



**WOMEN'S HEALTH
IN THE NORTH**

Without Violence Tip Sheet: Responding to Disclosures from Victim Survivors

Considering the prevalence of family violence, it is likely that campaign facilitators will come into contact with victim survivors during Week Without Violence activities. Stalls, workshops and displays may prompt community members to disclose their experience of abuse.

When planning activities, remember to consider and prioritise the safety of victim survivors.

It is recommended that campaign facilitators watch the [Introduction to Family Violence Response Webinar](#) prior to running their event.

Identifying Family Violence

Given the significant barriers victim survivors experience in disclosing family violence, it is important to respond in a way that validates their experience and prioritises safety interventions.

An effective response to a disclosure includes:

- the story is heard, believed and validated
- the discussion occurs in a safe place
- immediate safety is assessed and actioned
- referrals are offered
- barriers are recognised
- the complexity and impact of family violence is understood
- victim survivor's readiness is respected.

Helpful Responses

When victim survivors disclose, it is important that they are heard and believed. Consider using the following statements:

- I believe you.
- That must have been terrifying. You are a strong person to survive that.
- I'm glad you told me.
- Yes, maybe (the adult using violence) is stressed/affected by alcohol/depressed, but there is no excuse for harming family members.
- Your safety is the most important thing. You and your children have the right to be safe.

Some follow up questions could include:

- Do you have any ideas about what you would like to do next?
- Would you like some information, or would you like to speak with someone who works with victim survivors experiencing family violence?

Prioritising the Safety of Children

It is important to determine an appropriate course of action to address the safety and wellbeing of any children or young people. If a campaign facilitator is concerned for the wellbeing of children they should follow their organisation's protocols and professional guidelines. Referrals can be made to Child Protection or Child FIRST. The safety of children is a priority.