



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: AN INTRODUCTORY TOOLKIT

Completed in partnership with



What is domestic abuse and violence?

Domestic abuse/violence is defined by the Home Office (2013) as :

‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional’.

Controlling behaviour is:

‘a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour’.

Coercive behaviour is:

‘an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.’*

*This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Home Office (2013) Information for Local Areas on the change to the Definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Domestic abuse/violence...how would you put this into

language that would make sense to someone who doesn’t

work in social care/a young person?

Domestic abuse/violence and young people

Young people can experience all forms of domestic abuse in their relationships and the likelihood of experiencing high severity abuse is no different to adults – in fact, high severity abuse may be highest for the youngest age group. 2011/12 Crime Survey for England & Wales identified that 16 – 19 year olds were more likely to suffer abuse from a partner than those in any other age range (Home Office 2013).

Male violence against women is different to female violence against men because of:

- **the amount**
- **the severity and**
- **the impact.**

Women are more likely to experience:

- **severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence**
- **persistent psychological or emotional abuse and physical violence and women are more likely to be seriously hurt/killed**
- **higher rates of repeated victimisation**
- **they may also experience higher levels of fear and coercive and controlling behaviours**

Safe Young Lives: Young People and Domestic Abuse (2017)

Data from the Home Office Homicide Index for the year ending March 2020 identified that almost half (46%) of adult female homicide victims were killed in a domestic homicide.

Males were much less likely to be the victim of a domestic homicide, with only 7% of male homicides being domestic in the latest year

ONS (2020)

[Homicide in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

Physical abuse

One fifth of young people have reported physical violence – although a greater proportion of females report severe physical violence (Safe Lives 2017)

This might include – punching, slapping, biting, pinching, pinning down or round the neck, strangling – physical violence can be so severe that it can result in serious injury or death.

Young people might also experience threats of physical violence. For example, using size to intimidate, shouting, breaking things or punching walls/doors, threatening with a gun/knife, threatening to harm others (including children), threats of suicide.

The impact of physical abuse/violence:

Physical abuse can result in death or serious injury.

Visible signs: **bruises and welts; lacerations and abrasions; abdominal or thoracic injuries; fractures and broken bones or teeth; sight and hearing damage; head injury; attempted strangulation; and back and neck injury.** Women may pass this off as 'accidental' or because they are clumsy. Krug (2002) also identifies...**hair loss, tiredness due to sleep deprivation.**

Far more common... 'stress-related conditions', and include irritable bowel syndrome/ gastrointestinal symptoms, fibromyalgia, various chronic pain syndromes and exacerbation of asthma; migraines, hypertension and skin disorders. poorer physical health overall compared with women who have not experienced violence, and it increases the risk of women developing a range of health problems (Krug 2002).

Emotional abuse

Half of all young people reported emotional abuse, most often being shouted at and/or called names.

Criticism, verbal abuse & disrespect: shouting; name calling; putting them down; taking money without asking.

Pressurising: threats to withhold items (car/money/drugs/medication). Using children (eg denying/changing contact), threats to go to the police/social care unless they do what they are told; pressure to use drugs/alcohol; lying to others about the person; taking away choice in decision making.

Denial, blame, 'gaslighting': saying that the abuse doesn't happen; that they were 'joking' or the person was dreaming it up, mad, confused or overdramatic; blaming the victim- they 'wind' them up, so it's their fault; saying that they can't control their anger.

Breaking trust: lying; jealous; involved in other relationships; breaking promises and shared agreements.

Presenting a different side when with other people, e.g. being publicly gentle and loving; buying presents

Promising to change behaviour - crying and begging for forgiveness; promising it will never happen again.

Controlling what the person can do - where they can/can't go; access to friends/family; locking them in a room/house.

Accompanying the person wherever they go/following and stalking them – stopping attendance at appointments with GP/mental health services or insisting that they attend with them (e.g. midwife)

Sexual violence/abuse

A third of adolescent girls and a quarter of boys reported sexual violence through pressure or physical force - higher rates for girls if only physical force is included in the definition. An End Violence Against Women (EVAW) poll in 2006 also found 40% of young people had been pressured to have sex.

Using physical force or threats/intimidation to perform sexual acts or watch pornographic material; threats to post or posting sexual pictures/video online; pressure into having sex

Forcing them to have sex with other people – **consider whether the young person is being sexually exploited.**

Unwanted touching/sexual assault

Degrading treatment related to sexuality or with regard to whether they are lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual.

Filming without consent (for example, while in bed or just out of the shower) and posting online

Online abuse

The Young Peoples Programme (2014) reporting on Safe Lives website identified that young people are experiencing 'high levels of harassment and stalking, jealous and controlling behaviours and emotional abuse. As using a mobile phone and the internet is now the default position for young people when communicating with friends, the abuse frequently takes place online in addition to offline behaviours'.

Most often there is controlling behaviour and surveillance through messaging or social networking sites - pressured **sexting and sending nudes and so called 'revenge porn'** – this is most often reported by girls/women.

Tracking location online; not allowing privacy (eg opening mail, checking phone), checking to see who has phoned or FB posts/likes; accessing their phone or online applications, reading their message; embarrassing them online; disconnecting phone/internet, taking away/destroying mobile or laptop,

Financial abuse – buying things online using the young person's account
monitoring or blocking phone calls, e-mails and social media accounts,

Constantly phoning/texting to see where they are/who they are with

Interrupting calls or asking them to end calls – talking/instructing in the background

Getting others to track, follow or harass online - even when a relationship is over, other people can be used for online control of the young person.

Pregnancy

*Nearly 30% of abuse starts in pregnancy & 40-60% of women who have experienced domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy. Domestic violence has overtaken gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia as the leading cause of foetal death
Royal College of Midwives (2016)*

- *Coercion to get pregnant or to continue an unwanted pregnancy*
 - *Risks to the unborn baby - miscarriage; foetal injury including death, stillbirth;*
 - *Pregnancy complications,*
 - *late entry into maternity services/seeing a midwife*
 - *premature labour and birth;*
 - *maternal mortality*
 - *low-birth-weight or small-for-gestational-age infants*
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Honour based violence and forced marriage

'Honour'-based violence(although the use of the word 'honour' in terms of 'honour' based violence is contentious) is included under the government definition of domestic abuse and includes forced marriage. 68% of victims of honour based violence are at high risk of homicide or serious harm (Safe Lives 2017)

Forced marriage: It is a criminal offence in England, Wales and Scotland to force someone to marry (or take them overseas to be married or to force someone to marry when they lack capacity to consent to the marriage).

A young person who has recently turned 16 is at a high-risk trigger point for forced marriage and, in cases where the concept of 'honour' is at stake, there is a significantly increased potential for multiple perpetrators.

<https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/forms-of-violence-and-abuse/honour-based-violence/>

The impact of domestic violence and abuse on young people:

Physical health – risk of death or serious injury, bruises and welts; fractures and broken bones/teeth; head injury; attempted strangulation; and back and neck injury. Can also cause ‘stress-related conditions’, for example, hair loss, IBS and gastrointestinal symptoms. poorer physical health overall compared with women who have not experienced violence, and it increases the risk of women developing a range of health problems (Krug 2002).

Emotional health – depression and anxiety, self-harm, PTSD, suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide. Shame and anger. - alcohol and drug abuse;
- eating and sleep disorders; physical inactivity; poor self-esteem;

Financial difficulties – unable to pay rent or buy food

Relationships /social life - Restrictions on social life – isolated from family and friends. Not allowed to go to interviews, attend lessons or go to work which can result in loss of job or education and reduced income and opportunities.

Sexual and reproductive health

Unintended and unwanted pregnancy

Access to contraception, abortion or forced into unsafe abortion

Sexually transmitted infections including HIV

Infections and disease, including pelvic inflammatory disease,

Urinary tract infections

Access to medical treatment might be blocked, which increases risk of infection and physical health problems.

Difficulty engaging with services, including 1625 – this might be discouraged or prevented by the person perpetrating the abuse. This can result in homelessness, not accessing mental health or drug and alcohol support.

It is estimated that 1 in 5 children are exposed to domestic abuse, so this means that for many young people their experience of domestic violence does not begin in their own intimate relationship or by demonstrating harming behaviour themselves, but in the childhood home.

“Young people who have experienced abuse are making complex, daily decisions about risk and safety. Due to the trauma response, they may be living mainly in the ‘survival’ part of the brain, constantly hyper-vigilant and scanning for threats and danger. This may come at the expense of higher reasoning, problem solving and logical reasoning.” *(Sharpen (2017) – Safe Lives:2017)*

‘The abuse that young people experience may also look different to the abuse that adults experience. Young people commonly experience abuse through new technologies and social media, which can be used as a monitoring or harassment tool by the perpetrator. SafeLives data shows that young people are more likely than adult victims of abuse to be in a relationship with the perpetrator at the point at which they accessed support. And our Spotlight case studies highlight that they may not see themselves as a ‘victim’, especially when they too are demonstrating some forms of abusive behaviour’ (Safe Lives 2017:8)

Regardless of whether they can access adult support, the evidence suggests that young people need a different response to adults (Safe Lives 2017:8)

Managing concerns and disclosures

As a result of speaking to young survivors of DVA, Safelink identify that **young people require time to build relationships**. They **need to build a rapport** with professionals before they are able to disclose the extent of the abuse they are experiencing and trust them to provide support.

Sharpen from Ava (2017) explains that the time required to establish a rapport **may be linked to the trauma that the young person has experienced. A young person's experience of trauma may affect their ability to build relationships, to engage with others (especially adults), or to take on new information, and maintain a schedule of appointments or phone calls (Safe Lives 2017)**

If you are concerned that a young person is experiencing domestic abuse or violence start with open, indirect, non-threatening questions: keep discussions open and use open questions.

Don't press the young person to disclose – young people will need to do this in their own time – forcing a discussion may make them retreat from you. You can talk more generally about healthy relationships and expectations about relationships. Many young people will not be aware they are in an abusive relationship.

Listening is the most valuable thing you can do at first and might be the only help they can accept at this stage.

The young person may need time to consider any discussion, so it's important that you stay in contact with them. It is important that you or someone else, continue to offer support until they are ready to talk to someone about what is happening to them.

Following a disclosure

- Reassure that the violence and abuse is not their fault
- Believe them and do not minimise the abuse.

- Be sensitive to and discuss young people's fears and take their concerns seriously, even if you know the perpetrator and the behaviour described does not match your own experience of them.

- Be careful not to push them into taking **what you see** as the right course of action. Often the young person may ask you what they should do - **try to help the young person with what they decide is right for them.**

- Explore the support they might need & be aware of support services that are available.

Record what the young person has said , in their own words, as much as is possible.

Do not promise to maintain confidentiality or that you won't tell anyone.

Privacy is a key area of concern for young people, so always aim to be transparent about the limits on what information you can keep confidential.

From the outset, revisit your confidentiality policy [and safeguarding policy], and make sure you repeat the limits of confidentiality at regular intervals during your contact with young people. While this can make disclosures less likely, it is necessary for a positive disclosure environment - young people will need to be confident about what you will do with the information they give you.

Think about the language you use when talking to or about young people.

Are we giving young people the message that they are responsible for the abuse due to their alcohol use, clothing, behaviour or lifestyle?

Messages can increase feelings of self-blame, reduce likelihood of seeking help and shift the focus away from those perpetrating abuse – for example, '**why do you stay with him**' or '**why don't you just leave**' and '**you shouldn't let someone treat you like that**' '**what did you do**' ?

'**Is your relationship going through a bad patch**' or '**is he in a bad place at the moment?**' – we are at risk of minimising the incident or writing this off as a one-off incident.

Did they mean it...were they drunk?

Avoid jargon...your concerns needs to be explained clearly so that young people understand what DVA is and what your worries are about the risk

Also consider the use of...

'Putting themselves at risk' – this implies that the person is responsible, despite the fact that they may have been groomed, controlled or coerced.

'Involved in CSE' – suggests choice, rather than the fact that the young person is being exploited, groomed or controlled/coerced.

'promiscuous' – is not a helpful label for any young person but particularly where a young person is being exploited.

'drug running' when considered in the context of an abusive relationship, this needs to be considered as part of the control in the relationship.

Safeguarding and safety planning

All agencies have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people in violent relationships.

Be aware of your local safeguarding procedures, including safeguarding procedures if the young person is under 18, and seek advice and support from your Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Learn about support agencies and DVA services who might be able to assist young people (there are contact numbers for agencies at the end of this booklet)

Don't forget to consider links between domestic violence and the exploitation of young people, including child sexual exploitation.

It is important that you talk to a Wellbeing Advisor or your Designated Safeguarding Lead if you are concerned about a young person. They may consider completing a DASH risk assessment with the young person, or support you to complete one with the young person. The DASH can help to identify the level of risk to the young person – this may also help to decide whether to refer to an IDVA or MARAC (see below).

An **IDVA** (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) is a **specialist professional who works with a victim/survivor of domestic abuse to develop a trusting relationship**. They can help someone who is experiencing, or has experienced DVA with everything they need to become safe and rebuild their life. They can also help them to understand the criminal justice system or legal processes available to keep them safe. They work with the different agencies to provide multi-agency support.

Young Person's IDVA role:

- To reduce harm to young people (up to 18 years) caused through intimate partner abuse and violence.
- To address the immediate risk to young victims of intimate partner abuse and violence.
- Ongoing assessment of risk and amending safety plans as necessary.

A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

After sharing all relevant information they have about a victim, the representatives discuss options for increasing the safety of the victim and turn these into a coordinated action plan. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the victim. The MARAC will also make links with other fora to safeguard children and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator.

At the heart of a MARAC is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a victim, but all may have insights that are crucial to their safety.

APPS

Aspire News (appears as a news app and contains summaries of the top about world news)

Bright Sky is a free to download mobile app, providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know. It is also designed to be used by practitioners. <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

Hollie Guard - Personal Safety App free to download - <https://hollieguard.com>

- personal alert

- stealth alert

- deterrent alert

My Plan – looks like a health and fitness app

'Love don't feel bad' website has been created by Womens Aid and is aimed at young people - [LoveRespect - Everyone has a right to be safe and happy](#)

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- The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is often called 'Clare's Law'. Clare's Law gives any member of the public the right to ask the police if their partner may pose a risk to them.
 - Under Clare's Law, a member of the public can also make enquiries into the partner of a close friend or family member.
 - Young people can make a Clare's Law application at a Police Station or via 101.
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SAFETY PLANNING

It is important that the young person completes this themselves (with support) as they will be more likely to remember the plan. There is a Safety Plan on the Safe Lives website but talk with a Wellbeing Advisor or your Safeguarding Lead for support with this https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/YP_safetyplan.pdf

The young person should be encouraged to call 999 if they are in danger.

Talk with the young person about safety when they are online, as well as inside the project and when they leave, for example, if an argument occurs they should try to move to a space that is low risk and try to move to a public place. Avoid places where they can't get out...for example, a bathroom and rooms without an outside exit should also be avoided.

Keep their mobile fully charged so they can contact help if needed.

Create a code word for use with people they trust.

Try to ensure that the abuser doesn't have control of key documents/possessions - e.g. bank cards, phone, driving licence etc...

Help them to plan where to go if they need to get away and how they will get back to their home.

Useful websites and helplines

Forced Marriage Service (Next Link) - Telephone 0117 9250680 or Karma Nirvana Telephone: 0800 599 9247

GALOP helpline 0800 999 5428 /National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Line 020 7704 2040 - London LGBT+ Advice Line

Mens Advice Line (Domestic Abuse) Telephone: 0808 801 0327

Mindline Trans+ Telephone: 0300 330 5468

National Domestic Violence Helpline – Freephone 0808 2000 247

National Centre for Domestic Violence Telephone: 0844 8044 999 (Option 1: Information about getting an injunction) Text: NCDV to 60777 and we will call back

National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 9995428

Next Link Domestic Abuse Services - Telephone: Bristol: 0117 925 0680 South Gloucestershire: Tel: 08004700280 or Text: 07714290011

One25 (Sexual Violence Support Service) Telephone : 0117 909 8832 - office@one25.org.uk

OPOKA – DV support for Polish women. The contact telephone number for professionals only: 0117 427 00 12 The freephone for Polish Women: 0300 365 1700

PALADIN – for high risk victims of stalking 020 3866 4107

RENEW refuge (Bath) 01225 354 661

Respect phonenumber (for perpetrators of domestic abuse) Telephone: 0808 802 4040

Revenge Porn Helpline Telephone: 03456 000 459

Rights of Women – free and confidential legal advice for women – Tel: 020 7251 8887

SafeLink Telephone Helpline – Telephone: 0333 323 1543 Telephone: 0117 925 0680

SARSAS (Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Assault Service) - Telephone: Women & Girls 0808 801 0456 Men & Boys 0808 801 0464

Stalking helpline - Telephone: 0808 802 0300

SARC – Sexual Assault Referral Centre Telephone: 0117 342 6999

Survivors UK (male rape and sexual assault) – 02035983898

The ManKind Initiative Telephone: 01823 334244

The Men’s Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327 (run by Respect)

The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994

The Sky Project (Professional advice re forced marriage) - Telephone: 07990 625805

UNseen (Trafficking) 0300 020 0290 - Resettlement, Integration and Outreach (RIO)

Womankind Telephone: Office: 0117 9166461 Helpline: 0845 458 2914