

# How to recognise and respond to renters whose tenancies may be at risk

## Step one: Recognise the early signs

- Non-payment of rent/partial payments of varying amounts/regular late payments
- Decline in presentation of the property
- Renter not communicating with property manager

## Most common causes of housing instability:

- If renting as a couple or share house, relationship/family breakdown, discord between share house members
- **Family or domestic violence** accounts for approximately **17%** of renters seeking housing assistance, and includes both intimate partner violence, as well as violence between carers and dependents
- **Personal housing crises such as physical and or mental health emergencies, problematic addictions** and or **increased disability needs** accounts for around **17%** of rental distress. The renter may present with reduced capacity to maintain the property to a satisfactory standard (particularly if they have historically not had a problem doing so) they may present as emotionally heightened or withdrawn in interactions with property management staff or home inspections may reveal other possible indicators such as rubbish piling up, bad odors or unpaid bills.
- While it is important not to be seen to overstep one's role or infringe upon renter's rights to privacy and confidentiality, seeking clarification and additional information from a renter is reasonable, and may be welcomed, particularly if you can justify such queries with examples which may indicate the renter is experiencing hardship, and if the queries come from a place of non-judgement curiosity and concern for the renter's wellbeing.

**Points to keep in mind:** A tenancy is a home, and the home is a highly personal and sometimes complex space. You may be managing tenancies where renters may be socially isolated, and have minimal support or family and friends, therefore Property Managers may be one of their only points of contact outside the home.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Table clients.21, Specialist homelessness services annual report 2019-20, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/9e4e2ff0-d30c-419-abe6-1bb648fc43dd/Specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report.pdf.aspx?inline=true>, accessed 4th January 2022