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‘Support a friend’ campaign – safe ways to support someone experiencing violence

A new national campaign to help Australians recognise the signs of intimate partner violence and how best to support someone experiencing it has been launched today.

Domestic violence campaigners, 2015 Australian of the Year Rosie Batty and Geelong AFL premiership player Jimmy Bartel, joined forces to launch 1800RESPECT’s ‘Support a friend’ campaign, which provides a practical list of do’s and don’ts when supporting someone experiencing domestic violence.

The campaign, which features a video and information resources, provides practical advice to family and friends about how to talk to and safely support someone who may be experiencing violence, including sexual assault.

According to ANROWS, one in four women in Australia has experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner.

Launching the campaign, Ms Batty said ‘Support a friend’ provides valuable information and advice on how to have the sometimes challenging or difficult conversation with someone experiencing the impacts of violence.

“I believe the most crucial support a family member or friend can lend is to listen without judging,” Ms Batty said.

“Focus on what you can do to support her without telling her what to do. And it’s important that she feels you believe her, and that you want to help her. Blaming her, or suggesting it’s her fault or she should just leave, is not helpful. Respect her decisions even if you don’t agree.”

Bartel, as a result of personal experiences with domestic violence as a child, has pledged to grow the awareness of domestic violence and how people can seek assistance.

"It is important for the people affected by domestic violence to reassure themselves they are not alone, help is available in a variety of ways and that their story is valued and not judged," Bartel said.

"I can't encourage people enough who find themselves in domestic violence environments to have a conversation with family and close friends that they can trust and who can listen and not feel like they need to battle it alone."

Jane French from 1800RESPECT said family and friends should look out for signs that a relative or friend may be experiencing domestic violence, including:

- she seems afraid of her partner or is very anxious to please them
- she often talks about her partner being jealous or bad tempered
- she seems anxious or no longer trusts her own judgement
- she sees less of her friends or family
- she seems reluctant to leave her children with her partner

“Given the impact sexual assault and domestic violence has across every section of our community, it is important for all of us to recognise the signs of violence in others and know what to do to support those women experiencing it,” Ms French said.

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“Many Australians learn CPR because one day someone’s life may depend on it. We should have the same mindset when it comes to educating ourselves about domestic violence because one day the wellbeing, or even the life, of a woman you know may depend on it.

“If someone you know is living with violence, listen to her, take her concerns seriously and help her to explore options.

“You don’t need to have all the answers. Just let her know you are there for her.”

The campaign resources were developed by 1800RESPECT in partnership with Domestic Violence Resources Centre Victoria, OurWatch and ANROWS.

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault or domestic violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au . In an emergency, call 000.

For more information about a service in your state or local area download the [Daisy App](#).

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1800RESPECT is the National Sexual Assault Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service. It is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services as part of the Australian Government's commitment to reduce violence under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022.

1800RESPECT is a confidential online and telephone counselling, information and referral service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is for those experiencing the impacts of sexual assault, domestic and family violence. Victims of sexual assault, domestic and family violence, as well as their family and friends, can call 1800RESPECT or visit the website.