



SPECIALIST FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE EXPECTING SPIKE IN CALLS THIS CHRISTMAS

DVassist is gearing up for an increase in demand for its family and domestic violence counselling and support over the Christmas/New Year period.

The specialist family service for people living in regional, rural and remote communities in Western Australia said cost of living pressures, family estrangement and excess alcohol consumption can contribute to tension within relationships at this time of the year.

Loneliness can also be at its most acute for those who live on remote farms and properties or have been intentionally secluded from their family members by their partner.

“Most people associate the festive season with socialising, plenty of gifts and connecting with family, but for people in abusive relationships it can be an extremely sad and isolating time,” said DVassist Director, Lachlan Hunter.

“We also know people living in many of WA’s regional communities are doing it tough this year and issues such as drought, bushfires and falling agricultural commodity prices are adding to the stress being experienced by some families.

“It is important for people to know that even if they don’t have access to physical services in their local town, DVassist is only a phone call or a text message away,” he said.

Mr Hunter said physical distance from family support networks and services isn’t the only reason people living in small regional and rural communities can feel isolated.

“When you live in a tight-knit town where everybody knows each other you might be reticent to seek help because you want your situation to remain private,” he said.

“People experiencing relationship abuse often keep silent on what is happening due the commonly held belief that what happens behind closed doors is nobody else’s business.

“But the only way we are going to reduce family and domestic violence is to open up conversations and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help.”

According to DVassist, there are still a misconception about family and domestic violence only involving physical abuse.

However, its counsellors are supporting people who are experiencing financial abuse, stalking, emotional abuse, coercive control and tech-facilitated abuse.

“DVassist is playing a critical role in educating people across Western Australia about the full breadth of what constitutes family and domestic violence,” said Mr Hunter.

“It is another critical step in encouraging people to understand that what is happening to them is abuse and that help is not just for people who are victims of physical violence.”

DVassist is available by calling 1800 080 083. If you can't speak and need support, you can text or use their web-chat on dvassist.org.au.

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