



Safety Conversation Guide

How to Talk About Risk,
Readiness, and Support

This guide is designed to help you have sensitive, safety-focused conversations with someone who may be experiencing domestic or family violence. It is not a substitute for professional advice – it's a compassionate starting point for connection and safety planning.

♥ 1. Before You Begin

Pause. Prepare. Protect.

- **Choose a private and calm space.** Avoid conversations where the person's partner or anyone else can overhear.
- **Check your own state first.** Take a breath. Be grounded, not reactive.
- **Respect their autonomy.** Your role is to listen, not to fix.
- **Have resources ready.** Keep helpline numbers or local services on hand (see resource list below).

🌿 2. How to Start the Conversation

Gentle Openers:

- "I've noticed you don't seem yourself lately – how are things at home?"
- "Sometimes when people seem anxious around their partner, it can mean they're not feeling safe. Is that something you'd like to talk about?"
- "You deserve to feel safe and respected. Is everything okay in your relationship?"

Avoid:

- Interrogating ("Why don't you just leave?")
- Blaming ("You must have done something to make him angry.")
- Making promises you can't keep ("I'll fix this.")

🌻 3. Listening Without Judgment

- Believe them. Even if what you hear seems hard to imagine.
- Validate feelings. "That sounds frightening." "No one deserves that."
- Stay calm. Your composure helps them feel safe.
- Avoid giving orders. Instead, ask, "What do you feel you need right now?"

🔒 4. Talking About Safety

If someone discloses abuse, explore their immediate and longer-term safety gently.

Ask:

- "Do you feel safe right now?"
- "Do you have somewhere you can go if you need to leave quickly?"
- "Would you like to talk about a safety plan together?"

Practical Steps to Suggest:

- Keep essential documents, medications, and keys together.
- Code-word with a trusted friend.
- Memorise key phone numbers.
- Avoid digital tracking – turn off location sharing, use safe devices.

🌸 5. Supporting Next Steps

- Offer to help them **contact support services** or **apply for Clare's Law** (where available).
- Encourage them to reach out to **trained domestic violence counsellors**.
- Respect their timing. Leaving can be dangerous and complex.
- Check in later – safety is built through **consistent care**, not one conversation.

💬 6. What to Say if They're Not Ready

- "That's okay. You don't have to decide anything today."
- "Whenever you're ready, I'm here to listen."
- "You're not alone, and it's not your fault."
- "There are services that can help keep you safe when you're ready."

🚑 7. For Professionals & Advocates

If you're a health worker, advocate, or volunteer:

- Follow trauma-informed principles: *Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration, Empowerment*.
- Document only what's necessary.
- Never share information without consent, unless someone is in immediate danger.
- Keep your own emotional boundaries – seek supervision or debriefing.

📞 8. Key Contacts (Australia)

- 1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732 (24/7)
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Men's Referral Service: 1300 766 491
- Police or Emergency: 000
- South Australia Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law): sa.gov.au/dvdisclosure

🌺 9. Remember

Safety conversations are acts of care, not confrontation.

You don't need perfect words – just genuine presence.

When we replace silence with compassion, we plant the seed of change.

🌿 Downloadable Resource

[Free Printable PDF – “Safety Conversation Quick Sheet”](#)