

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY

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Drafted by	Business Manager; and Safe Ministry & Incidents Coordinator
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Table of Content

1. Scope.....	1
2. Crossroads' Duty of Care.....	1
3. Crossroads' Commitments.....	2
4. Support and Care.....	4
Appendix A: Who to contact for help.....	6

1. Scope

1.1 This policy applies to all Crossroads staff, volunteers, congregants, and other visitors to our church¹.

1.2 This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- a. Crossroads' Safe Ministry Policy;
- b. Safe Ministry Guidelines;
- c. Staff Code of Conduct;
- d. Volunteer Code of Conduct;
- e. any relevant Federal or Australian Capital Territory legislation, guidelines, or best practice relating to domestic and family violence.

1.3 The primary focus of this policy is abusive or intimidating behaviour inflicted by an adult against a current or former adult family member². (Abuse involving children should follow child protection procedures as outlined in Crossroads' Safe Ministry Guideline.)

1.4 Domestic and family abuse includes but is not limited to emotional, verbal, social, economic, psychological, spiritual, physical and sexual abuse. Such behaviour often seeks to control, humiliate, dominate or instill fear in the victim.

2. Crossroads' Duty of Care

2.1 Crossroads believes that both domestic and family abuse is contrary to the biblical pattern of mutual love and care of each other in the household, anchored in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also contrary to God's vision for the safety of all members of our church community.

¹ This extends to individuals who often attend Crossroads events, programs or church services, but don't consider themselves a participating member of the church.

² This includes current and/or former spouses, children, parents, immediate and extended family members.

2.2 **All forms of domestic and family abuse are wrong and must stop.** If you are (or suspect to be) a victim of domestic and family abuse, please talk to a Crossroads pastor, Safe Ministry Supervisor (see contact list in Appendix A),

2.3 Crossroads has developed this Domestic & Family Violence Policy in line with scripture, in order to set appropriate standards of behaviour for all individuals as defined in section 1.1.

3. Crossroads' Commitments

3.1 In line with our policies, guidelines, and codes of conduct listed section 1.2, Crossroads is committed to:

- a. recognising equality amongst people;
- b. promoting a culture of healthy relationships that are healthy, Godly, and respectful relationships across marriages, families and the church community.
- c. ensuring that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse while attending Crossroads' programs, events, or at Crossroads venues (e.g. the church office);
- d. striving to implement best practices when protecting the victims of domestic and family abuse;
- e. refusing to condone any form of abuse; and
- f. enable concerns to be raised and responded to clearly, quickly, and consistently.

3.2 Crossroads upholds and affirms that:

- a. abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and in the wider community. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. Sometimes abuse will be a one-off event and at other times it will be a pattern of behaviour; and
- b. Individuals should never abuse their spouses, children or other members of their family.

3.3 Crossroads recognises that:

- a. domestic and family abuse requires a serious and realistic response;
- b. all forms of domestic and family abuse are wrong, may result in a criminal offence, and can cause damage to victims;
- c. domestic and family abuse can occur in all communities, including church communities;
- d. domestic and family abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of child abuse by the perpetrator of the abuse;
- e. working in partnership with vulnerable adults and children, statutory authorities and specialist agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse;
- f. pastoral staff need to obtain advice from those with professional expertise when dealing in domestic and family abuse
- g. where mistakes in caring for people in difficult situations are made, an apology should be offered wherever possible.

3.4 Crossroads respects people who come to us for help by;

- a. Valuing, listening to and respecting both victims and alleged (or known) perpetrators of domestic abuse, while appreciating the need to ensure a distance is kept between the two and refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse;

3.5 Crossroads upholds Scripture's abhorrence of abuse in its words and public statements by

- a. clearly teaching that domestic and family abuse is wrong;
- b. clearly teaching that the Bible should never be used to justify or excuse any form of domestic and family abuse;
- c. clearly teaching that the Bible should not be used to demand a spouse tolerate or submit to domestic and family abuse;
- d. raising awareness of domestic and family violence agencies, support services, resources and expertise;

3.6 Crossroads ensures safety first by:

- a. ensuring that those who have experienced domestic abuse can find safety and informed help as a first priority (see list of contacts in Appendix A for a list of contacts for help about domestic and family abuse);
- b. taking it seriously – ensuring that any disclosures of abuse are taken seriously and not dismissed;
- c. getting help from outside – working with the appropriate statutory authorities during an investigation into domestic violence, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community;
- d. keeping it confidential – respecting the need for confidentiality within the bounds of our Safe Ministry Policy and Guideline, including reporting to authorities when required by law;
- e. challenging with care – carefully challenging inappropriate behaviour, but only in a way that does not place any individual, especially a victim, at increased risk.

4. Support and Care

4.1 Appendix A shows a list of people and organisations you may contact if you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone about domestic and family violence.

4.2 We offer support to those in our care by:

- a. offering informed³ care – ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any adult, child or young person who has suffered domestic abuse;
- b. going at the victim's pace – never pressuring any victim of domestic abuse to forgive, submit to, or restore a relationship with an offender;
- c. understanding that reconciliation comes with conditions – understanding that any reconciliation between victim and offender is dependent principally upon genuine repentance and reformation of the offender, and also upon the willing grace of the victim;
- d. coordinating the care – identifying the appropriate relationships of those with pastoral care responsibilities for both victims and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

³ Crossroads maintains a list of recommended mental healthcare professionals that are trained to assist in a variety of contexts. You may reach out to one of the Crossroads staff for this list at any time.

Appendix A: Who to contact for help

Options available	Description	Contact info
Police	24/7 emergencies or if you're in immediate danger.	Crisis line: 000
Talk to a Safe Ministry Supervisor	Crossroads has designated Safe Ministry Supervisors at all its congregations. Safe Ministry Supervisors are individuals with secular experience or training in caring for individuals. They have also been screened and trained by Crossroads through its Safe Ministry Check process.	<u>Contact info by congregation</u> North: SMSNorth@crossroads.asn.au City: SMSCity@crossroads.asn.au Belconnen: SMSBelco@crossroads.asn.au Lake G: SMSLakeG@crossroads.asn.au
Talk to Crossroads' Safe Ministry & Incidents Coordinator	Crossroads' Safe Ministry & Incidents Coordinator is a paid member of the Crossroads staff team, specifically engaged by Crossroads to manage and resolve Safe Ministry incidents and risks.	Email: safeministry@crossroads.asn.au
Talk to a pastor	Our pastors are often the most recognised people at church. They've made a Biblical commitment to loving and caring for God's people - that includes you! Feel free to chat to them if you need help.	Our pastors' contact details can be found on our website: https://crossroads.org.au/who-we-are

Domestic Violence Crisis Service	Domestic Violence Crisis Service is a non-profit organisation that provides intervention and support services for those suffering from domestic and family violence in the Australian Capital Territory region.	Website: https://www.dvcs.org.au/ Crisis Line: 02 6280 0900
1800 Respect National Helpline	1800Respect is a national domestic family and sexual violence counselling service.	Website: https://1800respect.org.au/ Crisis line: 1800 737 732 Crisis Line Interpretation Service: 13 14 50 Text chat: 0458 737 732
Lifeline	Lifeline is a national charity providing 24-hour crisis support to those experiencing domestic and family violence.	Website: https://www.lifeline.org.au/ Crisis Line: 13 11 14 Text chat: 0477 131 114
Legal Aid	For legal advice regarding: • Applying for a Family Violence Order (FVO); • Understanding and responding to a FVO; • Changing conditions on an FVO if you've made one	Website: https://www.legalaidact.org.au/what-we-do/dv-unit Urgent legal help: 0262 071 874 Email: dv@legalaidact.org.au