



Domestic Violence
and Capacity Building
for Community Legal
Centres Program

Factsheet 4 - Part I

Identified Groups

Top tips and techniques from experts in working with people at risk of domestic and family violence (DFV)

- + Be aware of the barriers faced by people from at-risk groups when seeking support and assistance
- + Gain a better understanding of at-risk groups and domestic and family violence.

Working with clients with disabilities

- + Treat the person as a person – and as an adult
- + Be clear and concrete; Use easy words, not complicated words
- + Conversations will take more time; pace your communication
- + Be prepared to discuss things more than one time and in different ways
- + Take responsibility for not understanding
- + Sign post a change of conversation topic
- + One question at a time & one choice/idea per question
- + Speak in clear, short sentences
- + Give time for the person to process your words and give a reply

- + Use open ended questions, avoid questions with yes and no answers
- + Use simple sentences, not complex sentences full of lots of ideas
- + Let people tell their story in their own way (it is likely not to be sequential)
- + Take the time to listen and show you value what people say
- + Concentration may be a challenge. Having shorter, but more frequent conversations is more helpful.
- + Be concrete – ‘Does he call you names’? Rather than ‘Does he verbally abuse you’?
- + Check understanding through:
 - Clarification: “Could you tell me in your own words”
 - Breaking down complex ideas into parts: “what’s the first thing you need to do? What do you need to do after that?”
 - Naming and concretise alternatives: “We could do X. or we could do Y, either is fine with me. What would you like to do?”
 - Naïve questioner: “I don’t know much about x. Could you tell me about it?”
- + Where possible you may be able to share information with support people or advocate to help give a consistent message and consistent information.

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Working with LGBTIQ clients

- + Be aware and respectful of preferred pronouns, gender identity etc
- + Don't ask irrelevant or unnecessary questions especially in relation to gender identity, sexuality and trans status
- + If a trans client is before the Court, contact the Court to make arrangements for their preferred name to be used so that they are not referred to by their 'dead name', which will cause additional distress and trauma.

Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) clients

- + Be aware of cultural bias and stereotyping
- + Be ready to counter cultural beliefs and concerns – particularly around confidentiality
- + When using interpreters:
 - Allow a lot more time
 - Ensure you have the right interpreter: gender, region, affiliation, community connection
 - Explain role of interpreter and that they have a code of confidentiality
 - Ask client if they can understand the interpreter and resolve misunderstandings
 - Speak in first person with the client. Use short sentences. Speak more slowly
 - On-site, look at client, not the interpreter
 - Watch for long discussion or confusion between interpreter and client. Ask what the interpreter is saying to see if it is just clarifying, or something more
 - Regularly check client's understanding – ask them to repeat back important points
 - Avoid speaking at length without interruptions or comments from the client
 - Repeat matters and rephrase points
 - Avoid jargon and colloquialism
 - Simplify statements: avoid long and complex sentence structures, but don't oversimplify
 - Provide background information, such as the meaning of legal words and concepts.

Resources

- + Domestic violence capacity building for CLCs webinar – *Assisting LGBTIQ clients in domestic violence matters*: <https://communitylegalqld.org.au/clc-staff/staff-training-and-cle/webinars/dv-capacity-building/lgbtiq-clients>
- + Domestic violence capacity building for CLCs webinar – *Assisting culturally diverse clients in domestic violence matters*: <https://communitylegalqld.org.au/clc-staff/staff-training-and-cle/webinars/dv-capacity-building/cald-clients>
- + Domestic violence capacity building for CLCs webinar – *Assisting clients with disabilities in domestic violence matters*: <https://communitylegalqld.org.au/clc-staff/staff-training-and-cle/webinars/dv-capacity-building/disabilities-clients>
- + Domestic violence capacity building for CLCs factsheets <https://communitylegalqld.org.au/clc-staff/staff-training-and-cle/webinars/dv-capacity-building-for-clcs>