number of survey respondents who had never experienced workforce interference by their perpetrator but explained that they were worried that they might. This finding was illuminating in that it reveals the way(s) in which DFV can impact the mindset of victim-survivors: even if a perpetrator is not actively engaging in abuse during work hours or at the site of work, the respondents were “worried” that they could. As such, workplace interference *per se* need not occur in order for the workplace experience to be interfered with. As two victim-survivors described:

“Couldn’t do my work, I’d always be looking around the corner to see if my abuser was there I had sweat all around my collar I felt scared and intense to be here”

“Being afraid all the time that they would escalate things and get me fired when I needed the money”

The high number of survey respondents who either experienced or feared they would experience workplace interference strategies is perhaps unsurprising among this sample when considered against the earlier findings that 66 per cent of respondents reported that DFV impacted their ability to concentrate, 41 per cent reported that it impacted their productivity and 35 per cent reported that it impacted their quality of work.

Types of perpetrator workplace interference

Interference in getting to work

31 per cent of the survey respondents who had experienced perpetrator workplace interference reported that their perpetrator had stopped them from getting to work (n=455). As two survey respondents described:

“He hid my bus tickets keycards, purse keys etc made me look like I was unreliable I had anxiety all the time I was always on edge. I was unable to continue to work there. I withdrew into unemployment.”

“my abuser would retaliate by taking away things like my phone and would refuse to drive/let me go to my work.”

Interfering with an individual’s ability to attend their workplace or concomitant obligations — either entirely and/or punctually — can contribute to their short- and long-term stress and anxiety, make them appear unreliable, and thus influence how they are perceived by colleagues and supervisors. Each of these impacts can have substantive implications for the security of a victim-survivor’s employment and may culminate in them leaving, or being asked to leave, their job. Importantly, such interference was not only experienced by those victim-survivors who were required to physically attend their workplace. Some survey respondents reported that their abusers stopped them accessing the materials needed to access their work remotely or complete their tasks (37.77%, n=550). Given that COVID-19 restrictions radically changed working patterns and led to an unprecedented number of employees working remotely, the unique ways and degree to which a perpetrator can interfere with an individual’s ability to work from home warrants further investigation. This will remain the case as the trend towards hybrid work teams combining in the office and work-from-home allocations continue subsequent to COVID-19 restrictions.

While there is a growing body of research documenting how the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted DFV for victim-survivors in Australia (see: Inter alia, Boxall & Morgan, 2021; Pfitzner, Fitz-Gibbon & True, 2022), there is minimal research which has specifically examined how experiences of DFV has impacted upon a victim-survivor’s ability to safely and effectively work remotely during this period of time.

Conducting abuse via phone during work hours

More than one in two survey respondents who had experienced workplace interference identified that the perpetrator abused them by phone during work hours (51.85%, n=755). Victim-survivors explained that this abusive tactic negatively impacted their focus, ability to complete the tasks required as part of their job and their general feelings of safety at work. As numerous survey respondents described:

“[my] abuser would sometimes ring me at work to check up on me and ask who I was talking to as to why it took so long to answer the phone.”

“My abuser would text me constantly while I was at work to make sure I wasn’t cheating on them. It made me so on edge, dreading and anticipating the next message. It added to my stress levels and made focusing on my job harder.”

“By contacting me constantly at work I felt on edge and constant checking my phone which caused prob some in my performance.”

“Constant disruptions at my work place Constant distraction was an impact to my productivity. Constant message and phone calls distracting and unable to concentrate Constant phone calls and verbal abuse Constant pressure on my mobile and the office phone.”

Survey respondents described how the perpetrator’s continual phoning during work hours was often one of many workplace interference strategies, ultimately affecting how managers and supervisors perceived their performance. As one victim-survivor described:

“my boss gave me warnings about my partner phoning all the time. I was often late 4 work as my ex-partner would hide my car keys and phone. I couldn’t concentrate and had to hide my bruises.”

In one instance, the victim-survivor employee was working on a phone line as part of her job and she reported that the abuser would regularly engage this phone line. Communication interference strategies were not just limited to abusive phone calls. Some respondents reported that their perpetrator would target them by whatever means possible, even in public spaces. One survey respondent explained that as she worked in an open space where customers were free to roam alongside employees, and the perpetrator would appear “pretending to be a customer”. As she described:

“He would call up and ask weird questions pretending to be a customer, show up upon closing and wait ... would come and chat with my colleagues while I was busy with clients and then force me to go outside with him to “chat” where he would remind me he could check up on me anytime.”

Indeed, a significant number of victim-survivors explained that perpetrators used a range of platforms and interfaces to exert control over them during work hours.

Physically appearing at victim-survivors’ workplace

Another commonly experienced workplace interference strategy was perpetrators appearing at the workplace. Survey respondents frequently reported that their perpetrators physically presented at the workplace. 30 per cent of survey respondents who had experienced DFV workplace interference selected that the abuser had physically presented at their workplace (30.43%, n=443). These survey respondents were asked about the frequency with which the abuser presented at the workplace. Of those respondents who answered this question, the study found:



- 51 per cent selected that their abuser “sometimes” presented at their workplace (n=127).
- 29.6 per cent selected that their abuser “often” presented at their workplace (n=80).
- 7.4% per cent selected that their abuser “always” presented at their workplace (n=20).
- 12 per cent selected that they abuser had “once” presented at their workplace (n=33).

Survey respondents utilised the open-ended question space to elaborate on the experience of their perpetrator appearing at their workplace. Most respondents noted that this tactic significantly impacted their sense of wellbeing and focus at work, reporting that they felt “anxious”, “on edge”, “worried”, “distracted” and “ashamed” while at work. Many victim-survivors reported spending a

majority of their time at work worried about whether the perpetrator “might” physically appear at the workplace or what their perpetrator might or “could do”. As two survey respondents explained:

“It’s embarrassing and made me constantly on edge. When he showed up at the workplace unannounced I froze and I was shocked and couldn’t complete work for a little while after that.”

“[my] boss could tell I was distracted... I was ashamed when my partner showed up to my workplace to make sure I was there.”

Perpetrators appearing at the workplace constituted a form of intimidation for the victim-survivor as well as their colleagues. 18 per cent of survey respondents stated that their abuser harassed their colleagues (n=259) upon presentation. As one survey participant explained:

“My abuser would come and sit in the restaurant and just watch me and make my staff feel uncomfortable.”

In addition to physically presenting at the workplace, perpetrators were described by many respondents as exhibiting behaviours consistent with definitions of stalking. For instance, 8.6 per cent of survey respondents noted that the abuser was having things delivered to their workplace (n=125). This included sending gifts (such as flowers) to the workplace, which was experienced as an especially intimidating tactic in instances after the victim-survivor had sought to end the relationship. One participant explained that the gifts the perpetrator sent to her workplace was a manipulation tactic intended to make her colleagues to view him favourably:

“He would deliver gifts at my work which made my colleagues praise him to me which made me believe he was not so bad.”

Such behaviours are well documented among domestic abusers, where perpetrators position themselves in highly favourable lights among the family, friends and colleagues of the victim-survivors in order to discredit any disclosures of victimisation they may make.

The impact of perpetrator workplace interference

Survey respondents were invited to describe how the perpetrator’s workplace interference impacted them. Many victim-survivors noted that it interfered with their focus and ability to complete their duties, as well as how they were perceived by colleagues and/or supervisors. In the open text responses, endless respondents used the words “upsetting”, “ashamed”, “awkward” and “embarrassed” to describe how DFV impacted their workplace experience. One respondent eloquently described the multitude of emotions the workplace interference had:

“Made me feel angry and paranoid thinking they were going to turn up at my work or watch me when I finish work and me feel intimidated while trying to work, and it scared me knowing that I would never be able to escape him [m]ade me feel unprofessional and drew attention to me. Made me look like a bad worker and making me look like slack to other workers. I’d be late to work and it would cause problems with me with management. Made me scared and uncomfortable Made me scared as I needed to earn an income to support my children Made me scared to go to work Made me stressed about being able to get to work.”

The most frequently reported impact by survey respondents was a sense of embarrassment and shame that the workplace interference, and DFV more broadly, was taking place. As numerous survey respondents described:

“It made me very unsure of myself and self-conscious. I always felt I had to do more because of [it]”

“It was incredibly embarrassing, and I was so young that I didn’t even know I was experiencing DV so didn’t know there were avenues for asking for help. It was just awkward and embarrassing.”

“It was scary and uncomfortable It was so very embarrassing indeed It was stressful and highly embarrassing It was stressful. I got anxiety. Even though my manager was very supportive. I felt embarrassed. It was uncomfortable & intimidating.”

“It was very distracting and did not make me want to work It was very embarrassing as he usually turned up when he was drunk do at his most vulgar and abusive It was very embarrassing for me when she showed up to yell at me in front of my staff. It was very embarrassing, as I tried to cover up his behaviour. I lied to my colleagues as to how my injuries were sustained. it was very embarrassing, my manager hated the disruptions and felt I was unreliable It was very hard.”



It is important to recognise that perpetrators typically target each and every aspect of victim-survivors’ lives. In effect, the perpetrator divests the victim-survivor of not only the right to privacy, but activities, space and networks that are straightforwardly their own. This means that they have less opportunities in which they can disclose what they are experiencing, further their safety, and feel autonomous. This impacts their performance and wellbeing at work. In order to be productive and functional at work, employees need a base level sense of confidence and emotional wellbeing. As one victim-survivor described, the perpetrator’s workplace interference strategies “cause[d] anxiety, sadness, reduced[d] her work productivity”, decreased her “confidence” and led her to “self-doubt”. As was the case in many responses, the impacts of DFV — including experiences of self-doubt, decreases in self-confidence, anxiety and sadness — specifically impacted victim-survivors’ work productivity and, subsequently, their performance. It is essential for workplaces to recognise that even in instances where the perpetrator may not have directly set out to specifically impede the victim-survivors’ ability to work, the impacts of DFV operate so as to make engagement in the workplace difficult for victim-survivors potentially on a day-to-day basis.

The experiences of victim-survivors who work alongside their abuser

“As a joint business owner with the abuser, I had no real assistance. I have since tried to remove his presence from the business. I was a sole trader and stupidly let my partner in on the business.”

As captured in the victim-survivor respondent quote above, almost one in five (19%) survey respondents worked in the same workplace as their abuser. As shown in Table 14 below, men surveyed were more likely to report working at the same workplace as their abuser than women and non-binary survey respondents.

Table 14: Where the abuser is employed at the same workplace

	All respondents (n=2,999) n (%)	Women (n=2,074) n (%)	Men (n=879) n (%)	Non-binary respondents (n=41) n (%)
No, the abuser did not work at the same workplace	2,417 (80.5)	1,785 (86.1)	597 (67.9)	30 (73.2)
Yes, the abuser did work at the same workplace	582 (19.4)	288 (13.9)	281 (32)	11 (26.8)
Missing data	3	1	1	0

The study found that First Nations survey respondents as well as survey respondents who identified as having three and four or more disabilities were significantly more likely to be employed in the same workplace as their abuser. Specifically, just under half of the First Nations survey respondents (n=151, 48.7%) reported that their abuser worked at the same workplace. Likewise, 50 per cent of survey respondents who identified as experiencing four or more disabilities and 54 per cent of survey respondents who identified as experiencing three disabilities worked in the same workplace as their abuser.

582 survey respondents reported that they worked alongside their abuser in the same workplace. These respondents were then asked, “What role did/does your abuser have in your workplace?” 62 per cent of those who responded identified that the abuser was in a position of power above them in the workplace. This incredible result includes 33 per cent (n=192) who described their abuser as their “employer” and 29.4 per cent (n=171) who described their abuser as their “direct manager”. This is particularly concerning given the range of ways in which the workplace hierarchy can further reinforce the pre-existing power imbalance in the relationship and facilitate further opportunities for abuse and control. In one instance, a respondent explained that her perpetrator’s position of authority in the workplace insured him against any material consequence and left her unsupported. She shared that “HR did not discipline the perpetrator, he remained as my direct supervisor.” These findings have important implications for employee safety, duty of care and the provision of supports. They also further blur the often-assumed boundaries between the private and professional realms of a person’s life.

The heightened risk experienced by victim-survivors who work for or under their abuser within the workplace hierarchy was particularly notable among survey respondents with co-occurring disabilities. 46.5 per cent of survey respondents who identified as having three disabilities and 49 per cent of survey respondents who identified as having four or more disabilities reported that their abuser was or is their current employer.

Working alongside the abuser — even if the perpetrator does not hold a position of power over the victim-survivor — means the victim-survivor has no respite from them. Within the broader survey sample, there were a number of respondents who shared in the open text comments that work functioned for them as a “safe haven” and even, in some cases, a welcome distraction during their experience of DFV. As two survey respondents described:

“My work was the only safe place and I really needed it to escape.”

“I used work as a means of escaping the domestic violence, so I felt that the domestic violence situation only motivated me to work more and see my colleagues.”

The first respondent captured above associates “work” with the idea of “escape”, as did a number of victim-survivors throughout the survey responses. The work-escape association is especially important to bear in mind given the fact that paid work can enable and facilitate literal escape from abusive environments. As such, these findings seek to inform why workplaces must proactively connect victim-survivors with financial resources and support that address their safety and recovery needs. Remaining in paid work is an instrumental factor in facilitating a victim-survivor’s safe exit from an abusive relationship. However, it is also

important to bear in mind that the prospect of work as a “distraction” and/or “escape” is unavailable to those working alongside their abusers, and perhaps even impossible for those working beneath their perpetrator within the workplace hierarchy. Further research is needed to understand the particular challenges that arise for employees experiencing DFV who work alongside their abuser, and who are employed in small businesses where their ability to access DFV supports at work may be more limited.

Part 3: Disclosing Domestic and Family Violence at Work

For victim-survivors of DFV, deciding whether or not to disclose to members of their workplace that they are experiencing DFV is a significant decision. There is limited research in Australia and internationally examining the patterns of DFV disclosure in workplace settings and, subsequently, the adequacy of the workplace responses to a disclosure. Such knowledge is vital to informing the development and implementation of DFV-informed workplace training and the implementation of workplace supports for victim-survivor employees. This section of the report focuses on victim-survivors’ experiences of disclosing DFV at work.

Rates of disclosure in the workplace



The survey found that:

- 30 per cent of survey respondents told someone at work they were experiencing DFV (29.96%, n=809).
- 73 per cent of survey respondents did not tell anyone at work that they were experiencing DFV (73.04%, n=2192).

It is significant that the majority of victim-survivors in this study did not tell anyone at work that they were experiencing DFV. This is particularly striking given that a majority of survey respondents reported that DFV impacted their work.

The number of victim-survivors who reported that they disclosed they were experiencing DFV in their workplace decreased significantly for those in insecure employment. Research has long documented the shortcomings of insecure and precarious employment, noting that “insecurity” refers to forms of employment where there is uncertainty in relation to hours of work available, pay, job continuation and permanency of a role (see: Inter alia, Working Women’s Centre, 2021). Notably, in Australia more than 20 per cent of the workforce is estimated to be insecurely employed (ABS, 2020, 2021). In an earlier study, Crowne and others (2011) found that women who experienced violence were more likely to be concurrently experiencing unstable employment and lower levels of employment six years later.

In this study, only 17.5 per cent of survey respondents who were employed on a casual basis told someone at work they were experiencing DFV. As shown in Table 15 below, this compares to 30.8 per cent of survey respondents who were securely employed in either a full-time or part-time capacity. This finding is perhaps unsurprising given research that has documented the ways in which job insecurity further entrenches an unequal power dynamic within a relationship and creates additional barriers for victim-survivors to leave an abusive relationship (Working Women’s Centre, 2021). Women in Australia are overrepresented among casual employees, a trend that has been exacerbated since the onset of the pandemic. Globally, women who experience DFV are not only usually employed in higher numbers in part-time and casual work, but they can also be earning up to 60 per cent less than women who do not experience any form of DFV (World Bank, 2015).

Table 15: Rates of disclosure by security of employment

	Casual employment (n=441) n (%)	Secure employment — including ongoing part-time and ongoing full- time roles (n=1751) n (%)
Told someone at work they were experiencing DFV	77 (17.5)	540 (30.8)
Did not tell anyone at work they were experiencing DFV	364 (82.5)	1211 (69.2)

In relation to this finding, it is significant that the draft Commonwealth legislation to introduce 10 days of paid domestic and family violence leave extends to casual employees. This is particularly important given that most workplaces do not currently offer casually employed staff other paid leave provisions, such as sick, annual and parental leave (Working Women's Centre, 2021: 8). The draft bill represents a significant step forward in recognising the need to provide workplace supports for employees experiencing DFV regardless of their employment type. The provision of DFV support to casual employees may engender positive cultural change that enables more victim-survivors to disclose their abuse in the workplace.

Men surveyed reported slightly higher levels of workplace disclosures than women and non-binary survey respondents. As shown in Table 16 below, 34 per cent of men surveyed disclosed their experience of DFV to anyone at work, while 24 per cent of women and 26.8 per cent of non-binary respondents disclosed their experience of DFV to someone in the workplace.

Table 16: Rates of disclosure by gender identity

	Women (n=2,074) n (%)	Men (n=879) n (%)	Non-binary respondents (n=41) n (%)
Told someone at work they were experiencing DFV	498 (24)	299 (34)	11 (26.8)
Did not tell anyone at work they were experiencing DFV	1,576 (76)	580 (66)	30 (73.2)

Of the 310 First Nations survey respondents who provided information on disclosures, one in two victim-survivors who identified as First Nations had disclosed their experience of DFV to someone at work. This was significantly higher than rates of disclosure among survey respondents who did not identify as First Nations, where only one in four survey respondents reported having disclosed their experience of DFV to someone at work.

An analysis of rates of disclosure by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities revealed that survey respondents who identified as having three or more disabilities were more likely to tell someone at work that they were experiencing DFV. As shown in Table 17 below, just over one in two survey respondents who had three or more disabilities disclosed their experience of DFV, compared to under one in five survey respondents who identified as having no disability.

Table 17: Rates of disclosure by presence and co-occurrence of disabilities

	Identified as having no disability (n=1,596) n (%)	Identified as having one disability (n=808) n (%)	Identified as having two disabilities (n=315) n (%)	Identified as having three disabilities (n=159) n (%)	Identified as having four or more disabilities (n=74) n (%)
Told someone at work they were experiencing DFV	292 (18.3)	249 (30.8)	122 (38.7)	87 (54.7)	42 (56.8)
Did not tell anyone at work they were experiencing DFV	1,304 (81.7)	559 (69.2)	193 (61.3)	72 (45.3)	32 (43.2)

Rates of disclosure within the workplace were similar among survey respondents from metropolitan, regional and remote areas, where nearly three in four surveyed victim-survivors reported not telling anyone at work they were experiencing DFV. As shown in Table 18 below, victim-survivors from rural areas were slightly more likely to report disclosing their experiences of DFV to their workplaces, with one in three survey respondents from a rural area of residence reporting a workplace disclosure.

Table 18: Rates of disclosure by area of residence

	Metropolitan (n=1,810) n (%)	Regional (n=902) n (%)	Rural (n=270) n (%)	Remote (n=18) n (%)
Told someone at work they were experiencing DFV	480 (26.5)	235 (26.1)	89 (33)	4 (22.2)
Did not tell anyone at work they were experiencing DFV	1,330 (73.5)	667 (73.9)	181 (67)	14 (77.8)
Missing data	0	0	0	0

Though a victim-survivor's choice to refrain from disclosing their DFV experience to anyone at work might be due to a number of reasons, victim-survivors' qualitative responses suggested that a sense of shame and negative workplace cultures were instrumental in their decisions to not disclose their abuse. As captured in the following responses:

"A lot of the time I was too ashamed to ask for help or even admit to how serious it was so I wouldn't talk to people, even family, talking about it was so scary as if he found out he would kill me. I think I would have spoken freely to a stranger on the phone about it because they couldn't see me or even work with me."

"I just felt so ashamed and embarrassed. I didn't feel like I would be accepted if I spoke up."

For several victim-survivors, the decision not to disclose their experience of DFV at work was a deliberate strategy to ensure a separation between their work and private lives. As two victim-survivors described:

"I didn't seek support. It's not a situation you want to disclose to an employer. In my case I did everything to keep work and private life separate."

"I find my work a professional place and shouldn't be involving home life and I should get support elsewhere instead."

These findings demonstrate how perpetrators deploy interference strategies in order to dissolve boundaries between work and private lives. However, as shown in the above reflections, a number of victim-survivors outlined the desire, where possible, to ensure that their experiences of DFV did not become known at their places of work.

Who victim-survivors disclose to in the workplace

For those victim-survivors who did disclose their experiences of DFV at work, they were most likely to share with a “close colleague” as opposed to a manager. Indeed, the survey responses received showed that significantly fewer victim-survivors report their experience of DFV to a supervisor or manager. Specifically, this study found that of the survey respondents who disclosed their experiences of DFV within the workplace, the decision of who to disclose to was quite similar among men and women surveyed (as shown in Table 19 below). The two notable differences in disclosure patterns were that men and non-binary victim-survivors surveyed were twice as likely to report to a HR representative than women, and that non-binary respondents were more likely to report to a senior colleague who was not their manager.

Table 19: Who victim-survivors disclose to in the workplace by gender identity

	Men (n=299) n (%)	Women (n=498) n (%)	Non-binary respondents (n=11) n (%)
A close colleague	156 (52.2)	282 (56.6)	5 (45.5)
A senior colleague who is not my manager	12 (4)	9 (1.8)	2 (18.2)
Another colleague/team member	49 (16.4)	74 (14.9)	1 (9.1)
HR	30 (10)	22 (4.4)	1 (9.1)
My manager	45 (15.1)	94 (18.9)	2 (18.2)
Other	6 (2)	17 (3.4)	0
Missing	1	0	0

Similar levels of disclosure were evident among survey respondents in secure versus insecure employment. As shown in Table 20 below, the most common person that a victim-survivor reported disclosing to in the workplace across both categories was their close colleague. The notable difference was that employees who were casually employed were almost half as likely to report to an HR representative than survey respondents in secure employment, although in both cases the likelihood of disclosing to HR was rare.

Table 20: Who victim-survivors disclose to in the workplace by security of employment

	Casual (n=77) n (%)	Secure (ongoing full time and ongoing part time) (n=540) n (%)
A close colleague	45 (58.4)	306 (56.7)
A senior colleague who is not my manager	3 (3.9)	13 (2.4)
Another colleague/team member	11 (14.3)	78 (14.4)
HR	3 (3.9)	39 (7.2)
My manager	12 (15.6)	95 (17.6)
Other	3 (3.9)	9 (1.7)

Reflecting on their choice to disclose to a “close colleague”, some victim-survivors described the human support they sought. As three respondents described:

“I confided in [a] close work mate, they had no authority over the situation but they did look out for me.”

“I only disclosed my situation to a close friend that i worked with. I only spoke to a close friend / colleague regarding it. They could not offer any assistance and I did not ask for any I only told a close co-worker who I know kept my secret to herself, no one from my Team, HR or my Manager know of the experience I only told a close friend.”

“My colleagues in the workplace offered to help me. My colleagues made an effort to protect me and not disclose where I was if I was sheltering. My colleagues were a huge support to me. They had good advice and were someone I could speak to. My colleagues were extremely supportive and offered a shoulder to cry on and advice or assistance. When my boss found out he was sympathetic however he had less idea of how he could help/what to say.”

Reflecting on their decision to disclose to a close colleague, many victim-survivors explained that this choice often culminated in displays of friendship and/or support. As such, when disclosing to a colleague on “equal footing”, rather than a superior, surveyed victim-survivors did not describe seeking to engage the workplace’s formal support system (if there were any), but rather they described confiding in someone for the very purpose of seeking informal, interpersonal support. This is a valuable finding to reflect on when devising DFV workplace training. Employees should be trained around the principle that responding appropriately to reports of DFV does not exclusively entail connecting victim-survivors to formal support pathways. As the victim-survivors surveyed in this study reflected: a listening, compassionate ear is also a key element of an appropriate workplace response.

The fact that victim-survivors in this study sample were far more likely to disclose to someone on equal footing with them reinforces the need for comprehensive education and training on responding to DFV at all levels of the workplace. Although some disclosures occur at a managerial level and/or to members of the Human Resources team, this study found that they are far more likely to occur between close colleagues and team members. For this reason, it is essential that Australian workplaces prioritise whole-of-workforce training over training for managerial levels only. Responding to a disclosure of DFV can be a confronting experience for any member of the workplace, and it is essential that all Australian employees, regardless of their level and management responsibilities, are equipped to respond in a way that ensures the victim-survivor feels believed and validated, and also with an understanding of the support pathways specific to their workplace.

Workplace responses to disclosures of domestic and family violence

Of the 808 survey respondents who disclosed to someone at their workplace that they were experiencing DFV, 52 per cent of them described the workplace response as supportive (n=422). This is a positive result, and highlights that while workplaces in Australia certainly have significant work to undertake towards ensuring consistent DFV and trauma-informed responses to employees who disclose DFV, there are some positive practices already in place.



While it is positive that over half of the victim-survivors who participated in this survey reported a positive response following their disclosure, almost as many survey respondents described the response as either negative or were ambivalent about it. More than a quarter of respondents described their workplaces’ response as “neither supportive nor unsupportive” (26.49%, n=214), 8.5 per cent described the response as inconsistent — being “sometimes supportive, sometimes unsupportive” (n=69) — and nine per cent described the response as “unsupportive” (n=75). There were no significant differences in this study between

the likelihood that men and women employees would experience a positive or negative response to their workplace disclosure of DFV. Likewise, survey respondents who identified as First Nations reported the same rate of positive and negative responses to their disclosure as non-First Nations respondents. In the following sections, we explore victim-survivors' reflections on their experiences of negative and positive responses to disclosing their experiences of DFV at work.

Negative workplace responses to disclosures of domestic and family violence

Many of those survey respondents who disclosed their experience of DFV to their supervisors and/or managers reported negative and insensitive responses. One respondent explained that an "older manager" criticised both "how [she] worked and [her] personal life." As one respondent summarised: "No one seemed to care about me emotionally". Other survey respondents described a workplace atmosphere that left them feeling unsupported following their decision to disclose DFV:

"I don't think people in the workplace care about people who suffer the domestic and family violence."

"I explained my ex had followed me to my workplace, that I was afraid and they basically said there are two sides to every story and didn't care."

"nobody cared."

Common among respondents' reflections on negative workplace responses to their disclosures of DFV were descriptions of workplace responses that lacked understanding or empathy:

"[they] did not understand the position I was in."

"I briefly mentioned some things happening in my relationship, where my partner was emotionally manipulating me, how I'd gone to work hurt one day because he was angry and threatened me. My boss essentially gave me a dirty look and said I must have deserved it."

Multiple survey respondents explained that after disclosing to their workplaces, the significance of their experiences were played down, and in many cases that their colleagues suggest they be "strong" as a coping strategy.

"My manager told me to "toughen up""

"Don't worry, you will get over it. You seem to be very strong."

"My workplace did not validate my experiences and pretty much silenced me."

Supporting the fears of those respondents who did not disclose their experiences of DFV on the basis that it may affect their reputations within the workplace, multiple respondents who did disclose explained that the choice to do so led negatively impacted how they were perceived by colleagues and supervisors. As one victim-survivor explained:

"I kept my personal problems to myself and after a long time I couldn't cope so I approached my workplace and they dropped my hours and put me in a box which made my situation even more difficult than it already was. I resigned from the stress."

It is an incredibly significant choice for a victim-survivor to confide in a work colleague that they have experienced DFV. The way that the victim-survivor's colleague (and/or the workplace more broadly) responds to them is vitally important. If a victim-survivors' disclosure is met with attitudes of disbelief, minimisation or excuses for violence, the opportunity to connect them with support pathways can be lost. DFV-informed

workplace education is vital to ensure all members of a workplace not only understand that this is a crucial point of intervention, but they are also resourced so that they can understand how to respond appropriately.

Workplace DFV education should challenge the notion that help-seeking is associated with any form of weakness on the part of the victim-survivor. It is important that workplaces recognise the courage required to disclose and seek support. Suggesting that someone is suitably “strong” to manage it alone, or that they should “toughen up” as a strategy to cope with their experience of DFV, is an insufficient and dangerous response that fails to comprehend the seriousness of the DFV experience. Similarly, workplace education should emphasise that DFV can be an all-consuming event that impacts every facet of an individual’s life and is therefore impossible to “leave at home”. Given that workplaces recognise that illness and bereavement constitute legitimate interruptions to an employee’s capacity to work, DFV should not be viewed differently.

Workplaces should educate all levels of the workforce to respond appropriately to DFV disclosures — that is, with a trauma-informed lens. Ensuring consistently safe and appropriate responses to disclosures requires workplaces to implement a DFV policy that outlines the available supports to DFV victim-survivors both within and external to the workplace. The workplace must also ensure employee awareness regarding the existence of the DFV policy and familiarity with its content and prioritise education for all employees on the seriousness and complexity of DFV.

Positive workplace responses to disclosures of domestic and family violence

While many respondents described negative workplace responses, some survey respondents described how positive and even proactive workplace responses facilitated their disclosure. In some instances, victim-survivors described experiences where their supervisors had sensed something was amiss prior to their decision to disclosure, and had reached out to offer support. As two survey respondents described:

“They noticed bruises on my face and approached me. They helped me realise it’s not okay.”

“Upon noticing that my mood at work had changed, and that I was absent for a mental health day, my manager pulled me aside to chat. I confided in her and she supported me and informed me of confidential and free counselling session the workplace provides should I need someone to talk to.”

Some workplaces were practical in their responses to an employer’s disclosure of DFV, offering support alongside access to additional workplace security, access to counselling and, in one case, assistance with interstate transfers. As some victim-survivors explained, their workplaces offered them important supports subsequent to their disclosures, as captured in the following responses:

“When they found out they were supportive in many ways. The best was a photo of him was shown to all staff. If they seen him they were to let me know and if he was in Shop he would be [forcibly] escorted of the premises.”

“They offered counselling [and] a safe place [and] offered me a transfer to another location in order to allow me an opportunity to move to a different city [and be with family].”

“Ensured I was safe within the workplace. Offered additional security for to and from work if needed.”

“I explained to my manager what was happening and my plan to flee from WA to NSW. They secured me a transfer so I would still have an income to support myself and my son.”

As the above four reflections demonstrate, there are a range of different supports that workplaces can offer employees who disclose DFV to support their safety needs and ensure their ongoing access to the workplace. Given the wide spectrum of DFV experiences and the range of different ways that it can impact victim-

survivors, the provision of a suite of different workplace supports ensures that responses to a disclosure can be tailored to best meet the individual needs of that employee. While one workplace support might be effective and useful for one individual, it might not meet the needs of another (for example, we discuss the complexity of working-from-home provisions below in Section 4).

There is no one-size-fits-all workplace support for victim-survivors of DFV. In one instance, a survey respondent benefited from a flexible response that entailed altering their work schedule and duties, thus giving them time off to attend judicial matters and focus on their wellbeing. As this survey respondent described:

“my work was excellent- they provided le[e]way by allowing me time off to go to court, personal health days. Even though I am aware of the Employee Assistant Program, they made sure I knew of it. They decreased my workload a little as I was becoming exceptionally overwhelme[d] with smaller things in life. They would always have time to listening to the jumble that was my brain. they were wonderful.”

In addition to the practical workplace supports offered, survey respondents identified the benefits of a safe and compassionate working environment — and simply having someone to talk to. Indeed, numerous victim-survivors identified simply having a listening ear as instrumental in maintaining their wellbeing and safety. As captured in the following responses:



“Very accommodating and supportive. Felt safe at work very caring and supportive Very caring and would listen.”

“... made me feel not so alone. Made me feel it was a safe space to talk. Allowed me to stay strong and keep working to the best of my ability. Gave me a lot of moral support.”

“My manager was very sympathetic as she had gone through it in the past. She actually helped me leave the situation and then kept me safe until I was able to get on a plane and leave the state to start afresh somewhere else.”

“They were understanding when I wasn’t working as often as I had been. They supported me and were giving me options and trying to help me get out of my situation at home.”

These responses further highlight the importance of workplace culture and training to ensure that employees are equipped with the DFV and trauma-informed strategies required to respond to disclosures, no matter the employment level or setting in which they occur. While it is essential that workplaces offer DFV victim-survivors workplace supports, these are ultimately only one component of the necessary workplace developments. As the analysis in this section has shown, victim-survivors also described deriving great benefit from compassionate and kind human connection. A best-practice workplace response would offer a robust range of DFV workplace supports embedded within a compassionate and empathetic workplace culture.

Part 4: Workplace Policies and Responses to Domestic and Family Violence

DFV policies are instrumental in establishing an environment in which victim-survivors can remain engaged in the workforce (see: Inter alia, Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2021). Workplace supports are instrumental in securing victim-survivor safety and supporting recovery, particularly in supporting ongoing victim-survivor engagement and security in the workforce and, subsequently, continued workforce participation and financial independence. DFV workplace supports can be wide-ranging, including family violence leave provisions, workplace security and access to flexible work arrangements such as working from home, the option to change shift start and end times, and the option to relocate to a different workplace site. These supports may be available and listed within a workplace DFV policy or may be made available on a more informal individual basis for employees who come to the attention of the workplace as experiencing DFV.

This section of the report examines the degree to which surveyed victim-survivors in Australia had access to workplace supports during their experience of DFV. To do so, this section explores employee awareness of DFV policies and well as their experiences of accessing supports at work. The final section explores what workplace supports survey respondents described as desirable to support their safety and recovery needs.

Regarding employee awareness of the presence of DFV policies, one in four survey respondents were aware that their workplace had a DFV policy. Specifically, the survey found that:

- 26 per cent of survey respondents were aware that their workplace had a DFV policy.
- 30 per cent of survey respondents “did not believe” that their workplace had a DFV policy.
- 44 per cent of survey respondents were “not sure” if their workplace had a DFV policy.



It is important to remember that this survey sample comprises of employees who have all experienced DFV. As such, this is likely to be a sample of individuals with a greater awareness of DFV-related policies in the workplace. Yet still, nearly three in four victim-survivors surveyed either did not know whether their workplace offered DFV supports or believed that it did not. As the Commonwealth, state and territory governments renew their commitment to eliminating violence against women and child as part of the next National Plan (DSS, 2022), it is essential that they encourage a culture whereby Australian workplaces of all sizes are required to develop and implement DFV policies.

It is a positive finding that over a quarter of survey respondents were aware that they had access to a DFV policy (26.44%, n=793). Nevertheless, the mere presence of a DFV policy is insufficient: In supporting victim-survivors, the administration and operation of the leave policy is just as critical as the existence of the policy in the first place (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2021). The DFV policy must be promoted to all employees and embedded within a compassionate and gender-equitable workplace to be meaningful in practice.

When survey respondents were asked to select the workplace supports they had available to them, the results are similarly concerning. Survey respondents could select from a list of possible supports or select “other” and detail supports that were available to them but were not specifically listed on the survey (see: Appendix A for a copy of the survey instrument). In responding to this question, the most common responses were “No support” (30.69%, n=920) and “None of the above” (24.95%, n=748). In other words, for over a quarter of the workplaces in which victim-survivors were working while experiencing DFV, there were no policies or supports in place at the time. For these respondents, there were no workplace supports available that gave them respite from work, supported them to take leave from work to attend to DFV-related matters, or supported them to stay in their particular job or the workforce more generally. Findings such as these highlight the significant work that is still required across Australian workplaces to ensure that victim-survivors are supported in maintaining their employment during and following an experience of DFV. While instances of best practice have been widely celebrated in recent years, including, for example, the leadership of the

Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) in this space (CBA, 2019; Dikranian, 2022), there is much progress to be made in ensuring that DFV support policies become commonplace nationally.

The third most frequently selected option for survey respondents was that they had access to “non-family violence leave provisions (such as sick and carer’s leave)” (19.38%, n=581). Nearly one in five victim-survivors who had accessed DFV workplace supports selected this option. This figure is similarly concerning because it indicates that many of the victim-survivors had access to no DFV-specific workplace supports and when they did, these were generic supports made available to all employees. It is undesirable for victim-survivors to be required to use their sick leave, carer’s leave or compassionate leave for DFV-related matters and to support their safety and recovery needs. Employees who have experienced DFV still require access to sick and carer’s leave, just as any other employee might. In fact, the profound impact on their wellbeing — including physical injury and potential impacts on victim-survivors’ children and young people within the family unit — might actually mean that victim-survivors have a greater requirement for sick and carer’s leave than an employee who is not experiencing DFV.

The importance of paid DFV leave is increasingly recognised across Australia as a minimum expectation on workplaces to enable victim-survivors to take remunerated leave for DFV-related issues (ANROWS, 2019; Baird, McFerran & Wright, 2014; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2021; WGEA, 2021). Following the May 2022 decision of the 2021 Fair Work Commission’s review into DFV leave (Decision- [2022] FWCFB 2001), the Commonwealth Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Hon Tony Burke MP, has committed to overseeing the introduction of 10 days paid DFV leave nationally (Statement- [2022] FWCFB 152). That legislation is progressing through Federal Parliament at the time of this report’s publication.

Of the survey respondents to this study, seven per cent (n=212) had access to unpaid DFV leave and only 7.7 per cent (n=223) had access to paid DFV leave during their experience of DFV. This is an extremely low number and captures the lived reality that the provision of, and access to, DFV leave has as yet not been routinised across Australian workplaces.



Beyond leave provisions specifically, a small number of respondents identified accessing various flexible working arrangements during their experience of DFV. For example, nine per cent of survey respondents identified working-from-home arrangements as a workplace support that they had access to (8.81%, n=264). In addition, seven per cent of survey respondents were given the option to relocate to a different worksite (7.34%, n=220) if required for safety reasons. In research undertaken with victim-survivors to support the 2021 Australian FWC review, the need for flexible working arrangements was evidenced as critical to supporting safety and recovery needs (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2021). As the Commonwealth Government moves to introduce national paid DFV leave provisions, it will be essential to ensure these are implemented alongside an increase in the accessibility of flexible working arrangements for DFV victim-survivors.

In their open-text responses, many victim-survivors clearly articulated that they did not know if there was any support available to them at work, making them less likely to disclose their own victimisation. As several survey respondents explained:

“I am not sure as I never asked I am unaware of any but never asked I am unsure and will have to look into this I didn’t ask for any leave so not sure what was available I didn’t try to access I didn’t access any support as I don’t know if my workplace has them and I kept my abuse secret.”

“I don’t know ... I never spoke up I don’t know, I did not make any enquiries.”

“I never reported any issue at work in relation to my domestic violence situation and never

looked for support.”

“Not aware of what was available. Not right ...Not sur’ as I didn’t tell anyo’e, so wasn’t spoken to about any support system in place Not sure I didn’t ask for help.”

These findings demonstrate the ways in which victim-survivors are often reluctant to disclose to their workplace experiences of DFV and, as a result, the limited information available to them on the accessibility of DFV workplace supports. Disclosing DFV to a colleague and/or an employer will, in many instances, demand a certain degree of confidence that many perpetrators have set out to diminish in the victim-survivors. The findings from this study highlight the importance of promoting and making visible any DFV workplace supports that are available to employees, so as to lessen the reliance on employees to first disclose their own victimisation in order to be provided information on available supports. Furthermore, given the earlier findings from this research documenting employees’ reluctance to disclose their experience of DFV, the importance of workplace culture again comes to the fore. It is essential that any workplace supports for DFV victim-survivors are embedded within a compassionate workplace culture — one in which victim-survivors are not only aware of the available supports, but also feel safe and able to access those supports without fear of judgment and/or career reprimand.



Positive experiences of accessing support at work

A modest number of victim-survivors within this study reported positive experiences of seeking support for DFV from their workplace. While these responses sometimes felt few and far between, they do highlight the presence of supportive workplace practices across some Australian workplaces. Despite their infrequency, these reflections constitute an invaluable resource to discern what victim-survivors described as positive experiences of accessing support at work. With a view to enhancing understanding of how Australian workplaces can facilitate more positive experiences of help-seeking for victim-survivors, the following section analyses these reflections.

Two key themes emerged from the open-text responses of victim-survivors who had positive experiences of accessing support at work: The provision of genuine support and compassion from work colleagues, and flexibility from their employers. As two survey respondents described:

“I feel as though my workplace was super supportive my manager was understanding and accommodating to my needs.”

“I had all the support that i needed thanks to my caring family and work colleagues and my boss.”

Although neither respondent here specifies the specific supports they accessed or were offered, their responses indicate that the way in which their workplaces responded was significant. A human-centred response that prioritises kindness, discretion and dignity for the victim-survivor cannot be underestimated. Indeed, it is telling that the first respondent above notes that their manager was “accommodating to [her] needs”. Victim-survivors who reported an overall “positive” workplace response often noted the flexibility of the supports made available to them following their disclosures. As one survey respondent noted:

“I found that my workplace offered me everything I needed. They were incredibly flexible and provided me with so much help.”

This victim-survivor’s reflection supports the study’s earlier findings regarding the importance of flexible working arrangements and the provision of a suite of DFV workplace supports. There is no one workplace support that will meet the needs of all DFV victim-survivors. These findings reinforce the importance of listening carefully to victim-survivors and working collaboratively with them to ensure that they can access

support(s) that meet their unique needs. And, as always, the importance of workplace culture remains a key factor: These conversations are unlikely to occur at all — and victim-survivors are unlikely to engage in any help-seeking behaviour — unless the workplace culture has cultivated a sufficiently safe space.

Negative experiences of accessing support at work

In contrast to the positive experiences shared by some victim-survivors, a greater number of survey respondents reported that their disclosures of DFV and/or requests for workplace supports were met with negative responses. In many instances, victim-survivors inferred that their disclosures or requests to access supports were considered inconvenient within their workplace:

“I just need[ed] to go home and some time off but they were hesitant as staff always sick etc..”

“they thought I was just trouble having to no show and change shifts based on him.”

“[they] did not like me taking leave.”

“My manager recognised that I had ongoing issues, but impressed on me the necessity to keep getting into work on time and being attentive to work issues, do what she needed/wanted at the time and try and not let phone calls and other issues/activities arising from the domestic violence scenario intrude into work time as far as possible and they were always alert to any so called “slippage” on my part.”

For some victim-survivors, seeking to access support was met with the response that DFV was not a workplace issue. Respondents also sensed hesitance on the part of their employers regarding discerning and enabling them to engage the supports they needed. As two survey respondents explained:

“[they] did not want to get involved. And just wanted me to continue work.”

“They swept it under the carpet. no one wanted to know at all.”

Indeed, many respondents explained that there was an expectation that they would “keep home at home”, and a view that it was inappropriate for them to “bring” their experience of DFV into the workplace:

“once after a bashing, i went to work with a black eye and a split lip. i was told by “y manager “not to bring personal home issues to the”work place“ and that “they did not want to become involved due to the risk of harm to othe” employees” owner of company.”

““They didn’t care, I requested time off to get myself out of that situation and into a better mindset and I w”s told to “leave ho”e at home.”

As explored earlier, the decision to disclose an experience of DFV is not one that an employee enters into lightly. Some survey respondents explained that, in retrospect, they now realised that their decision to share with a colleague was in fact a tacit request for someone to help them identify, or name, what they were enduring as abuse. As one respondent explained:

“I just wish one of my colleagues had been brave enough to say, “You’re being abused, and everyone will gladly help you in any way you need”, rather than beating around the bush and saying “He sounds toxic and immature and undeserving of you”. I knew plenty of people who would have helped out for a few days, and it was easy enough to pack up all my stuff in a day and move while he was at work, I just needed someone to be upfront and honest with me to open my eyes.”

It is vitally important that any disclosures of victimisation or help-seeking behaviours are met with responses that validate an individual's experience of abuse and provide potential pathway(s) towards support. The victim-survivors who shared negative experiences of disclosing at work — particularly those who encountered disbelief and/or justifications for violence — sharply illustrate the progress that still needs to be made in ensuring that Australian workplaces are equipped to provide trauma-informed responses to DFV disclosures.

Desired workplace supports

“Anything would have been appreciated at the time. It was the lowest, scariest and most embarrassing situation I had ever been in. Work just became another difficult and overwhelming factor that I could not put energy into.”

The above reflection is representative of a pattern in victim-survivors' responses in which, when asked what workplace supports would have been most useful to them during their experiences of DFV, many repeated that the provision of *any* support would have helped. The survey asked respondents to indicate from a list of potential DFV workplace supports which would have been most desirable in supporting their safety and support needs, and subsequently offered them an open-text response in which they could identify supports that were not specifically listed in the survey (see: Appendix A for a full copy of the survey instrument).



Of the supports listed, respondents indicated the following workplace supports as most likely to have helped them:

- Paid DFV leave (31.59%, n=496)
- Workplace recommended counselling services (27.98%, n=838)
- Flexible hours (27.61%, n=827)
- A training workplace family violence representative (26.8%, n=799)
- A discussion between the victim-survivor and their colleague/supervisor where they choose to inform particular co-workers about the discussion (23.91%, n=716)
- Access to technology at work that the abuser cannot access (19.23%, n=576)
- A security escort to walk them to their car/public transport (12.09%, n=362)
- Unpaid family violence leave (12.02%, n=360)
- Working-from-home arrangements (11.69%, n=350)

In light of the Commonwealth Government's commitment to introducing paid DFV leave legislation, it is encouraging to see that this was the most frequently selected support that victim-survivors felt would have supported their safety needs and engagement in the workplace. The finding that respondents did not view unpaid DFV leave to be an effective support substantiates this recent policy direction and is supported by evidence that has emerged over the last 10 years, including recent research undertaken for the Australian Fair Work Commission which detailed Australian victim-survivors' perceptions of unpaid DFV leave (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2021).

The least desired support among survey respondents was the option to be provided with working-from-home arrangements (11.69%, n=350). It is understandable that the home, once described by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2019) as the “most dangerous place for women worldwide”, may not be readily seen as a desirable workplace location for many victim-survivors. This has perhaps been felt acutely by victim-survivors over the last two years given that employees across Australia and indeed the world have worked from home for extended periods of time during COVID-19 restrictions. This survey finding is consistent with research that has found that working-from-home arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic have further invisibilised DFV perpetration and led to further insecurity — and lack of safety — for

victim-survivors (see: Inter alia, Boxall & Morgan, 2021; Pfitzner et al., 2022). For many victim-survivors in this survey, work was described as a key place outside of the perpetrator's surveillance and one where they could escape abusive behaviours.

However, although working-from-home provisions were the least popular of the supports listed, because of the scope of the study (3,002 respondents in total and 2,995 who answered this question), it is noteworthy that 350 victim-survivors still identified it as a workplace support that might have helped them. As such, while our data might encourage workplaces to prioritise the implementation of other supports (for example, paid DFV leave and flexible hours) over working from home, offering the option to work remotely will still likely constitute a form of support for some victim-survivors. We are conscious that the timing of data collection for this survey — which occurred in the first half of 2022 following more than two years of mandated working-from-home provisions in Victoria and other Australian states and territories — might have influenced respondents' views on the helpfulness of this as a support provision. A discretionary option to work from home might nevertheless be a robust DFV support, particularly for victim-survivors who have left the shared home of their abusive partner and/or for victim-survivor with primary caring responsibilities.

In addition to DFV leave provisions and flexible working arrangements, multiple survey respondents identified that information in the workplace around identifying DFV and what specialist support services were available would have been helpful. As one victim-survivor explained:

“unfortunately it takes a lot to open up about dealing with DV Anything at all Anything at all. This was back in 2010-2012. There wasn't even a poster on the back of a toilet door back then. Anything at. But its not something i like to talk about anyway Anything simple like a poster on the staffroom wall ect [sic] noting all the types of domestic violence ... anything to be honest. Anything to help.”

Victim-survivors often explained that they would have benefited from the workplace providing them with someone to talk to. Hundreds of respondents reported the desire to have access to free counselling, and many clarified that it was necessary that any counselling offered be trauma-informed, given their previous experience with counsellors who were inexperienced in matters of DFV and trauma. Many victim-survivors noted that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was insufficient in this regard and did not meet their support needs. In the open-text survey responses, numerous victim-survivors stated that they wished they had access to a DFV-trained workplace representative. As two respondents described:

“It would have been amazing to have someone who understood the ins and outs of family and domestic violence, it would have been helpful to be able to communicate with someone safely and confidentially.”

“It also would have been good to have a compassionate designated person in the office.”

A number of victim-survivors lamented the fact that while experiencing DFV, they struggled to identify it as such. They explained that they would have liked more DFV-informed workplace education programs that might have helped them — as well as their colleagues — to be able to identify and name what was happening to them. Many survey respondents did not understand, or readily identify, at the time that they were experiencing DFV, as evidenced in the following reflections:

“One of the issues I experienced at the time (I was younger) was that I had no real awareness of the impact of the family violence situation on all involved, or even that a family violence situation was actually happening. Without that awareness I could not have sought support, although that would have been non-existent at the time.”

“I think the support I needed was alr-ady there - my problem was 'hat I didn't know I needed the support.”

Some victim-survivors believed that promoting wider awareness of DFV across the workplace might have supported opportunities for colleagues to proactively identify what they were experiencing and subsequently offer them support. As one survey respondent described:

“I wish someone picked up something was wrong. I felt like no one cared. If one person had come up to me and said: I can feel or I can see something is not right. We needs to talk. I would’ve opened up. But felt like I was a nobody in a big corporation. And I was once told. If u don’t want to do your job. I’ll find someone who will.”

Many survey respondents outlined that DFV left them in a situation of despair. They explained that while experiencing DFV, they felt that they had “nothing” available to them and were left feeling abandoned and without any type of support — whether within or external to the workplace. These respondents explained that access to *any* form of support offered to them at work would have helped. In the following reflections, survey respondents detail their urgency for any form of workplace support:

“Any support Any support. Any support would have been great. Understanding from my fellow staff, financial support so I could leave him Any support would have been helpful at the time Any support would have been of value to me any support would have exacerbated the situation.”

“Any support wud hav bin gud or valuable had it bin available 2 me ’t that time but it wasn’t so I just carried on. Counselling or having some1 2 talk 2 or discuss the situation with wud hav[e] bin of great benefit Anyone Anything & everything!”

“Anything would have been better than nothing ... I wish someone had asked if I was okay.”

“Anything would have been better than nothing.”

These reflections capture the need for *something* — indeed *anything* — to address the current dearth of workplace supports for DFV victim-survivors in Australia. This is particularly critical as Australia progresses towards a commitment to embedding whole-of-system services to support the recovery of victim-survivors of DFV (on the importance of supporting victim-survivor recovery in Australia’s next National Plan, see: Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2022a, 2022b). Workplaces are a key site to realising this commitment of supporting victim-survivor recovery.

Workplace supports identified to support victim-survivors gain new paid employment

Survey respondents also emphasised the importance of additional DFV-informed support when seeking new paid employment during or following their experience of DFV. Supporting victim-survivors to re-enter paid employment is absolutely critical in light of the growing body of evidence confirming the connection between women’s experiences of poverty and DFV victimisation (Summers, 2022; see also: Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2022b).

Specifically, survey respondents identified four key supports that would have helped them gain paid employment following their experiences of DFV:

- Recruitment services that are trained in DFV
- DFV financial bursaries
- Workplaces offering flexibility in terms of hours
- Working-from-home options as well as better workplace literacy regarding the reality of DFV

The most frequently cited support specific to supporting victim-survivors in gaining new paid employment was access to DFV-specialised recruitment assistance. Many survey respondents identified the need for straightforward help with their CVs, cover letters and the job-seeking process. However, in addition to this, a vast number of survey respondents also identified the value of having access to job agencies that specialise

in DFV support, indicating the importance of gaining support from recruiters that understand their experience of DFV:



"Yes employment agency or similar that understands"

"Yes, an advocate or an agency so there was a level of understanding of the situation without me having t' disclose"

"If you don't have a job, any opportunity or special agency able to understand your issues to get a job, would be welcome."

"Job agencies that specialise in helping people who are dealing with trauma, mental health issues and have been victims of violence whether that be domestic and family violence or other."

Other survey respondents suggested that victim-survivors be connected to workplaces that are specialised in "offer[ing] second chances" to DFV victim-survivors. As two respondents proposed:

[this type of workplace] "might understand that [those employees] might be late or need to take days off [and] offer supports in terms of that."

"Being able to access roles available from organisations who were understanding of fv looking for new jobs."

Multiple survey respondents identified the fact that their experience of DFV had diminished their confidence, noting the need for career counselling that could build and develop their sense of self-worth, as it is an integral part of the recruitment process. As two survey respondents explained:

"I wish there was a system that helped victims realise their potential. As it was really drilled in that I was worthless"

"Career counselling to reconnect with my value and strengths as an employee."

Building on this, respondents noted that their diminished confidence also impacted their ability to perform well during interviews — a factor they believed was necessary for securing a job. As one respondent noted:

"I hope to get support [because] after experiencing domestic violence, I can be more tolerant in job interview, or interview in a relaxed way."

Some respondents identified the benefits of having a liaison between the victim-survivor and the prospective workplace during the recruitment phase, noting that such a role could assist in explaining gaps in employment history or frequent changes in roles over a period of victimisation. As one respondent explained:

"A specific organisation that can advocate for you as sometimes your work history is all over the place meaning future employer may not know the reason."

Another survey respondent proposed that they would benefit from not only individualised support, but also someone to explain to the interviewing workplace why they might not interview well:

"A supportive network to help assist me getting a new job at such a fragile time. Someone to help guide me and my potential new employers to not judge me because I wasn't in the right frame of mind when interviewing which is why I was knocked back from work for so long."

Some respondents explained that more flexible workplaces would have supported them in getting them back into the workforce following their experiences of DFV. Multiple respondents noted that flexibility with hours and the capacity to work from home were important options, especially to enable individuals with caring responsibilities to balance paid employment and care. As two survey respondents explained:

“Easier to get jobs working from home, this didn’t exist when I went through my issues, and even now after the pandemic it is still hard to get a job that is working full time from home.”

“Flexible work hours to drop off and collect kids from school”

In addition to the creation of DFV-informed recruitment supports, a small number of respondents identified the potential introduction of financial assistance packages as a helpful transition arrangement that could have supported them to start afresh and find new work. As two survey respondents described:

“Mainly financial assistance [would have helped me gain paid employment]. I can’t afford to le’ve as I am his carer. I’m on a carers pension with no savings to help transition.”

“Because I was working (not highly paid) I was unable to access any Centrelink support even to help change my situation. I was the working poor, I think that’s still relevant today for some people. A one-off payment could have helped to change my situation earlier.”

For these victim-survivors, there was a problematic link between their ability to spend time securing new employment and their financial dependence on their abusers until they were able to secure that employment. This reliance is unsurprising given the document time and costs of leaving an abusive relationship. In Australia, research shows that given the many barriers to leaving a violent or abusive relationship, it takes on average seven to eight attempts to leave a relationship and around \$18,000 and 141 hours to extricate oneself from an abusive relationship (Australian Council of Trade Unions, as cited in SBS World News, 2017). This is quite simply not an option for many victim-survivors, particularly those who are not in the workforce — hence the proposal by some survey respondents for financial assistance to be provided to support victim-survivors during any interim period.



Finally, reflecting on findings from the earlier analysis of desired workplace supports, many survey respondents identified the need for robust workplace education on DFV. Victim-survivors explained that improved understandings of the phenomenon of DFV would both serve as a preventative measure — reducing or eliminating the need for victim-survivors to leave unsupportive workplaces in the first place — and also make the transition for victim-survivors into a new workplace smoother. The shared view among many victim-survivors of the need to address underlying workplace cultures, and create shared understandings of DFV, was viewed as a critical element of any workplace support policy and practice.

Part 5: Workplace Cultures and the Importance of Cultural Change

The findings throughout this report highlight the critical importance of workplace culture and the need for significant cultural change across Australian workforces to ensure that DFV is routinely understood as a workplace issue, as well as ensuring that employees experiencing DFV are readily supported within workplaces. The change required to achieve this nationally — across all industries and levels of employment — is substantive, but as the findings from this research show there are emerging pockets of good practice and, most recently, positive indications of leadership in this space from the Commonwealth Government.

Alongside the implementation of new legislation to introduce paid DFV leave across Australian industries, there is a need to utilise this policy window to shift the expectation dial among employers so that it is not considered exceptional practice but rather the accepted norm to provide workplace supports to employees experiencing DFV. To this end, the cultural change required necessitates a shift in thinking whereby DFV supports are viewed as a preliminary employer responsibility and perceived through a duty-of-care lens — alongside a host of other OHS responsibilities that are routinely accepted without question by employers.

It is of note that some victim-survivors in this study explained that they did not think their workplace had a responsibility to support them, or at least suggested that they viewed a sharp separation between their working and home lives (the “home life” being where the DFV was occurring). This view is captured in the following four reflections from survey respondents:

“Because the relationship was based outside of the work place, I did not feel it was necessary to get them involved.”

“When I did express how I was feeling they were supportive to a degree and offered EAP as an outlet.”

“My colleague [to whom this individual disclosed that they were experiencing DFV] was supportive but I did not escalate the matter internally as the incidents occurred outside of the workplace.”

“[the] abuse was domestic, within the family, my work place had nothing ’o do with it and I didn’t tell anyone.”

Although a small number of respondents explained that they saw no reason or benefit to seek support from their workplace, there was a far more commonly held belief among surveyed victim-survivors that workplaces had failed to support them. There was a tacit assumption built into these responses that the workplace did have a role or responsibility to do so, and that these workplaces had failed to deliver upon that. This study uncovered a widespread intuition among victim-survivors that workplaces have a responsibility towards them, and perhaps even owe them a duty of care. The task is now to shift attitudes and ensure that all Australian employers embrace this responsibility. Engendering a sense of responsibility and duty on the part of all Australian employers is a critical first step in order to ensure that any workplace policies that support DFV victim-survivors become visible and effectively embedded across Australian workplaces. This research demonstrates why DFV workplace supports are superfluous if they are not embedded within an appropriately supportive workplace culture.

Conclusion

There has been a sharp increase in attention in recent years into the role that workplaces can play in supporting victim-survivors of DFV. This study seeks to ensure that the resulting reform agenda is informed by the lived experience and expertise of victim-survivors. As the consultation to inform the next National Plan has recently revealed, there is a growing recognition among advocates and policy stakeholders around the importance of ensuring that the design, implementation and monitoring of policy and practice reform processes are informed by the lived realities of those victim-survivors who navigate the system. It is from this standpoint that this report has sought to centre and better understand the experiences of victim-survivors across Australian workplaces.

The evidence showcased in this report further debunks the myth of the public-private divide as it relates to a false distinction between the workplace and DFV. A majority of survey respondents described DFV as either “significantly” or “somewhat” impacting their ability to do their job. The data shows that DFV significantly impacted victim-survivors’ ability to attend work, meaningfully engage in the work, fulfil the expectations of their roles and participate in the workplace environments. Crucially, almost half of the survey respondents reported that their perpetrators were deploying workplace interference strategies. The experiences of victim-survivors described throughout this study evidence that when perpetrators engage in DFV abuse at the victim-survivor’s place of work, it becomes hard — if not impossible — for the individual to “leave their personal life at home”.

Perpetrator interference behaviour has a long-lasting impact on a victim-survivor’s ability to access and thrive at work. One in two survey respondents indicated that DFV impacted their career progression either “significantly” or “somewhat”, pointing to the short- and long-term employment impacts of DFV, including the subsequent financial implications of stymied career progression and reduced opportunities.

Although some survey respondents reported a positive workplace response subsequent to their disclosure, the results of this study indicate that Australian workplaces are falling short when it comes to supporting victim-survivors. The majority of victim-survivors surveyed did not disclose their experiences of DFV to anyone at work. Respondents who did inform colleagues about their experiences of DFV described a range of insensitive and inadequate reactions in the open-text responses. Overall, a vast number of survey respondents felt that their workplace’s response was inadequate. While respondents were not always sure what their workplace could have done, they nevertheless felt unsupported in their environment. In other words, while workplaces are not yet embracing their responsibility or duty of care towards employees experiencing DFV, several of the victim-survivors in this study intuited that the workplace had a responsibility to support their safety needs. Ultimately, this report emphasises that Australia workplaces have a responsibility to expect and proactively plan for the reality that there are victim-survivors of DFV in their workplace.

Recommendations and policy implications

For over a quarter of the workplaces in which victim-survivors in this study were working while experiencing DFV, there were no policies or supports in place at the time. For these victim-survivors, there were no workplace supports provided to facilitate respite from work, to support them to take leave from work to attend to DFV-related matters and/or to support them to stay in their particular job (or the workforce more generally). This study’s findings also highlight the importance of communicating policies to employees. If a DFV policy exists it must not only be accessible, but all employees must also be aware of its existence. Nearly three in four victim-survivors surveyed either did not know whether their workplace offered DFV supports or believed that it did not. It is important to remember that this survey sample comprises employees who have all experienced DFV, and as such this is likely to be a sample of individuals with a greater awareness of DFV-related policies in the workplace.

Recommendation 1: That every Australian workplace prioritises the implementation of a DFV workplace policy. The policy should identify a suite of workplace supports available to all employees who experience DFV. The study's findings emphasise there is no *one-size-fits-all* workplace support for victim-survivors of DFV, and as such the workplace policy should include a suite of available workplace supports that can be tailored to each individual employee's needs. The policy must be easy to follow, widely communicated to staff and accessible to all employees. In order to support the prospect and likelihood of victim-survivors of DFV disclosing their experiences at work, and to educate their colleagues on how to respond appropriately, it is essential that the policy is embedded within a compassionate workplace culture.

Practical workplace supports are one component of the workforce development required, but as the research findings indicate, victim-survivors regularly described deriving greater overall benefit from human connections in the workplace. A best-practice workplace response would offer a range of DFV workplace supports embedded within a compassionate and empathetic workplace culture. Indeed, this report recommends that Australian workplaces prioritise the cultivation of a DFV-literate, trauma-informed workplace culture.

This study's findings consistently point to the importance of workplace culture in maintaining safety for victim-survivors of DFV. Victim-survivors explained that improved understandings of the phenomenon of DFV would both serve as a preventative measure — reducing or eliminating the need for them to leave unsupportive workplaces in the first place — and also make the transition for victim-survivors into new workplaces smoother. The commonly held view among many victim-survivors of the need to address underlying workplace cultures, and create shared understandings of DFV, was viewed as a critical element of effectively embedding any DFV workplace support policy.

Given the study's finding that individuals are significantly more likely to disclose experiences of DFV to members of the workplace on "equal footing" with them, it is imperative that Australian workplaces focus on whole-of-workforce educational programs. These educational programs must not exclusively resource managers. The more every single person in a workplace has some understanding of the complexities of DFV, the better the workplace response to disclosure will be and the more likely that the disclosure will itself occur.

Recommendation 2: That Australian workplaces prioritise the cultivation of a compassionate workplace culture that is DFV informed. Workforce education that debunks common myths regarding, and educates individuals on, the phenomenon of DFV is essential. Given this study's finding that most victim-survivors disclose experiences of DFV to a close colleague rather than a superior, education must occur at all levels of the workforce and not only target a managerial level or HR representatives. The more members of a workplace who understand the nuances of DFV, the safer victim-survivors are to effectively seek support in that workplace.

The findings from this research contribute valuable insights into the content required for DFV workplace education. Workplace education on DFV should debunk key myths to ensure more appropriate responses to victim-survivors when they disclose to a colleague at work what they are experiencing. It is important that workplaces recognise the courage required to disclose and seek support. Suggesting that an employee should "toughen up" to get over it, or that any individual should or could face it alone, is an insufficient response that mitigates the seriousness of the experience of DFV. Conversely, suggesting that someone is suitably strong to face their experience of DFV alone is equally dangerous. Workplace education should emphasise that DFV can be an all-consuming event that is likely impossible to "leave at home".

Furthermore, workplaces should be trained in understanding the ways that the victim-survivor experience might play out in the workplace. Scores of victim-survivors used the open-text responses to share the ways in which perpetrator workplace interference tactics impacted them. Though the most frequently reported impact for respondents was a sense of "embarrassment" and "shame", a secondary pattern emerged. A closer reading of the responses revealed that this shame and embarrassment (as well as "sadness", "anxiety" and "self-doubt") led to a drop in work performance and productivity for many of those who reported it. An

effective DFV workplace education program would train employees to understand the impacts of DFV within a broader context. If a victim-survivors' behaviour is viewed in isolation (decreased attendance or focus, for instance), they are left open to punitive outcomes in the workplace. Ideally, workplaces would have training in place that enables behaviour to be understood in context (i.e. to be able to understand that an otherwise unexplainable drop in the employee's performance might signal something greater happening in that employee's life, such as DFV).

Key avenues for further research

It is a deeply concerning finding that the more disabilities survey respondents identified as having, the greater impact DFV had on their working lives. Furthermore, First Nations survey respondents were significantly more likely to report that their employment status had been impacted by their experience of DFV, with only 38 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=118) selecting that they had maintained employment throughout their experience of DFV and remained in the same job. The breadth of this report did not provide the opportunity for an in-depth analysis of these findings. There is important work to be done to better understand the ways in which being First Nations, and having four or more disabilities, impacts the working lives of DFV victim-survivors. Furthermore, an alarming number of survey respondents (19%) worked alongside their abuser. This was more common among First Nations respondents as well as survey respondents who identified as having three or more disabilities. This is an important area that warrants further investigation. Further research is needed to understand the unique experiences of victim-survivors who work in family-run or small businesses with their abusers, and to better understand how the working relationship impacts intimate partner relationships that entail abusive dynamics.

References

- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2019). Paid Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Leave: Summary of the Evidence, *ANROWS*. Australia.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2017). Personal Safety Survey, cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2020). Characteristics of Employment. Australia. August 2020 - 6333.0. *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, 11 December. Accessed at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/characteristics-employment-australia/aug-2020>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2021). Characteristics of Employment. Australia. August 2021. *Australian Bureau of Statistics*, 11 December. Accessed at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/characteristics-employment-australia/latest-release>
- Australian Human Rights Commission. (2020). Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces. *Australian Human Rights Commission*. Sydney, NSW.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. (2021). Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces. Australian Human Rights Commission. Sydney, NSW.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia, 2018. *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*, 10.25816/5ebcc144fa7e6. Accessed at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-in-australia-2018/summary>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). Family, domestic and sexual violence. Web article. Accessed at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence#consequences>
- Baird M, McFerran, L. & Wright, I. (2014). An equality bargaining breakthrough: Paid domestic violence leave. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 56(2): 190-207.
- Bevitt, A., Chigavazira, A., Herault, N., Johnson, G., Moschion, J., Scutella, R., Tseng, Y., Wooden, M. & Guyonne, K. (2015). Journeys Home Research Report: Complete findings from Waves 1 to 6 (No. 6).
- Boxall, H., & Morgan, A. (2021). Intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic: A survey of women in Australia (Research report, 03/2021). *ANROWS*. Australia.
- Brandwein, R. A., & Filiano, D. M. (2000). Toward real welfare reform: The voices of battered women. *Afflia*, 15: 224-243.
- Breckenridge, J., Cale, J., Hameed, S., McCaskie, L. & Tzoumakis, S. (2015). Implementation of Domestic Violence Clauses: An Employer's Perspective, Gendered Violence Research Network. *University of NSW*.
- Brewster, M. P. (2003). Power and control dynamics in prestalking and stalking situations. *Journal of Family Violence*, 18: 207-217.
- Champions of Change Coalition. (2021). Playing our Part: A framework for workplace action on domestic and family violence. *Champions of Change Coalition*. Accessed at: <https://championsofchangecoalition.org/resource/playing-our-part-a-framework-for-workplace-action-on-domestic-and-family-violence/>
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia. (2019). CBA offers unlimited paid leave to employees affected by domestic and family violence. Media Release, 11 October. Accessed at: <https://www.commbank.com.au/guidance/newsroom/unlimited-leave-to-employees-affected-by-domestic-violence-201910.html>
- Cortis, N. & Bullen, J. (2015). Building effective policies and services to promote women's economic security following domestic violence. Landscapes: State of Knowledge: Issue 07/2015. *ANROWS*, Sydney.
- Council of Australian Governments. (2010). National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010–2022. *Department of Social Services, Commonwealth Government of Australia*. Accessed at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1: 139–167.

- Crowne, S. S., Juon, H.-S., Ensminger, M., Burrell, L., McFarlane, E., & Duggan, A. (2011). Concurrent and long-term impact of intimate partner violence on employment stability. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(6): 1282-1304.
- Decision- [2022] FWCFB 2001
- Dikranian, J. (2022). CBA offers unlimited paid domestic violence leave. *My Business*, 18 May. Accessed at: <https://www.mybusiness.com.au/how-we-help/be-a-better-employer/managing-risk/cba-offers-unlimited-paid-family-and-domestic-violence-leave>
- Diversity Council Australia & Our Watch. (2021). Myth Busting Domestic & Family Violence at Work. February 25. Accessed at: <https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/myth-busting-domestic-family-violence-work>
- Equity Economics. (2021). Nowhere to Go: The benefits of providing long-term social housing to women that have experienced domestic and family violence. July. *Equity Economics*. Accessed at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61b14c4abbc81a1543f55180/t/62185d457ad63d191d0af100/1645763920507/EE_Women+Housing_Domestic+Violence_WEB_SINGLES.pdf
- Fitz-Gibbon, K. (2021). Our National Shame: Violence against women. Monash University Press, Victoria, Australia.
- Fitz-Gibbon, K., Meyer, S., Gelb, K., McGowan, J., Wild, S., Batty, R., Segrave, M., Maher, JMM., Pfitzner, N., McCulloch, J., Flynn, A., Wheildon, L. & Thorburn, J. (2022a). National Plan Stakeholder Consultation: Final Report. Monash University, Victoria, Australia. DOI: 10.26180/16946884
- Fitz-Gibbon, K., Meyer, S., Boxall, H., Maher, J., & Roberts, S. (2022). Adolescent family violence in Australia: A national study of prevalence, history of childhood victimisation and impacts (Research report, 15/2022). ANROWS.
- Fitz-Gibbon, K., Pfitzner, N., McNicol, E. & Rupanagudi, H. (2021). Safe, thriving and secure: Family violence leave and workplace supports in Australia. Monash University, Victoria, Australia. DOI: 10.26180/17131691
- Fitz-Gibbon, K., Reeves, E., Gelb, K., McGowan, J., Segrave, M., Meyer, S., & Maher, J.M. (2022b). National Plan Victim-Survivor Advocates Consultation Final Report. Monash University, Victoria, Australia. doi.org/10.26180/16947220
- Franzway, S., Zufferey, C., & Chung, D. (2007). Domestic violence and women's employment. In: S. Dann, S. Franzway & H. Masterman-Smith (Eds.), *Our work – our lives: National Conference on Women and Industrial Relations: Proceedings of the 2nd National Conference held in Adelaide, South Australia, 20-21 September 2007*. University of South Australia. Adelaide.
- Hughes, M. M. and Brush, L. D. (2015). The price of protection: A trajectory analysis of civil remedies for abuse and women's earnings. *American Sociological Review*, 80(1): 140-165.
- KPMG. (2016). The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia. Accessed at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08>
- LaVan, H., Lopez, Y.P., Katz, M., & Martin, W.M. (2012). The impact of domestic violence in the workplace. *Employment Relations Today*, 39(3): 51-63
- Lindhorst, T., Oxford, M., & Gillmore, M. R. (2007). Longitudinal effects of domestic violence on employment and welfare outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(7): 812-828.
- Lloyd, S. (1997). The effects of domestic violence on women's employment. *Law and Policy*, 19: 139-167.
- Lloyd, S., & Taluc, N. (1999). The effects of male violence on female employment. *Violence Against Women*, 5: 370-392.
- McCarthy, A. (2018). Domestic Violence Leave – What are the entitlements? *Australian Nursing & Midwifery Journal*, 25(7): 12.
- McFerran, L. (2011). National Domestic Violence and the Workplace Survey. Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse. Accessed at: https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/National_Domestic_Violence_and_the_Workplace_Survey_2011_Full_Report.pdf
- Moe, A .M., & Bell, M. P. (2004). Abject economics: The effects of battering and violence on women's work and employability. *Violence Against Women*, 10: 29-55.
- Murray, S. & Powell, A, (2008). Working it out: domestic violence issues and the workplace. Issues Paper 16, Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse. University of NSW. April.
- Our Watch. (2018). Workplace equality and respect tools and resources. Melbourne, Victoria: OurWatch.

- Pfitzner, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K. & True, J. (2022). When staying home isn't safe: Australian practitioner experiences of responding to intimate partner violence during COVID-19 restrictions. *Journal of Gender Based Violence*. doi: 10.1332/239868021X16420024310873
- Rayner-Thomas, M., Dixon, R., Fanslow, J., & Tse, C. (2016). The impact of domestic violence on the workplace. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 41(1): 8– 21.
- Reeves, C. & O'Leary-Kelly, A.M. (2007). The effects and costs of intimate partner violence for work organizations. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3): 327-344.
- Riger, S. Ahrens, C., & Blickenstaff, A. (2001). Measuring interference with employment and education reported by women with abusive partners: Preliminary data. *Violence and Victims*, 15: 161-172.
- Royal Commission into Family Violence. (2016). Final Report: Summary and Recommendations. Victorian Parliament, Victoria.
- SBS World News. (2017). Cost of fleeing violent relationship is \$18,000 and 141 hours: ACTU. *SBS News*, 4 November. Accessed at: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/cost-of-fleeing-violent-relationship-is-18-000-and-141-hours-actu/s46y8lg0c>
- Serpell B., Sullivan T. & Doherty L. (2022). Homicide in Australia 2019-20. Statistical Report no. 39. Australian Institute of Criminology. Canberra. <https://doi.org/10.52922/sr78511>.
- Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland. (2015). Not now, not ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland. Queensland, Australia.
- Stark, E. (2007). *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Statement- [2022] FWCFB 152
- Stott-Despoja, N. (2020). *On Violence*. Hachette Australia.
- Summers, A. (2022). *The Choice: Violence or Poverty*. University of Technology Sydney. <https://doi.org/10.26195/3s1r-4977>
- Swanberg, J. E., Macke, C., & Logan, T. (2006). Intimate Partner Violence, Women, and Work: Coping on the Job. *Violence and Victims*, 21(5), 561-78.
- Swanberg, J. E., Macke, C., & Logan, T. (2007). Working Women Making IT Work: Intimate Partner Violence, Employment, and Workplace Support. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3), 292-311.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2019). Home, the most dangerous place for women, with majority of female homicide victims worldwide killed by partners or family, UNODC study says. *United Nations*, 25 November. Accessed at: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2018/November/home-the-most-dangerous-place-for-women-with-majority-of-female-homicide-victims-worldwide-killed-by-partners-or-family--unodc-study-says.html>
- Williamson, S., Foley, M., & Cartwright, N. (2019). Women, work and industrial relations in Australia in 2018. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 61(3): 342-356.
- Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. (2021). *Hear her voice: Report one – Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland*. Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, Brisbane. Accessed at: https://www.womenstaskforce.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/700600/volume-1-executive-summary-and-introduction.pdf
- Working Women's Centre. (2021). *The protective power of job security*. October 2021. Working Women's Centre. Accessed at: <https://wwcsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-Protective-Power-of-Job-Security-Report-5-October-2021.pdf>
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2021). *Family and domestic violence: Provide paid leave*. Australian Government, Canberra.
- World Bank. (2015). *Women, Business and the Law 2016: Getting to equal*. World Bank. Washington, DC, USA. Accessed at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22546>

Legislation

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

Appendix A: Survey instrument

Workplace support and pathways for family violence victim-survivors

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MURHEC) project number: xx

Chief Investigators

Emma McNicol

Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre

Faculty of Arts, Monash University,

Email: emma.mcnicol1@monash.edu

Associate Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon

Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre

Faculty of Arts, Monash University

Phone: (03) 9905 2616,

Email: kate.fitzgibbon@monash.edu

You are invited to take part in this study

Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the Chief Investigator via the contact details listed above.

[Electronic consent is included in the hyperlinked explanatory statement. This asks respondents to consent that they have read the explanatory statement and also that they are victim-survivors of domestic and/or family violence.]

Services on offer if adversely affected

We have compiled a list of relevant support services should you experience any negative outcomes from this research process. To access the list, [hyperlinked here]

Q Do you live in Australia?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q Please select your residency status:

- ☐ Australian citizen
- ☐ permanent resident
- ☐ student visa
- ☐ family visa
- ☐ partner visa
- ☐ working and skilled visa
- ☐ other, please specify: [open text box option]

Q What is your age bracket?

- ☐ Under 18 years old [which then immediately excludes participants from proceeding]
- ☐ 18-24 years old
- ☐ 25-30 years old
- ☐ 31-40 years old
- ☐ 41-50 years old
- ☐ 51-60 years old
- ☐ 61 years old or above

Q In what type of area do you live?

- ☐ Metropolitan
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Regional
- ☐ Remote

Q In what state/territory do you live in?

- ☐ Victoria
- ☐ Tasmania
- ☐ Australian Capital Territory
- ☐ Western Australia

- ☐ New South Wales
- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ South Australia
- ☐ Northern Territory
- ☐ I do not live in Australia

[If participant selects 'I do not live in Australia' a branch option comes up]

(Q) Have you ever worked in Australia:

1. Yes, in the last 10 years
2. Yes, over 10 years ago
3. No, I have never worked in Australia [end survey here]

Q How would you describe your gender identity?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ non-binary / gender diverse
- ☐ Other [open text box option]
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q How would you describe your sexual/romantic orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Pansexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Other (please specify) [open text box option]
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q Do you identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander?

- ☐ Yes – Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q How many dependent children do you have?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ More than 5

Section 2: Please answer the following questions in relation to the main job you were in when you were experiencing domestic and family violence.

Q During your experience of domestic and family violence, how would you classify your employment status? Status. Please answer the following questions in relation to the main job you were in when you were experiencing domestic and family violence.

- ☐ Full time ongoing
- ☐ Full time contract
- ☐ Part time ongoing
- ☐ Part time contract
- ☐ Casual
- ☐ Self employed
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ A combination of the above
- ☐ I had multiple jobs while experiencing domestic and family violence.
- ☐ I was unemployed
- ☐ I was on leave
- ☐ Other, please describe: [open text box]

Q During your experience of domestic and family violence, in what industry were/are you employed (select as many as relevant):

- ☐ Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- ☐ Mining
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Electricity, Gas, Water, Waste Services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Wholesale trade
- ☐ Retail trade
- ☐ Accommodation and Food Services
- ☐ Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- ☐ Information Media and Telecommunication
- ☐ Financial and Insurance Services
- ☐ Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- ☐ Professional, Scientific, Technical Services
- ☐ Administrative and Support Services
- ☐ Public Administration and Safety
- ☐ Education and Training
- ☐ Health Care and Social Assistance
- ☐ Arts and Recreation Services
- ☐ Other, please describe:

Q Were you working for the Victorian Public Service (VPS) at the time that you were experiencing domestic and family violence?

- ☐ Yes, full time
- ☐ Yes, intermittently
- ☐ Yes, part time
- ☐ Yes, casually
- ☐ No

Q Was/is your abuser also employed at your place of work?

- ☐ Yes, the abuser worked at the same workplace
- ☐ No, the abuser did not work at the same workplace

[The following question is only visible to those that answer yes].

Q What role did/does your abuser have in your workplace?

- ☐ They are/were my employer
- ☐ They are/were my direct manager
- ☐ We are/were in the workplace on 'equal footing'
- ☐ They are/were my subordinate/were reporting to me
- ☐ We run/ran the business together
- ☐ They are/were a co-worker
- ☐ Other (specify)

Section number 3: Please answer the following questions in relation to your physical location of work while you were experiencing domestic and family violence

Q Were you working from home while experiencing domestic and family violence?

☐ Yes, always

☐ Sometimes

☐ No

Q [If yes] Why were you working from home? [select as many as apply]

☐ COVID-19 public health restrictions

☐ Other health related reasons

☐ Working from home has always been part of my job

☐ I work from home to assist in accommodating my primary carer responsibilities.

☐ My employer offered for me to work from home because of my experience of domestic and family violence

☐ My employer offered for me to work from home without knowledge of my experience of domestic and family violence

☐ Other (please specify)

Section 4 Work disclosures of domestic and family violence

Q Did you tell anyone at work that you were experiencing domestic and family violence?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q [If yes] Who did you tell at work that you were experiencing domestic and family violence? [select all that apply]

- ☐ A close colleague
- ☐ Another colleague/team member
- ☐ My manager
- ☐ HR
- ☐ A senior colleague who is not my manager
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q How did your workplace respond to your disclosure of domestic and family violence?

- ☐ The workplace response was supportive
- ☐ The workplace response was neither supportive nor unsupportive
- ☐ The workplace response was unsupportive
- ☐ The workplace response was inconsistent – sometimes supportive, sometimes unsupportive
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Would you be able to elaborate on your workplace's response to your experience? Please provide as much detail as you wish. We welcome your insights and reflections. Every victim-survivor's voice is valuable to us. If you do not wish to elaborate, simply write n/a. [Open text box]

Q How much did your experience of domestic and family violence impact your ability to undertake your job?

- ☐ It significantly impacted my ability to undertake my job
- ☐ It somewhat impacted my ability to undertake my job
- ☐ It is hard to gauge whether it did or not
- ☐ It did not impact my ability to undertake my job
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Only show the below question if the respondent answer yes, significantly or yes, somewhat to the above question.

Q In what way did your experience of domestic and family violence impact your ability to undertake your job?
(Please select as many of these that apply.)

- ☐ It impacted my punctuality
- ☐ It impacted my attendance
- ☐ It impacted my ability to concentrate
- ☐ It impacted my productivity
- ☐ It impacted my ability to enjoy my job
- ☐ It impacted my performance and the quality of my work
- ☐ It led me to try to overcompensate, and try to do more than what was required for my role
- ☐ It impacted my career advancement
- ☐ It impacted my job security
- ☐ It impacted my relationships at work
- ☐ It led me to withdraw from co-workers
- ☐ It impacted my participation in work social activities
- ☐ It made it difficult for me to get to work
- ☐ It impacted my ability to travel
- ☐ It impacted my ability to partake in team opportunities
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q While working did your abuser ever use workplace interference strategies? This may include making it difficult for you to get to work, phoning you at work, arriving at your workplace unexpectedly or harassing colleagues at your workplace.

- ☐ Yes, always or often

- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ No, this wasn't a concern of mine
- ☐ No, but I always worried they would

Only show the below question if respondents answer yes or sometimes.

Q What workplace interference strategies did they deploy? (choose any options that apply to your experience)

- ☐ My abuser stopped me getting to work
- ☐ My abuser stopped me accessing things I needed to conduct my work (for example, phone, wifi, computer)
- ☐ My abuser physically presented at my workplace
- ☐ my abuser was phoning me at work
- ☐ my abuser was harassing my colleagues
- ☐ my abuser was having things delivered to my workplace
- ☐ other, please specify: [open text box]

[if participant selects "physically presented at my workplace, a subsequent question asks:]

How often did your abuser physically present at your workplace?

- ☐ always
- ☐ often
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ once

Q Please describe the impact that this workplace interference had on you. Please provide as much detail as you wish. We welcome your insights and reflections. Every victim-survivor's voice is valuable to us. If you do not wish to elaborate, simply write n/a. [Open text box]

Q How much did your experience of domestic and family violence impact your career progression and opportunities?

- ☐ It significantly impacted my career progression and opportunities
- ☐ It somewhat impacted my career progression and opportunities
- ☐ It is difficult to gauge whether it did or not
- ☐ It didn't impact my career progression and opportunities
- ☐ I am not sure

Only show the below question if respondents answer yes to any of the options above.

Q Please describe how your experience of domestic and family violence impacted your career progression and opportunities, or why you are not sure if it did. Please provide as much detail as you wish. We welcome your insights and reflections. Every victim-survivor's voice is valuable to us. (if you do not wish to provide information please write n/a) [open text box]

Q How did your experience of domestic and family violence impact your employment status?

- ☐ I was unemployed and my experience of domestic and family violence was an instrumental factor
- ☐ I am unemployed and my experience of domestic and family violence is an instrumental factor
- ☐ I am underemployed and my experience of domestic and family violence is an instrumental factor
- ☐ I maintained employment throughout my experience of domestic and family violence and remain in the same job
- ☐ I needed to change jobs and my experience of domestic and family violence was an instrumental factor
- ☐ Other, please describe: [open text box]

Workplace support

Q Did/does your workplace have a domestic and family violence policy?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Q What workplace supports did you have access to when you experienced domestic and family violence? Please select as many of these that apply.

- ☐ Family violence policy
- ☐ Non-family violence leave provisions (ie. sick leave, carer's leave, compassionate leave)
- ☐ Unpaid family violence leave
- ☐ Paid family violence leave
- ☐ Working from home arrangements
- ☐ Option to relocate to a different workplace site
- ☐ Other flexible working arrangements
- ☐ No support
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other, please specify: [open text box]

Q Which of the following options would have improved your safety and engagement in the workplace while you were experiencing domestic and family violence? [select all that apply]

- ☐ Non-family violence leave provisions (ie. sick leave, carer's leave, compassionate leave)
- ☐ unpaid family violence leave
- ☐ paid family violence leave
- ☐ Working from home arrangements
- ☐ Flexible hours
- ☐ Having a trained workplace "family violence" representative in the workplace
- ☐ Access to technology at work that my abuser could not access (phone, laptop, iPad)
- ☐ Workplace recommended counselling services
- ☐ Security escort to walk you to your car/public transport
- ☐ A discussion between you and a colleague or supervisor where you choose to inform particular co-workers about your situation
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other, please specify: [open text box]

Q) Please describe any support you wish had been available to you. Please provide as much detail as you wish. We welcome your insights and reflections. Every victim-survivor's voice is valuable to us. (please write n/a if this does not apply to you)

Q How much did your experience of domestic and family violence impacted your ability to seek new employment?

- ☐ It significantly impacted my ability to seek new employment
- ☐ It somewhat impacted my ability to seek new employment
- ☐ It is hard to gauge whether it did or not
- ☐ It didn't impact my ability to seek new employment
- ☐ I am not sure
- ☐ I was not looking for new employment
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Only show the below question if respondents answer yes significantly or yes, somewhat to the question above.

Please describe how your experience of domestic and family violence impacted your ability to seek new employment or why you are not sure if it did. Please provide as much detail as you wish. We welcome your insights and reflections. Every victim-survivor's voice is valuable to us (If you do not wish to elaborate, simply write n/a.)

[Add open text box here]

Q Are there any supports that you wish had been accessible or in place to assist you in gaining paid employment following your experience of domestic and family violence? Please describe. (If you cannot think of supports you could wish for, simply write n/a) [Add open text box here]

Q Are you from a migrant, refugee and/or culturally and linguistically diverse background?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q We want to make sure we are as inclusive as possible. Please select any disability/disabilities you identify as having:

- ☐ Visual
- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Motor/mobility
- ☐ Intellectual
- ☐ Autism spectrum disorder
- ☐ Acquired brain injury
- ☐ Seizures (e.g. especially photosensitive epilepsy)
- ☐ Poor mental health affecting day to day functioning
- ☐ Learning/cognitive (e.g., dyslexia)
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q What is your current employment status?

- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Business owner
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Stay at home parent
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ On maternity leave
- ☐ Contractor
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q Which of the following income brackets does your total household income before tax fall?

- ☐ Under \$40,000
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 to \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 to \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 to \$89,999
- ☐ \$90,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$149,999
- ☐ \$150,000 to \$199,999
- ☐ \$200,000 to \$299,999
- ☐ \$300,000 to \$399,999
- ☐ \$400,000 or greater
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ I am not sure

End of Survey

You have now completed the survey.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to share your experiences and views with us.

In the event that you have experienced distress as a result of completing this survey, we have compiled a list of support services. To access the list, click this link: [\[Support Service List hyperlinked here\]](#)