

# Fact Sheet: What kind of support is available?



This fact sheet explains the kinds of services and supports that are available in each of the categories in the Directory of Information & Services.

## DV support

Domestic and family violence support services are available in every state and territory and usually offer some combination of emergency accommodation, safety planning, counselling, support for immediate needs (food, clothing), and support to access advice about legal matters, intervention orders, referrals and housing options. Some services have access to what is called “brokerage” which are funds that can help with expenses that no other grants or payments are available to cover.

In this category, you will find links to domestic violence helplines can help connect you with a service somewhere that works for you. In addition to the national helpline, [1800Respect](#), each state and territory has its own helpline.

## Debt help

If you have debts because of your partner’s actions, address these as soon as circumstances allow. Coming up with a plan to deal with debt will help take the pressure off your finances in the short-term, and in the longer term, protect or restore your credit rating, which is likely to be important to give you financial options in the future. A financial counsellor can help you sort out these debts and work with you to plan course of action. [Financial counsellors](#) provide free information, advice and advocacy to people in financial difficulty. Alternatively, you can call a company you owe money to and ask to speak with the “hardship” team. Most financial institutions, utility and telco companies have provisions to support people in what they call “hardship” and sometimes, the teams that provide this support have been trained to understand domestic and family violence.

Beware of companies offering to help you consolidate debts or ‘repair’ your credit for a fee. These services can be obtained for free through a financial counsellor.

## Legal

Australia’s legal system is not easy to navigate with different laws in place at the federal level and in each state and territory. If you’ve been experiencing economic abuse, chances are you do not have lots of money available to secure a high-paid lawyer, unless friends or family are chipping in.

In this category you will find links to good sources of legal information and to a range of state and territory-specific legal services for women, people on low-incomes and First Nations people.

The National Association for Community Legal Centres keeps an up-to-date [list of centres](#) across the country and is a good place to start.

## Financial Assistance

There is a range of types of financial assistance available from state and federal governments, including victim’s compensation, crisis payments and ongoing income support. Some of the eligibility criteria can be confusing but you shouldn’t miss out on support you need because of this. Centrelink has a commitment to “help you understand your rights, entitlements and obligations.” If you don’t understand something, you have the right to ask them to explain it to you.

Often, other services like community organisations or specialist family violence services will be able to help steer you towards options that are most likely to work for you. These same organisations will often be able to help with immediate needs while applications for financial assistance are processed.

Be aware that there are strict timeframes for applying for some payments. In particular, the federal government’s [Crisis Payment](#) for domestic and family violence requires an application within 7 days of your crisis.

## Victim support

Victims of crime can access a range of supports from government agencies and non-government organisations, including specialist counselling and financial payments.

This category provides links to the official victim support agency in each state and territory of Australia, and to some non-government organisations.

## Employment

Many women who have experienced economic abuse have been prevented from working or otherwise had their employment sabotaged. Some have had long periods of time out of the workforce which can make the prospect of re-entering the workforce seem daunting.

There are not-for-profit organisations expressly set up to support women become ready to work. Some organisations support women to gain employment while others support women to become self-employed.

Some educational institutions may offer scholarships to women who have experienced domestic and family violence to develop new skills, and therefore increase employment prospects.

## Indigenous

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience high rates of violence and systemic racism which may reduce the likelihood of support-seeking.

This category includes links to First Nations organisations operating legal services as well as specialist family violence services by and for Indigenous women.

## Housing

When your finances have been compromised by an abusive partner, finding stable and appropriate housing can be an immediate and ongoing challenge.

This category provides links to government and non-government organisations responsible for providing public and social housing, emergency housing, affordable housing, and subsidies for private rental housing.

## Financial wellbeing

Financial wellbeing is about having enough money to cover expenses with some left over, being in control of your finances, and feeling financially secure in the short and long term. If you've experienced economic abuse this might seem like an impossible pipe dream.

The financial wellbeing category includes links to information and services that provide guidance about managing money, your rights as a financial consumer and advice about building (or rebuilding) your financial capability.

No matter how bad things seem right now, there are always steps you can take towards better financial wellbeing in future.