

Diocese of Winchester Safeguarding

ADDRESSING DOMESTIC ABUSE



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WINCHESTER

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FOREWORD

Domestic abuse is disturbingly prevalent in our communities and, much as we would wish it to be otherwise, in our churches as well. As this document highlights, one in four women will be subjected to physical assault by their partner in their lifetime. Whether you are aware of it or not, you will know several people who have been or are currently suffering from domestic abuse.

In July 2004 the General Synod passed a motion noting that domestic violence is a crime and committing the Church of England to speaking out against it and working for justice and safety in the homes of the nation. As a Church we have made that commitment, but there is still a great deal of work to be done in this Diocese and across the Church to take domestic abuse seriously and to learn to address it as a real and urgent problem. This material will assist us in identifying and challenging abuse and in supporting those who are or have experienced abuse. We need to be prepared to name domestic abuse and to deal with it appropriately.

As this document clearly sets out, we as a Church affirm that domestic abuse in all its forms is contrary to the will of God as expressed in Scripture and is an affront to human dignity. We must all play our part in preventing it, dealing with it appropriately and working towards stopping it whenever we are aware of it.

I hope this material will assist parishes and individuals in our Diocese to address these issues in an informed way and be of use to anyone entrusted by victims, survivors or perpetrators to hear their story. I commend these guidelines to you.



+ Timothy Dakin

The Rt Revd Tim Dakin, Bishop of Winchester

INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse is:

“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. (Definition of ‘Honour based violence and FGM in Annexe 1.

Whilst it is recognised that women perpetrate domestic abuse and men experience domestic abuse in the majority of cases men are the perpetrators and women experience the abuse. It should also be recognised and accepted that domestic abuse can and does happen in same sex relationships and therefore the perpetrator can be the same sex as the victim.

We have chosen to use the name ‘domestic abuse’ rather than ‘domestic violence’ as abuse suggests a series of actions not limited to physical violence. Violence is always abuse, but abuse is not always violent.

Church of England

In July 2004 the General Synod of the Church of England passed the following motion:

‘That this Synod, noting that domestic violence is regarded by the Home Office and the police as a crime:

- 1) view with extreme alarm the number of incidents being regularly reported, as being an unacceptable picture of suffering and abuse;
- 2) call for national guidelines to be issued by the Archbishops’ Council for those with pastoral care responsibilities, as to the appropriate relationship with both victims and perpetrators;
- 3) recognise the special circumstances associated with domestic violence, and therefore the special needs of victims, in minority ethnic communities; and
- 4) urge all dioceses to consider ways in which they could:
 - a) work in partnership with other agencies, co-operating sensitively with those serving minority communities, to provide the resources needed by victims and their families;
 - b) speak out against the evil of domestic violence; and
 - c) work for justice and safety in the homes of this nation.

Aims and principles of the guidance

The aim of this guidance manual is to enable the Church to address domestic abuse both within its own community and wider society. The Church has, or should have, a prophetic role in society and this is one area where we can fulfil that role – both locally and internationally. The manual is intended to raise awareness and to highlight some of the areas that need to be considered in making our churches safe places. It will not make us experts and we must be aware this is a very complex issue. It will also signpost us in the direction for engaging professional help and advice. Please do use these resources and don't try to go it alone.

We hope the information here will be useful to:

1. Those who have previously or are currently experiencing domestic abuse
2. Those who may be at risk of domestic abuse
3. All those within churches
4. Church Leaders
5. Those involved in pastoral teams
6. Children's, families and youth workers
7. Those leading Marriage Preparation courses

The principles behind the guidance are¹:

- Belief in God as love expressed in relationships.
- Understanding of humanity (female and male) as made in God's image, and possessing equal worth.
- Equality amongst people and within relationships.
- Refusal to condone any form of abuse.
- Recognition that domestic abuse is prevalent among Christians, as among other groups.
- Acceptance that survivors may choose anyone they trust to talk to, and not necessarily those with pastoral responsibilities.

- Awareness that training for all is essential.
- Partnership with other agencies is the best way to provide informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult suffering abuse.
- Support, supervision, appraisal and ongoing training for those with pastoral responsibilities is essential.

¹ As stated in The House of Bishops document Responding to Domestic Abuse

What is Domestic abuse?

“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*
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- *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.

Domestic abuse comprises a number of different behaviours², for example:

Physical Abuse: For example, hitting; slapping; burning; pushing; restraining; giving too much medication or the wrong medication; assault with everyday implements such as kitchen knives; kicking; biting; punching; shoving; smashing someone’s possessions; imprisoning them; or forcing them to use illegal drugs as a way of blackmailing and controlling them.

Financial Abuse: For example, the illegal or unauthorized use of someone’s property, money, pension book or other valuables; forcing them to take out loans; keeping them in poverty; demanding to know every penny they spend; refusing to let them use transport or have money to pay for it. Being kept without money, having wages, benefits or pension taken from you.

Psychological (Emotional) Abuse: For example, shouting; swearing; frightening; blaming; ignoring or humiliating someone; blackmailing them; threatening harm to children or pets if they misbehave; ridiculing every aspect of their appearance and skills; keeping them deliberately short of sleep; being obsessively and irrationally jealous; keeping them isolated from friends and family; threatening suicide or self-harm. Being verbally abused, being put down in front of other people.

Sexual Violence: For example, forcing someone to take part in any sexual activity without consent, e.g. rape or sexual assault; forcing them or blackmailing them into sexual acts with other people; sexual name-calling; imposition of dress codes upon a partner; involvement in the sex trade or pornography; knowingly passing on Sexually Transmitted Infections; controlling access to contraception. Forcing to watch or act out pornography, being talked to in sexually degrading ways, indecent phone calls. Being coerced into sexual activity – ‘I wont talk to you if you don’t....’

² Please note, these lists are not exhaustive and any combination of behaviours can be used – there is no ‘one size fits all’ to domestic abuse and each case should be considered individually.

Spiritual Abuse: For example, telling someone that God hates them; refusing to let them worship (e.g. not allowing a partner to go to church); using faith as a weapon to control and terrorize them for the abuser's personal pleasure or gain; using religious teaching to justify abuse (e.g. 'submit to your husband'), or to compel forgiveness.

Neglect: For example, depriving someone of food, shelter, heat, clothing, comfort, essential medication or access to medical care.

Recognising abuse

The following list may help in recognising whether someone is experiencing domestic abuse:

- Threatening behaviour: verbal threats, physical threats, being watched, being followed, being pestered.
- Criticism / verbal abuse: this may include: shouting, mocking, accusing, name calling or threatening.
- Pressure: may include sulking, disconnecting the telephone, removing access to the car, threatening to withhold money, to commit suicide, to take the children away, lying to your friends and family, convincing you that you do not have any say in decisions.
- Disrespect: putting you down in front of others, ignoring you, listening to or interrupting your phone calls.
- Breaking trust: lying, keeping back information, jealousy, breaking promises, infidelity.
- Isolation: dictating where you can go, who you can see, what you can do, monitoring your friends, and phone calls.
- Harassment: following you, checking up on you, opening your mail, checking your phone calls, embarrassing you in front of others.
- Threats: physical intimidation, damaging possessions, shouting.
- Sexual violence: force, threats or intimidation to perform certain sex acts, forcing you to have sex if you don't want to.
- Physical violence: punching, kicking, slapping, biting, pulling hair, pushing.
- Denial: saying you are to blame for the behaviour, being kind and gentle in public, denying the behaviour happens, saying it will never happen again.

In many cases the perpetrator will make comments under the guise of a joke. If the victim attempts to object they are passed off as a 'spoilsport' someone who can't take a joke, a killjoy. It can be very easy to laugh along with the perpetrator and miss the pain in the eyes of the victim.

Many perpetrators will present themselves publicly as a very nice, friendly, helpful, considerate, caring person. The sort of person we are all keen to call a friend. This disguise can make it even harder for the victim to seek help as they fear (and are frequently told by the perpetrator) that no-one would believe them anyway.

Domestic abuse may be perpetrated by:

- A partner – male or female
- A former partner – male or female
- A family member – male or female, young or old.

Domestic abuse is all about exerting power and control over another person.

Many things make up the spectrum of domestic abuse: threats, harassment, physical attack and harm, financial control, emotional abuse, sexual assault. It can happen to anyone – regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, wealth, occupation. Domestic abuse is seldom a one off event and tends to escalate over time.

Who experiences domestic abuse?

There is no standard profile for a victim of domestic abuse. Those who experience domestic abuse come from all social groups, class, age, race, disability, sexuality or lifestyle. The majority of abuse is carried out by men against female partners, but abuse can be inflicted on men by women and can also occur in same sex relationships.

As with other forms of abuse it is sometimes assumed that domestic abuse is a 'working class' problem, but domestic abuse happens across the social spectrum.

Any children in a family where domestic abuse is perpetrated will be severely affected by this abuse. (See later section).

They may:

1. Witness the abuse directly, or indirectly by seeing the victim's distress or injuries
2. Intervene to protect the victim, either physically or by getting help
3. Be forced by the adult abuser to join in with the abuse
4. Have disrupted routines, sleep patterns, etc
5. Be allowed little or no social contact with others
6. Be told to keep it 'secret'
7. Be experiencing abuse
8. Be neglected

We must guard against any stereotype of a 'victim of domestic abuse'. We must also not be misled into thinking 'this sort of thing doesn't happen in churches'. It does and will continue to do so, sometimes unchallenged, unless we have a clear understanding of what domestic abuse is and why it is wrong.

Who perpetrates domestic abuse?

Just as there is no profile for someone who experiences domestic abuse, there is also no profile for someone who perpetrates domestic abuse.

People from all walks of life perpetrate domestic abuse - doctors, lawyers, police officers, vicars, teachers, lorry drivers and soldiers have been found to be abusing their partners. Perpetrators of domestic abuse come from every part of society. We may 'experience' someone in a particular way – usually as the nicest, kindest, most helpful person around, any disclosure of abuse by a partner should be taken seriously and believed – regardless of whether we have ever seen anything of this sort of behaviour in the person.

People who abuse their partners make a choice to do so; to gain power and control over them. They have the choice how they act. Factors such as childhood issues, alcohol, drugs, mental and other health problems are not the cause of domestic abuse, nor are they an excuse for it. They may be factors in the situation, but they are not the cause.

Domestic abuse happens within the Church community. Church leaders and prominent members of churches have been found to be abusers, and there are many more still perpetrating abuse. The reality for someone married to or in a relationship with an abuser who is a church leader can be horrific. As well as the abuse they are suffering, they may feel some kind of responsibility to the church their partner is leading to stay quiet and continue to suffer – because, after all “they are a wonderful leader and God is clearly using them to build the Kingdom”. The victim may have concerns about the impact a disclosure may have on the church family, individual's faith, the wider reputation of the church. Whilst these may be real considerations none of them are reason for the victim to continue to experience the abuse or to stop them disclosing the abuse.

Signs and symptoms of domestic abuse

It is not possible to create a definitive list of signs that indicate that domestic abuse is happening because:

a) Perpetrators of abuse are very manipulative and good at lying to hide their behaviour and victims of abuse will be very skilled at hiding whatever abuse is happening due to fear, shame and the desire to protect themselves and their children.

b) Domestic abuse can occur on many levels and at opposite extremes, for example, a person may never be allowed to work or leave the house, or may be forced to work long hours. A person may never be allowed to leave the children alone, or may never be allowed to touch the children or go near them.

If you are concerned that someone may be experiencing domestic abuse you may notice that they exhibit some of the following behaviours:

- unexplained bruises or injuries;
- shows signs of feeling suicidal;
- becomes unusually quiet or withdrawn;
- panic attacks;
- frequent absences from work or other commitments;
- wears clothes that conceal even on warm days;
- stops talking about her/his partner;
- is anxious about being out or rushes away.

The following may be a more comprehensive (but not exhaustive) list of warning signs that abuse may be happening:

1. A person is never seen on their own, they are always accompanied by their partner.
2. She / he may become increasingly isolated, maybe moving a long way from family, may not have any friends or may gradually stop seeing them, may withdraw from church.
3. Their partner may talk over them or for them and she / he may be reluctant to speak. Their partner may appear controlling or may regularly make disparaging comments about them.
4. They may have unexplained injuries. However, most perpetrators are skilled in ensuring the injuries inflicted on their partners are in places that are easily able to be covered up. When approached about any injuries she / he may make excuses about how they happened.
5. If a partner is behaving publicly in an inappropriate manner the victim may justify and excuse the behaviour.
6. She / he may lose their job, have regular unexplained absences from work or often be late to work.
7. They may appear to be very fearful, jumpy or over careful in their partner's company.
8. Her / his partner may contact them excessively, constantly texting and ringing them.
9. They may have no access to money.
10. They may not want people to visit them at home or may not be comfortable giving out their address or details.
11. Her / his partner may be unsociable with his / her friends, family or colleagues, or may be extremely charismatic and friendly to everyone. He / she may belittle them in public.
12. If they have children she / he may find it very difficult to control them and they may call him / her names and ignore them. Or the children may be extremely clingy to and not want to leave her / him.
13. The perpetrator may tell people their partner is abusing them and that they are a victim of domestic abuse.

14. In a new relationship a partner may constantly want to be with her / him and may 'surprise' them with visits when they know the person will be spending time with other people.
15. She / he may move in with him / her /become engaged /become pregnant very quickly after first meeting / starting a relationship.
16. An abuser may seek to present their partner as unreasonable and themselves as the victim of the unreasonable behaviour.
17. A person's behaviour may start to change after meeting him / her beginning a relationship.
18. They may stop talking about their partner.

**Please remember this is not an exhaustive list*

About domestic abuse

Domestic violence accounts for between 16% and one quarter of all recorded violent crime (Home Office, 2004; Dodd et al., 2004; BCS, 1998; Dobash and Dobash, 1980).

One incident is reported to the police every minute (Stanko, 2000).

45% women and 26% men had experienced at least one incident of inter-personal violence in their lifetimes (Walby and Allen, 2004) – however when there were more than 4 incidents (i.e. ongoing domestic or sexual abuse) 89% of victims were women.

In any one year, there are 13 million separate incidents of physical violence or threats of violence against women from partners or former partners (Walby and Allen, 2004).

Women are much more likely than men to be the victim of multiple incidents of abuse, and of sexual violence: 32% of women who had ever experienced domestic violence did so four or five (or more) times, compared with 11% of the (smaller number) of men who had ever experienced domestic violence; and women constituted 89% of all those who had experienced 4 or more incidents of domestic violence (Walby and Allen, 2004).

Women are more likely than men to have experienced all types of intimate violence (partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking) since the ages of 16. And nearly half the woman who had experienced intimate violence of any kind, were likely to have been victims of more than one kind of intimate abuse (Coleman et al., 2007).

54% of UK rapes are committed by a woman's current or former partner (Walby and Allen, 2004).

On average 2 women a week are killed by a male partner or former partner: this constitutes around one-third of all female homicide victims (Povey, (ed.), 2004, 2005; Home Office, 1999; Department of Health, 2005).

Repeat victimisation is common. 44% are victimised more than once, and almost one in five (18%) are victimised three or more times. (Dodd et al., 2004) An earlier British Crime Survey found even higher rates of repeat victimisation: 57%. (Home Office, July 2002).

At least 750,000 children a year witness domestic violence (Department of Health, 2002).

Children who live with domestic violence are at increased risk of behavioural problems and emotional trauma, and mental health difficulties in adult life (Kolbo, et al., 1996; Morley and Mullender, 1994; Hester et al., 2000).

Nearly three quarters of children on the 'at risk' register live in households where domestic violence occurs and 52% of child protection cases involving domestic violence (Department of Health, 2002; Farmer and Owen, 1995).

In 75% to 90% of incidents of domestic violence, children are in the same or the next room (Hughes, 1992; Abrahams, 1994).³

³ Data source: Domestic Violence Statistics (2009). National Women's Aid.

30% of domestic violence starts in pregnancy. (Lewis and Drife, 2001, 2005; McWilliams and McKiernan, 1993).

Domestic violence has been identified as a prime cause of miscarriage or still-birth (Mezey, 1997), and of maternal deaths during childbirth (Lewis and Drife, 2001, 2005).

Between 4 and 9 women in every 100 are abused during their pregnancies and/or after the birth. (Taft, 2002).

The UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People (O'Keefe et al., 2007) found that:

- 2.6% of people aged 66 and over reported that they had experienced mistreatment involving a family member, close friend or care worker during the past year, which equates to about 227,000 people.
- Mistreatment and abuse by partners/spouses in the last year involved 51% of cases, other family members at 49% and carers and close friends making up 18% (respondents could mention more than one person), with 53% of perpetrators living in the respondent's household.
- 80% of interpersonal abuse perpetrators were men and 20% were women.

Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Research has shown that disabled women experience abuse at least twice as often as non-disabled women.

According to the British Crime Survey 2004/05 and the homicide statistics for 2006/07 (Povey et al, 2008) 46% of male victims had experienced one incident of partner abuse in the last year, 14% had experienced 2 incidents, 20% had experienced 3 - 5 incidents of partner abuse, 9% between 6 and 20 incidents, 2% between 21 and 29 incidents and 9% more than 50 times or too many to count.

Work has been done to determine the 'cost' of domestic abuse. The figures suggest that domestic abuse:

- Costs Social Services an estimated £250 million a year. These costs are primarily related to children especially those caught up in both domestic abuse and child abuse.
- Costs the NHS £1.2 billion a year. Involving GPs and hospitals. This is mostly related to physical injuries but includes an estimated £176 million for mental health care.
- About £160 million a year in emergency housing costs.

'Domestic abuse is a cost borne by everyone through taxes for public services, lost economic output due to time off work, and the human and emotional costs to those who suffer the abuse.' Sylvia Walby, *The Cost of Domestic Violence*.

Christian women can be and are the victims of domestic abuse. Christian men can be and are the perpetrators of domestic abuse. People in your church may be perpetrating and / or experiencing domestic abuse. Children in your Sunday School and youth group may have and probably will have witnessed domestic abuse.

You may have been approached to offer help, support and advice to an individual or family experiencing domestic abuse. Your children's or youth workers may have been made aware of domestic abuse by those in their groups. Do you know what to do, where to go for help or how to advise someone?

Particularly within churches and Christian communities domestic abuse is still a subject it is very difficult to talk about. The church places great emphasis on 'the family' and many people will find it difficult to speak

of this kind of difficulty. Some may have tried and received a response that was not helpful and will be reluctant to broach the subject again unless they have some encouragement that they will receive a sympathetic response. It is often helpful to display some of this material as individuals may be reluctant to speak to someone in the church and need some encouragement and way of being given permission that it is OK to talk about these things.

Domestic abuse does not respect class, race, age, gender, or geography. It is predominantly male against female, although more male victims are coming forward.

Domestic abuse is often cyclical. Frequently periods of abuse will be followed by a time of regret, remorse and apparent reconciliation. When the tensions build up again the abusive behaviour usually recurs. This cycle may and probably will be repeated many times before action is taken. It is very rare for domestic abuse to happen just once.

As Christians and those seeking to help and support someone experiencing domestic abuse, we have to be aware of our own reactions and responses and ensure we have appropriate opportunities to deal with our own feelings. It is likely and entirely appropriate that we will have an emotional response to such disclosure. These emotions may range between confusion, disappointment, betrayal, anger, hurt, a desire for action against the offender, wanting to do all we can for the person experiencing the abuse, disbelief, etc. We need to ensure as far as possible we don't let our own reactions take over – we must give the person disclosing our full attention and the appropriate support. An interrogation or anything that might suggest doubt or disbelief 'he didn't did he?' 'I just can't believe it', 'I'm amazed, she just doesn't seem the sort' may well cause the person to close up and drop the subject.

Listening, believing and not judging are the greatest gifts we can offer someone talking for the first time about or experiencing domestic abuse.

Myths about domestic abuse

For those of us who have not experienced domestic abuse it is very easy to assume or to adopt views or attitudes which are incorrect and are based on a misconception about what domestic abuse is and who it affects. The aim of the list below is to challenge those misconceptions. At best these wrong ideas can be unhelpful at worst dangerous.

1. It happens to 'that type of woman'

It can be thought that domestic abuse happens to a certain 'type' of women, this type may be based on: a socio economic status; education, a level of inner strength or confidence; religious or cultural background etc.

"Because I am not that type of person it wouldn't happen to me."

"They just need a reality check and to get a backbone."

This is not the case. Domestic abuse can affect anybody regardless of race, colour, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or level of confidence and inner strength.

2. It happens because of...

Domestic abuse can sometimes be thought to be caused by many things. These may include alcohol or drug misuse, unemployment, mental or physical health problems, stress, a lack of submission by a woman, or experience of an abusive background, for example.

This is incorrect. Domestic abuse happens because an abusive person chooses to behave in a way that will enable them to have power and control over another person. All other reasons that are given as the cause of domestic abuse are excuses and are used to justify abusive behaviour. Whilst, in some cases they may be contributing factors they are never causes.

3. A woman can cause a man to become abusive

Often a man will tell his partner that she "made" him do it and many victims have been asked, "What did you do to let things get this bad?" A woman is never responsible if a man chooses to behave in an abusive and controlling way.

4. Victims of domestic abuse understand what is happening to them

When someone is in an abusive relationship, they will often not understand what is happening, and may not even realise what they are experiencing is abuse. Sometimes it will have become abusive slowly and what was once a loving relationship is now very different, it may be difficult for the person experiencing abuse to see what, and how and when things changed.

5. "Why don't they just leave?"

This is a very common question and one that displays the greatest lack of understanding of abuse. If it was that easy, of course they would leave. An abusive person will ensure their victim thinks they cannot cope alone, will undermine and put them down until they believe they can't cope alone. It can appear financially impossible to leave the situation.

Statistically the time a woman is at most risk of being murdered is when she is trying to leave an abusive relationship, therefore leaving is a very dangerous thing to do.

6. Leaving is a choice

As with the previous question, there is a misconception that when a person is in an abusive relationship, they have the choice to leave. This is often not the case. As has already been

noted, leaving will put them in immense danger. A perpetrator may threaten to harm the person, their children or themselves should any attempts to leave be made. Also when in an abusive relationship, a person may believe that leaving is outside of the realms of possibility, this means that for them leaving is NOT a choice.

7. Abusive men are not bad fathers

It has often been stated that if a man is abusive to his partner that does not necessarily make him a bad father. This is incorrect. By being abusive to the mother of the children, he is being a bad father. Witnessing abuse is harmful, can create a distorted image for children of what relationships should be, can create fear, and many other negatives.

8. Domestic abuse is about anger

Domestic abuse is a choice to behave in a controlling way; it is not about being angry. All abusive tactics employed by an abuser will be used regardless of whether they feel anger or not. Anger is not a reason, excuse or justification for abusive behaviour. It is also important not to refer a perpetrator of domestic abuse to anger management sessions, as this can in fact make them more 'effective' and controlled in the abuse of their partner.

9. If someone discloses abuse they are probably being "over dramatic"

The statement is both completely untrue and very dangerous. In actual fact any evidence of abuse is likely to be the tip of the iceberg. Most people living in threatening and controlling situations are reluctant to disclose what is happening to them for many reasons. These include the shame of being abused; the fear of what their abusive partner will do if they tell anyone; their partner will have minimised and justified their behaviour, which will often cause the victim to believe it wasn't 'that' bad and he / she was justified in being abusive.

10. False Repentance

Although it is possible for perpetrators to change and be transformed through God's power, very often a perpetrator will appear repentant or appear to become a Christian in order to gain space for their abuse to continue. If they appear to come to faith in Christ and/or appear repentant or remorseful; this cannot be taken at face value. To ascertain whether repentance or conversion is genuine it should be measured over a long period of time, consulting regularly with the victim, as they are most able to see if change has taken place.

Many abusers, whose partners are Christians, but who themselves have no real history of faith or church attendance can become 'experts' on what God wants and the Bible says if they are challenged. They will use any tactic to keep the partner in the relationship – quoting to them and any church person they come across things like – 'what God has joined together let no man put asunder'. And stating things like 'the church should be supporting marriage not trying to destroy it.'

11. Domestic Abuse doesn't happen in relationships where the couple are older.

It's something that only happens in relationships between younger couples. After all if they are still together when they are in their 70's or 80's there can't really be a problem.

Age is not relevant in the occurrence of domestic abuse. There are a lot of older couples in their 70's or 80's where domestic violence is still prevalent but people don't take it seriously because they assume (a) the couple are still together (b) he is too old to do any real damage. This is absolutely not correct. There may be a significant number of very valid reasons why a partner cannot leave the relationship..

History

400 Council of Toledo declared that 'a husband is bound to chastise his wife moderately unless he is a cleric, in which case he can chastise her harder.'

'Woman ought to serve her husband as unto God, affirming that in no thing hath woman equal power as unto God; affirming that woman ought to be repressed.'

Augustine on marriage.

'Husbands are pictured as chastising their wives, the wives as ministering to their husbands in all things, falling prostrate at their feet on holy days, and asking their forgiveness if they have offended them in any way.'

Thomas More's picture of an ideal society.

- In 1782 a judge ruled that a man could beat his wife if the stick was no thicker than his thumb.
- Until 1861 it was legal to beat you wife before dusk, after which it might disturb the neighbours.
- In 1891 the right of an English husband to use physical force to restrain his wife was abolished.
- The 1928 Prayer Book marriage service places the emphasis on the woman as the submissive partner, who must obey and submit to her husband.
- Only since 1980 has the Anglican marriage service put the emphasis on mutual comfort and help within marriage.
- Many of us will have grown up with the 'Punch and Judy' show. The standard show involved Mr Punch regularly and repeatedly 'abusing' Judy. His physical attacks were a cause for much mirth and laughter amongst the hundreds of children who flocked to the shows. For many children these images will have been influential in developing their views and attitudes to relationships.
- In 1974 Erin Pizzey wrote the book *Scream Quietly or the Neighbours will Hear*.
- 1985 'Faith in the City' was published and made domestic abuse an issue for the church. It highlighted 'Christian' perspectives of male dominance and female subservience and questioned whether these might contribute to a tolerance of abuse.
- The marital rape exception (the legal assumption that a wife has always consented to sex with her husband) was not finally and unambiguously over-ruled until 1991!
- In 2003 the BBC ran a series of programmes on the theme of domestic abuse under the title 'Hitting Home'.

In 2004 General Synod passed a motion on domestic abuse.

'That this Synod, noting that domestic abuse is regarded by the Home Office and the police as a crime:

- a) view with extreme alarm the number of incidents being regularly reported, as being an unacceptable picture of suffering and abuse;
- b) call for national guidelines to be issued by the Archbishops' Council for those with pastoral responsibilities, as to the appropriate relationship with both victims and perpetrators;
- c) recognise the special circumstances associated with domestic abuse, and therefore the special needs of victims, in minority ethnic circumstances; and
- d) urge all dioceses to consider ways in which they could
 - i. work in partnership with other agencies, cooperating sensitively with those serving minority communities, to provide the resources needed by victims and their families,
 - ii. speak out against the evil of domestic abuse and
 - iii. work for justice and safety in the homes of this nation.

Theology

Throughout history the Bible has been used to justify, perpetuate and propagate the abuse of women. The misuse of the Bible in this way not only gives perpetrators the ability to start and continue abusing, it can cause those who are experiencing domestic abuse to be plagued with spiritual dilemmas about the abuse being inflicted on them. This section is aimed at ascertaining some of the helpful ways of understanding Scripture and also identifying some of the Scriptures or belief systems that have been used in an unhelpful way, and re-examining them.

1. It is important to recognise the divine authority of the Bible; "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," (2 Timothy 3:16).
2. The word of God that is the Bible must be understood in relation to His incarnate Word, Jesus; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)
3. All this must be understood within the context of love; "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
4. That for any and all actions we take, an account will be required of us; "Each of us will give an account of himself before God." Romans 14:12

There is much written in both the Christian and secular press that points to the origins of violence against women and children being found in Christian theology and church teaching. The attitude and position given to women can be seen as giving a role and power to men that at the least does not condemn the use of whatever force they deem appropriate to 'control' their wife and family.

In many church circles – particularly evangelicalism – there is much emphasis put on passages such as Eph. 5 v 22 – 6 v 9. The conclusion that it is the role of women to 'submit' to men is drawn from such passages. This conveniently omits verse 21 'submit to one another out of reverence for Christ'. Men are seen as being the 'senior partner' in the marriage relationship, with the right to determine the role of their wife and ensure she is compliant. The responsibilities placed on men are often omitted.

Running in parallel with this is the fact that many of the nineteenth century women's rights leaders hail from an evangelical background. Their understanding of the Bible was of the equality of the sexes – which was radical thinking in its time.

There are many ways of interpreting and understanding the Genesis story, many are used to portray Eve as inferior, helper, temptress, etc. and to place women in a subservient relationship to men. However, if we look closely at the way in which Jesus viewed and related to women it is radically different to the culture of His day. He challenged the existing stereotypes and positively affirmed the position of women as people and as disciples. His dealings with the woman at the well (John 4) and Mary and Martha (Luke 10) are clear examples of this.

There is movement in many churches to see 'submission' as mutual; however, some churches do still preach a hierarchical model of marriage.

Church / Christian language used to refer to God is almost exclusively male. Women who have been abused by men (or children who have seen male / father violence) may find it difficult to find comfort in a 'male' God or to come to a male God. Sensitivity needs to be used in pastoral relationships.

Our God is the God of the abused, the violated, the one suffering. Those who experience such abuse may be helped to seek the compassionate God. Our God is the God of the oppressed, the abused, the violated, the humiliated. Our God is also the God who can and will willingly accept the outpouring of anger and pain.

The issue that will always come up at some point is that of forgiveness. At all costs we must avoid expecting or encouraging the victim to forgive too soon. The victim must be allowed the time to work through their anger and hurt. To begin to rebuild their life – piece by piece. When they are ready it may be right to help them work through issues of forgiveness. It must be clear that they are forgiving for their own reasons. It is about them resolving the issues for them and bringing them to God. Forgiveness does not, nor should it ever in any way be linked with going back to the abusive partner. The victim isn't forgiving to make the abuser feel better, but to follow the example and teaching of Jesus and in order to rid their life of the bitterness that will eat away as long as they harbour unforgiveness. Those involved with the partners should avoid at all costs comments like 'Chris is full of remorse and is begging for forgiveness' or 'Sam is consumed with grief and just needs to know that you have forgiven them before they can move on'. Sam's moving on is none of the victims concern and they are not in any way responsible for it. Even if Chris or Sam are saying these things – and you believe them, do not put yet another burden on the victim.

HELP AND SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE - GUIDANCE

Unless someone has acknowledged they are experiencing domestic abuse it can be very difficult to offer direct help.

If you have suspicions that someone may be experiencing domestic abuse do try to give them opportunities to talk or to bring the subject up, but do not try to force them into a discussion they are not ready for. If they deny anything is happening do not 'browbeat them' into 'admitting it'. This will be just another form of abuse.

However, there are some basic steps you can take to support someone who discloses their experiences. You can support someone who is experiencing domestic abuse in a number of ways:

Listening

- Give the time and space to talk.
- Reassure them that you believe what they are saying.
- Take care not to blame them.
- Reassure them they are not alone and there are many others in the same situation.
- Try not to push them to go into more detail than they feel ready to talk about.

Acknowledging

- This is a frightening and difficult situation.
- No-one deserves to be threatened or abused-despite what their abuser might have told them.
- Nothing they can say can justify the abuser's behaviour.

Supporting

- Encourage them to express their feelings.
- Try not to be judgemental.
- Encourage them to seek help and support via outreach services but don't tell them to leave the relationship if they are not ready to do this. Remember it must be their decision.

Support them to seek help

- Encourage them to speak to their local Outreach Services.
- Have they suffered physical harm? If so, ask if they wish to attend hospital, or visit their GP and offer to accompany them.
- Help them to report the assault to the police if they choose to do so.
- Encourage them to have their injuries logged in case they need evidence in the future.
- Seek advice on their options.
- Offer to go with them to visit a solicitor.
- Be ready to provide information on organisations that can help.
- Help them to plan safe strategies in case they decide to leave. Let them decide what they think is safe. Remember they know the abuser best.
- Offer the use of your address and/or telephone number for them to receive messages or information.
- Offer to look after an emergency bag as they may urgently need to leave an abusive environment.

Suggested items to be included in an emergency bag

- Financial details for example insurance documents, bank details, credit cards, National Insurance number.
- Medical details and medication (if applicable).

Specialist domestic abuse support

The very nature of domestic abuse actually requires very specific understanding and skills in dealing with cases and ensuring that victims and their families are kept safe.

Wherever possible, a victim of domestic abuse should be referred to and engage with a specialist domestic abuse agency, in addition to any support offered or available from the church.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a crucial part of helping to deal with domestic abuse and keep people safe. Levels of threat, danger and violence need to be identified and established to ensure the most appropriate course of action, and also to ensure the victim's safety.

It is important to evaluate the risk in light of the history of the relationship and the victim is most likely to be able to predict the perpetrator's level of threat, patterns of behaviour and likely reaction to different types of intervention.

It is recommended that all organisations routinely employ risk assessments with their clients. It is good practice to complete the [DASH Risk Indicator Checklist](#), as this is used on a multi-agency basis across Hampshire, along side the Police and the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy) services.

A central feature of any risk assessment should be the survivor's fears for their own safety: the victim has the most detailed knowledge of their perpetrator. Risk assessments are not, however, predictive, and there is no accurate procedure to calculate or foresee which cases will result in further harm or homicide. It should also be remembered that risk is not static: as circumstances change, so do risk levels.

MARAC

MARAC is a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference for Domestic Abuse. All cases assessed as high risk (using the DASH risk assessment) should be referred to MARAC, regardless of any other help and support being offered.

In a single meeting, a domestic abuse MARAC combines up-to-date risk information with a comprehensive assessment of a victim's needs and links those directly to the provision of appropriate services for all those involved in a domestic abuse case: victim, children and perpetrator.

The aims of a MARAC are:

- To *reduce the risk* of serious harm or homicide for a victim and to increase the safety, health and wellbeing of victims – adults and any children.
- To *share information* to increase the safety, health and well being of victims – adults and their children;

- To determine whether the perpetrator poses a *significant risk* to any particular individual or to the general community;
- To construct jointly and implement a *risk management plan* that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm;
- To *reduce repeat victimisation*;
- To improve agency *accountability*; and
- *Improve support* for staff involved in high-risk DA cases.

The responsibility to take appropriate actions rests with individual agencies; it is not transferred to the MARAC. The role of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety.

The MARAC will help you ensure that those high risk victims you support are better protected from further abuse by a coordinated effort from all agencies and organisations. The MARAC helps high risk victims access more resources locally, helps you build relationships with local agencies and impacts on the core of your work – safety planning with the victim.

For more information about MARAC and details on how to refer cases, visit the HDAF website: www.hdaf.org.uk.

Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway

The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) has produced a domestic abuse referral pathway to help people in identifying the best route possible to help a victim of domestic abuse and their children. It recognises that not everyone can be an expert in dealing with domestic abuse cases, and it points to the relevant experts who can help. It also highlights the importance of every victim of domestic abuse being risk assessed in order to properly manage levels of risk. A copy of the referral pathway can be found at the HDAF website: www.hdaf.org.uk or in the appendix of this document. (See contacts page for details of other areas.)

Information sharing

Practitioners who encounter domestic abuse victims and perpetrators often need to assess whether and how to share personal information about victims of abuse with other professionals. Lawful and responsible information sharing is vital to help keep victims and their children safe, to carry out risk assessment, to provide support and advocacy services and to help bring perpetrators to justice.

Whilst it is important to respect someone's wishes regarding confidentiality, never promise that you will keep information confidential as you may be faced with a situation where it is necessary to share information without consent, particularly in cases where someone is facing serious harm or murder.

Always try to gain consent. If you have consent then there is no problem with sharing information.

If consent is not obtained, disclosures can still be made under key pieces of law and guidance governing domestic abuse disclosures. They include:

- Data Protection Act (the DPA);
- Common law duty of confidence;
- Human Rights Act (the HRA); and
- Caldicott Guidelines (the Guidelines) (although as these are guidelines only, if there is any conflict between them and DPA and HRA, the legislation must take precedence).

Decisions to disclose must:

- be reached on a case-by-case basis;
- be based on a necessity to disclose;
- ensure that only proportionate information is disclosed in light of the level of risk of harm to a named individual or a known household in each case; and
- be properly documented at the time a disclosure decision is made, identifying the reasons why the disclosures are being made (i.e. what risk is believed to exist), what information will be disclosed and what restrictions on use of the disclosed information will be placed on its recipients.

Data Protection Act

The prevention of crime exemption under the DPA can be used if disclosure is necessary to prevent a crime against a named individual or specified household. The risk of crime must be a genuine or likely risk.

Common law duty of confidence

An obligation of confidence will exist where the individual has provided the information to another in circumstances where it is reasonable to assume that the provider of the information expected it to be kept confidential. Where there is a clear duty of confidence the information can only be disclosed to "third parties" if there is informed consent, compulsion of law or public interest.

Human Rights Act

A disclosure will comply with the HRA if it:

- (a) is made for the purposes of preventing crime, protecting the health and/or safety of alleged victims and/or the rights and freedoms of those who are victims of domestic violence and/or their children;
- (b) is necessary for the purposes referred to in (a) above and is no more extensive in scope than is necessary for those purposes; and
- (c) complies with all relevant provisions of law, including the DPA and the Caldicott Guidelines.

Caldicott Guidelines

Where an individual has not consented to the use of their information, that individual's wishes should be respected unless there are exceptional circumstances. One such exceptional circumstance arises where there is a serious public health risk or risk of harm to the patient or other individuals, or for the prevention, detection or prosecution of serious crime.

The Six Caldicott Principles are:

- Justify the purpose(s) of using confidential information
- Only use it when absolutely necessary
- Use the minimum that is required
- Access should be on a strict need-to-know basis
- Everyone must understand his or her responsibilities
- Understand and comply with the law

Cases considered at MARAC meetings are likely to constitute exceptional circumstances as defined in the Caldicott Guidelines, because MARACs are a forum to discuss the most serious cases of alleged or

suspected domestic abuse. However, each case must be considered individually, taking into account its specific circumstances. Practitioners should be aware that Caldicott Guidelines are not law and that the DPA, HRA and common law will always take precedence. If there is an apparent conflict between legislation and the common law, legislation takes precedence.

Safety planning

One of the most important steps a victim of domestic abuse can take is to make a safety plan. You can use the following tools to help a victim consider the options and plan for their safety.

Ask some of the following questions and record actions

- In what way can I (and others) help you?
- What do you feel would help you keep safe?
- Do you have any concerns about your children's safety?
- What have you tried in the past to protect yourself and your children?
- Did any of these strategies help?

General safety advice

- Arrange where you might go if you have to leave urgently.
- Find places where you can quickly and safely use the phone.
- Always carry a list of numbers with you in case of an emergency.
- Try to save money so that you have bus or taxi fares in an emergency.
- Get an extra set of keys for the house / car.
- Keep the keys, money and anything else you may need in a safe place, should you have to leave quickly.
- Talk to your children. Let them know it's not their fault. Children do not have to see abuse to be affected by it. They hear it, sense it and can be sad and frightened by it.
- Talk to friends, relatives, your doctor, nurse or others about how you feel.

If someone decides to leave home, they should consider taking:

Birth certificates	Marriage certificate	School records
Medical records	Driving licence	Car documents
Money	Credit cards	Cheque books
Benefit books	Rent books	Passports
Work permits	Visa	Medications
Several days clothing	Personal possessions with sentimental value	Children's favourite toys

The legal situation

Legal information can be quite confusing, especially if you're taking it in during a crisis. There are a number of different legal options available, including for example:

- Police responses
- Civil law options, including injunctions (both non-molestation orders and occupation orders)
- Criminal law options
- Court processes

However, for more detailed explanations, or to find out the exact information that is relevant to your case, it is strongly recommended that you speak to a member of your Public Protection Department's Safeguarding Unit at the police, the National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV), a solicitor, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, or a domestic abuse support worker.

Recovery from domestic abuse

When someone has escaped from a situation of domestic abuse they will need much support and help to rebuild their lives. There will be a number of stages they have to move through – in their own order and at their own time. During this recovery process they will need the non judgemental but affirming love and support of Christian friends. It will take a lot of patience and time to be with someone along the road to recovery. We cannot and should not attempt to direct the path someone takes or the speed at which they travel. There are likely to be some dead ends and u turns along the way – with old ground being covered again and again. It will require great discernment to know when it may be appropriate to suggest moving on beyond a particular phase to someone.

Basic help.

- Self Esteem – it is possible that if someone has experienced abuse for some time they will have been told and will believe that they deserve what has happened, that they are worthless, useless, stupid, etc. The person will need help in re-building their self esteem. This may include addressing each of the areas where they have been abused in turn and dismantling the lies and re-establishing the truth.
- Guilt – that they couldn't stop the abuse, that they couldn't protect their children, that they couldn't make the marriage work. They may feel that they have let God down too and that He is judging them and holding them guilty. They will need support as they unravel the reality from what they have been told and are able to accept any guilt that might be theirs, but are also able to place the real guilt where it should be.
- Personal value – if they found their worth and value in being 'someone's wife / husband' with the disintegration of the relationship they see their value disintegrating too. They will need to be encouraged to see their worth and value lies in them alone, as given to them as a unique and completely loved and accepted child of God.
- God – they may feel angry at God – for allowing it to happen, for not stopping it when they prayed. They may feel that God condemns them for 'causing it'. They will need help to see clearly that it is not Gods fault, God does not condone it, and God does not give permission or allow a person to do such things. They may need to be given permission to be angry at and with God. To take Him to task and to express their feelings honestly. In time it may be possible to help them to cry out to God in their hurt and confusion and pain. Perhaps using the words of the Psalms or of Job.
- Trust – they will probably find it very difficult to trust anyone again. Maybe even God. Probably those around them. The person they once believed would cherish and protect them against the world has turned into the person they fear above all. As those coming alongside we have to accept that they may not trust us and may be suspicious of our motives or of what we will do. We need to continue to be there, to be honest and open and to give them the time to rebuild trust.

- Ability – they may doubt their ability to do anything properly. They will need gentle reassurance and encouragement as they rebuild their belief in their abilities – as a parent, a friend, and a competent person.
- There are likely to be a host of questions – many of which will not have answers - we will need to listen patiently as these questions are asked – perhaps many times over. We must avoid the temptation to give glib answers or to try to stop them asking the same thing again and again. Questions like:
 - why me?
 - what did I do wrong?
- Children – the children will almost certainly be caught in the cross fire in some way. It is likely that they will have witnessed the abuse and maybe even been subjected to it. The parent will probably have concerns about their children and what this has done to them. They may need help in dealing with them and their questions and responses. It may be that the children will need someone outside the home to talk to. It is important that, as far as possible, the parent retains some ‘control’ over this. They have spent years possibly being the ‘helpless / powerless’ person in the relationship. To remove the power again and ‘do what we think best’ will seem like further abuse.
- Money – it is likely that there will be major financial issues for the family if they have separated. We must be very careful not to make the parent feel like ‘a charity case’ and make them dependant – yet again – on someone else, but we must also be alert to the financial needs and willing to offer support as necessary. It may be better to offer a loan that can be repaid as and when the parent is able to. There are a variety of subtle ways financial help can be offered. It may be very helpful for the person to know that if there is a financial crises money is available – just knowing this may relieve one area of anxiety from them. We must take care not to make them feel ‘dependent on’ someone again.
- Practical help – this may come in all manner of guises. We should be alert to where they may need some form of practical support – and clearly this will vary from person to person. Some areas to consider may be:
 - Gardening – if she has small children to look after this may be one job too many
 - DIY jobs – she may not have the time or knowledge or tools to do simple DIY tasks
 - Someone to sit with the children while they – go shopping, have their hair cut, go to church, see the solicitor, etc.
 - It may be a huge help to invite them and the children for a meal now and again, or to arrive with a pre cooked meal.
 - They may want someone to go with them as they sort out things like benefits, solicitors, etc. Offer but do not be surprised if they want company but want to go to the actual interview alone.
 - It may be helpful to do your homework and know the sorts of things they will have to do and how they go about them. Information about benefits etc. may be helpful.
- Holidays – in many cases these will be a luxury that is beyond the finances of the family. If the church has a weekend away or attends any of the annual ‘conferences’ it may be appropriate to tactfully offer financial assistance from the church. Again, if there are several children, it may be a very daunting prospect to go away and have to cope. Someone offering to help with the children may be very valuable. If this isn’t an option inviting the family or members to accompany you on days out will probably be much appreciated.

- Social inclusion – even though the home life was abusive, there will have been good times and probably times of social activity when the partner wasn't being abusive. Many of these may have been lost or decreased. This may be for many reasons – because the person couldn't face going, or couldn't face going alone, etc. as they recover it will be important to keep including them in social activities. The abusive partner may have sought to isolate them as a means of control – so they may need much support as they 're-learn' how to develop friendships and cope in social situations.

Other considerations

It is better not to have the same person trying to support both partners. This may lead to conflicting loyalties and put impossible pressure on the helper. The victim will need to know that you are there for them – and not fear that the partner's agenda may be allowed to creep into the discussions.

Do not expect or suggest that you see both parties together. It is possible and perhaps likely that the abuser will try to have this happen. Avoid it at all costs – at least until you are sure that the victim wants it and will be able to cope with the pressure of just being in the same room as the abusive partner.

Above all, they need someone who will be there, who will listen, who won't condemn, judge or attempt to offer simplistic answers. Someone who will let them shout, cry or throw things without comment. Someone who will offer advice when asked – but not until then. Someone who will be honest at all times. Someone who will stand with them but will gently encourage and support them as they moves towards taking control of their life.

Psalm 70

Hasten, O God, to save me;
 O Lord, come quickly to help me.
 May those who seek my life be put to shame and confusion;
 May all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace.
 May those who say to me, 'Aha! Aha!' turn back because of their shame.
 But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;
 May those who love your salvation always say,
 "Let God be exalted!"
 Yet I am poor and needy;
 Come quickly to me, O God.
 You are my help and my deliverer;
 O Lord, do not delay.

Psalm 71

In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge;
 Let me never be put to shame.
 Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness;
 Turn your ear to me and save me.
 Be my rock of refuge,
 To which I can always go.

Psalm 77

I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.
When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
At night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted.

Psalm 139

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
You perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
You are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord.

Where can I go from your spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

Even there your hand will guide me,
Your right hand will hold me fast.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.

How does domestic abuse affect children?

There is no one answer. Children are individuals and will react in different ways. However, any experience of domestic abuse will have an affect on the child.

Children frequently witness domestic abuse or at the very least are aware of it happening. Statistics indicate that:

- 3 in 5 children in every classroom have witnessed domestic abuse
- in 75% - 90 % of incidences of domestic abuse children are in the same room or the next

Children are likely to feel insecure, alone, frightened, confused. The two most significant people in their lives, the people they rely on for their survival are behaving in abusive, frightening ways. In many cases they may feel they are to blame. In some cases one or other parent / adult may directly blame the child. The child cannot be held responsible for unacceptable behaviour in an adult. Whatever the child may have done it is always the responsibility of the adult to deal with it in an appropriate manner.

It is important that children have the opportunity to talk about their feelings and fears. Ideally this will be with a parent / carer, but if not, it will help if they have this opportunity with a responsible adult – perhaps a youth or children’s worker in the church, or a professional domestic abuse children’s support worker.

You should seek to bring out some key points in this discussion:

- it is not the child’s fault
- they are not to blame nor are they responsible for an adults behaviour
- violence and abuse is always wrong and it does not solve problems
- do not lie directly to a child as they will see that as yet another breach of trust
- do not expect children to be able to understand complicated issues fully or in one go
- go at the child’s pace not yours – do not try to introduce things they do not want or are not ready to deal with
- it may be necessary to protect the child from some details of what has or will happen

Perpetrators of domestic abuse do not necessarily abuse children, but it does happen in a number of cases.

If a child talks to you about abuse they witnessed or experienced at home there are some simple guidelines that will help the child as they disclose:

- Listen carefully to the child. Let them take their time and tell the story at their pace and in their way.
- Reassure the child that they are in no way to blame or responsible for what has happened.
- Let the child know that you are concerned, but stay calm and try not to show shock or horror at what you are told.

If you are told or suspect that a child may be or has been abused you **MUST** do something about it. A referral should be made immediately to your local Children’s Services Department (contact details can be found at www.hdaf.org.uk). There are a number of agencies who will be able to help or give advice and support. Local children’s services offices will have people trained and equipped to provide support to the child and other victims. The Diocesan Director for safeguarding should also be informed as soon as possible and may be consulted for advice and support.

If you believe the child – or other family member – is in immediate serious danger you **MUST** report the situation immediately to the police. Dial 999 in an emergency. You may also need to contact Children's or Adults Services at your local council (there will be an out of hour's duty team phone number in the local telephone directory or at www.hdaf.org.uk).

Other agencies that may be able to help are listed in the contacts section.

Research suggests that children who have been affected by domestic abuse may develop a range of problems:

- Reduced educational achievement
- Antisocial behaviour
- Involvement in violence

In our work with children and young people we must be alert to these signals and the possible causes.

Perpetrators of abuse

The focus of our thinking has been the victim, the person experiencing domestic abuse, and rightly so. But what of the perpetrator, the abuser? What should our attitude be to them? How do we as individuals and a church respond to them?

In many cases we will have known them, liked them, considered them a friend. We may have been involved in specific areas of Christian ministry with them – sang in the choir, led youth group, worked together on the PCC, been in a home group, worked on an Alpha course, been in a ministry team and ministered with them. We may have been ministered to by them. They may be the person who led us to Christ. We may have respected and looked up to them. Valued their counsel. Firstly – we will have to deal with our own feelings – both towards them and perhaps the implications of that for our faith and our personal faith journey.

Regardless of our feelings we must be clear that what they have done is wrong. There is no justification for domestic abuse. Regardless of what they might tell us there is no excuse, no way of condoning, no way of making it right. We must be clear about this in our own minds and firm with them on this point.

As a church we must challenge them on their behaviour. We must be clear that it is a sin and will not be tolerated. If they are in a position of leadership or responsibility we must consider some form of discipline and removing them from that position.

We must provide them with the opportunity to talk and to have people who will listen to them, but who will remain firm on the nature and consequences of what they have done.

There is professional support and advice available if they are willing to accept it. This may be a measure of how seriously they understand their behaviour.

They may well try all forms of manipulation to get us to change our mind or ‘see it from their point of view’ or ‘understand how it was for them’. We can expect to see anger, tears, frustration, bullying, cajoling, etc. They may try to undermine our understanding, or work on anything they see as a weakness or chink in our defences. As soon as a seed of doubt has been sown it will be continually nurtured. They may tell us horrendous stories about their past and what they have experienced – these may or may not be true – but they do not condone or excuse what they have done. It may be appropriate, at a later stage, to offer support as they work through these, but firstly they have to understand, acknowledge and accept responsibility for their actions and to really believe and know they are wrong.

Only when they have reached this stage of understanding and acceptance can they truly repent and seek forgiveness from God. We must beware of allowing them to do this until they are truly aware of what has happened. Cheap grace, which is grace built on less than real repentance will serve no-one.

If they are truly repentant, God will forgive them. We need to ensure that they know this is not an unforgivable sin. That they also need to understand that their forgiveness by God does not equal forgiveness by those they have abused. It is not theirs to demand forgiveness or even to ask for it. It may be appropriate for them to apologise to the person they abused – but this may need to be done through an intermediary who knows where the person abused against is in their journey.

There will still be a long way to go in the abusers journey to understanding their abuse and dealing with it. We must remember that if they truly want to change the Holy Spirit is able to break the power of evil and bring freedom. This will not be a simple ‘one prayer and it’s OK’ process. It will require much work and soul

searching by the abuser. But we believe in a God who is able to deal with even the most long standing and deeply rooted issues.

Above all, the abuser must be made and kept aware that none of this will inevitably or necessarily lead to a reconciliation with their partner and / or family.

Great care will need to be taken in working out the logistics for church involvement. It is likely to be impossible for the perpetrator and victim to worship together in the same service. It may be possible with the agreement of the victim for them to both continue at the same church but attending different services. If this is the case it may be appropriate to draw up an agreement about the abusers involvement and to clearly establish the boundaries. This will limit their ability to try to manipulate or push the agreed boundaries. The Director of Safeguarding should be consulted in drawing up the agreement.

If the victim / children feel threatened or uncomfortable with this, it may be necessary to ask the abuser to worship somewhere else – at least in the short term. This may seem harsh, but we have to remember who the victim is and who is the offender. It is entirely appropriate that the offender be asked to move. Those abused against will have more than enough to deal with without this too. If the abuser moves to another church the Director of Safeguarding must be told to ensure the safety of those in the 'receiving' congregation.

Ways to deal with a perpetrator of domestic abuse

Do:

- Place the victim's safety as the highest priority.
- Seek help and advice from a specialist domestic abuse organisation
- Meet the abuser in a public place or in the church with several other people around, if meeting is appropriate.
- When not in their presence, pray for them. Ask God to help them stop the abuse, choose to change their behaviour and find a new way of living.
- Understand that the abuser alone is responsible for their behaviour and that being abusive is a CHOICE.
- Ensure that any actions you take are victim centred and do not lose sight of the abuse perpetrated.
- If they are still in the relationship only speak to the abuser about the abuse if they have been arrested, or their behaviour has been challenged by outside authorities.
- If they are no longer in the relationship, only speak to them if their partner is in a safe environment and the abuser is not able to harass them (either personally or electronically by text etc), and their partner has given you permission to speak to them about the abuse.
- Maintain awareness of the danger the abuser may pose to you, other people, but especially to the victim, children and wider family.
- Research treatment programmes and services to help the abuser change their behaviour. DO NOT refer them to anger management programmes.
- Find ways to collaborate with the police, probation and other services to hold the abuser accountable.
- Address any religious rationalisations the abuser may offer or questions they may have.
- Name the abuse as the abuser's problem, not the victims. Tell them that only they can stop it; and you are willing to help.

- Take seriously any murder threats they may make and inform the police and, if they involve the victim, children or family also inform them.
- Share any concerns you have with a properly trained professional.
- Remember domestic abuse is always the responsibility of the perpetrator.

Do NOT:

- Go to the abuser to confirm the victim's story.
- Meet with the abuser alone and in private.
- Approach them or let them know that you know about the abuse. If the abuser is to be approached this should be by a trained professional and should be a) with the victim's permission, b) their awareness that they plan to talk to the abuser and c) certainty that the partner is safely separated from the abuser.
- Allow them to use religious excuses for their behaviour.
- Pursue couples' counselling with the abuser and the victim if you are aware that there is abuse in the relationship.
- Give the abuser any information about their partner or their whereabouts, particularly if they are separated.
- Be taken in by the abuser minimising the abuse, denying the abuse or lying about the abuse.
- Accept the abuser blaming the victim, anything or anyone else.
- Be taken in by the abusers "conversion" experience. If it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as they proceed with accountability. If it is not genuine, it is only another way to manipulate you and the system and maintain control of the process to avoid accountability.
- Advocate for the abuser to avoid the legal consequences of their abuse.
- Provide a character reference for any legal proceedings.
- Forgive an abuser quickly and easily. Be mindful of what you can forgive and what is not in your gift to offer forgiveness for.
- Confuse remorse with true repentance
- Send them home with a prayer.

THE CHURCH AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Policy statement for churches

Other forms of abuse, particularly child abuse have broken out of the taboo that surrounded them, they are now spoken about in society and the church. We need to do this with domestic abuse. Those in our churches need to be able to discuss and talk about the issue of domestic abuse and to develop our understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on the lives of victims and their families.

By adopting a Policy Statement, the local church will be committing itself to undertake positive steps to provide information, support and pastoral care for those experiencing domestic abuse.

By displaying a Policy on its premises, the local church will be making a public statement about its condemnation of domestic abuse and its availability to offer information, care and support to those who are victims.

Church policy statement on domestic abuse

- We affirm that domestic abuse is always wrong, is contrary to God's intention in human relationships and is a sin.
- We will not accept, condone or tolerate abusive behaviour in relationships. Any such behaviour must be repented of by the abuser before God before forgiveness is possible.
- We formally repent of any behaviours or attitudes within this church which may have contributed to a condoning or legitimising of abuse.
- We undertake to make those involved in teaching and pastoral care aware of the practical, pastoral and theological issues.
- We will make links and work with local specialist domestic abuse organisations in order to keep victims and their children safe, recognise levels of risk and appropriately deal with any cases presented to us. We will not undertake to deal with domestic abuse purely on our own.
- We will undertake to include discussion of domestic violence and abuse, relationships, communication and conflict resolution in marriage preparation.
- This church will not use its belief in the sanctity of marriage as a weapon to 'encourage' victims to remain in abusive relationships or to accept back an abusive partner.
- All those working with children and young people will be made aware of the need to be alert for domestic abuse and know how to respond.
- All leaders will be responsible for considering how they use their power and the messages this may convey.
- This church takes issues of domestic abuse seriously and will, as appropriate speak out publicly against it.
- We believe the gospel must be presented as good news to those who experience domestic abuse, in so doing we will take care to ensure our language and way of speaking about God does not alienate those who for whom a male role is not helpful.
- We believe the gospel is also good news for those who perpetrate abuse. There is hope for forgiveness and change in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Church responses to domestic abuse

1. Believe it! Both outside and inside the church; for many people in church domestic abuse is a taboo subject, which “doesn’t happen here, and we don’t like to talk about it.” However, people in church will either know victims or be victims themselves. It is therefore vital that this subject is on the agenda of the church.
2. Create a list of domestic abuse contacts to refer people to. See resources section.
3. Support your local domestic abuse resources/initiatives;
 - a. *Research what services are available. Start by visiting the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum’s website (www.hdaf.org.uk) or by calling the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0800 2000 247.*
 - b. *Contact your local domestic abuse services and ask them what support they would most value.*
 - c. *Place them on your church’s list of giving.*
 - d. *Offer them space or one-off use of church and community hall.*
 - e. *Invite speakers from local agencies to your church groups to raise awareness.*
 - f. *Develop a scheme to provide emergency packs of toiletries or small bags of play things for children.*
4. Adopt a domestic abuse Policy Statement.
5. Be aware of limitations; we have many limitations and to not take account of this and work within those limitations is likely to do more harm than good. Our job is to provide a ‘safe’ place for victims and refer them to the appropriate professionals.
6. Educate your church.
7. Ensure support is available for children; domestic abuse has a serious effect on children. Ensure you have an effective child protection policy and that Church leaders and members are child protection trained.
8. Confidentiality; in view of the serious or real risk of potential harm to the victim and any children, it is important to respect the information disclosed to you. It should be shared on a need to know basis, with full consideration given to any safety issues.
9. Pray for all involved.

What can the Church do to help prevent domestic abuse?

- The church needs to consider the part it has played – historically (and more recently, perhaps) in accepting or validating violence and abuse. There may be a need for repentance.
- Although men can be and are victims of domestic abuse the significant majority of victims are women. It is imperative that gender issues and domestic abuse are included in church teaching – particularly with young people.
- Domestic abuse must be publicly named as a sin – always, in every circumstance and is never acceptable.
- Attitudes, stereotypes, and belief structures are learnt at an early age. These issues must not be ignored in our work with children.
- Acknowledge that 'this type of thing can and does happen to nice Christian families'.
- Be prepared to take a stand against anything which denigrates the position of women or 'glamorises' violence. Our media has recounted details of websites dedicated to the abuse of and violence towards women – the church should add its voice to those condemning these sites. Certain musicians listened to by young people write songs that promote the notion of violence towards women / partners being acceptable.
- Provide opportunities for people to share their stresses and pressures in a safe, non judgemental atmosphere. Seek to identify signs of stress and make an intervention.
- Provide clear teaching on the integrity of relationships and the need for mutual respect and understanding. In particular this should focus on responsibilities within marriage.
- Seek to identify pressure points in people's lives when they may be vulnerable to abusing or being abused.
- Domestic abuse, male-female roles, the nature / equality of the relationship between prospective marriage partners and attitudes towards violence should be discussed in marriage preparation.
- Male leaders need to consider how they exercise power and what this says about 'maleness'.
- Clergy and those offering pastoral support must be aware of the pitfalls and damage of 'cheap grace', which does not hold those who perpetrate domestic abuse entirely responsible for their actions.
- The gospel is good news for those who experience domestic abuse. In God they can find healing and hope for the future. It is also good news for the perpetrator – if they are serious about repentance – which starts with acknowledging and accepting their responsibility and guilt.
- The church must be prepared to take a public stand and declare domestic abuse (in all it's forms) to be wrong, and to state that there will be times when a Christian is justified, right etc. in seeking to divorce an abusive partner.
- Making a public statement by displaying posters and other information about domestic abuse and displaying details of sources of help and support.
- Having a domestic abuse policy and displaying it publicly.

How can the Church challenge abusive behaviour and attitudes?

1. Display posters, leaflets and cards that offer information about help that is available locally. Place domestic abuse contact number cards on seats and other suitable locations. Put up posters in toilet cubicles. Remember it is important for people to be able to access material discreetly and without embarrassment.
2. Use preaching and teaching to make it plain that domestic abuse is wrong.
3. Pray regularly for organisations that work in this area and for victims and offenders.
4. Review the content of your marriage preparation. Does it deal with the issues of conflict, control and abuse?
5. Challenge inappropriate behaviour and encourage inclusive language.
6. Make your church a safe environment and provide opportunity for prayer and listening.
7. Discuss issues in youth groups with the help of one of your local agencies. Make the necessary resources available.
8. Encourage training for greater understanding e.g. developing skills in listening and pastoral care.
9. Make books on domestic abuse issues available on your church bookstall and in your church library.
10. Stand up for the individual's rights, in church, locally, nationally and internationally.
11. Designate a special day each year when your church will focus on developing awareness of domestic abuse issues. November 25th is recognised as an international day of action to end violence against women, often referred to as White Ribbon Day.

Biblical reflections

The Bible has a number of stories about women who were treated badly – in what we might deem abusive ways. One way of viewing these stories is to say that they reflect the culture of the time, that may be true but that doesn't make them right.

Below is a brief outline of some of these stories. When preaching on these passages of scripture it would be a good opportunity to emphasize that such behaviour and all abusive behaviour is wrong and is sin.

Hagar.

Genesis 16, 21 v 8 – 21.

Hagar is the slave of Sarai – Abrams's childless wife. Sarai gives Hagar to Abram to bear a child for them. Sarai begins to abuse Hagar as becomes increasingly jealous. It all becomes too much for Hagar who runs away and comes face to face with God.

There are a range of issues for study in this story:

- Hagar was viewed as a commodity to be given and used as her mistress determined.
- As a non Israelite and slave Hagar had no rights, no power
- She was then abused for 'accomplishing' what was required.
- When she has given birth she is sent away with no prospect of returning – because Sarah now has her own son. She has been used, abused and disposed of.
- Violence enters the story and has implications for all concerned – children and adults. The story of who has power and how they use it becomes clear.
- God intervenes throughout the story – protecting and fulfilling His promises.

Tamar.

2 Samuel 13.

Tamar was King David's daughter. Amnon, her half brother falls in love with her. With the help of a friend he creates a situation in which he is able to rape her. She seeks refuge with her brother Absalom. King David takes no action about the situation. The issue festers with Absalom until two years later he is able to take his revenge. As a result of killing Absalom becomes an exile and is eventually killed when he rebels against his father David.

The story provides a study in inter family relationships. Who has power – physical, political and emotional and how they use it. There are issues around: denial, disbelief, sweeping under the carpet, confusion. It charts the disintegration in a family when violence is committed but no action taken. We often hear 'violence begets violence' – this story shows it happening.

David may have been the celebrated King of Israel, but his history with women is not good. Before the story of Tamar we have the story of his seduction of Bathsheba and the arranged death of her husband. (2 Samuel 11-12)

Later Absalom has intercourse with his father David's concubines. They are put under house arrest until they die as they are considered contaminated. (2 Samuel 15, 15 and 20).

Perhaps the most amazing story of the treatment of women in the Bible is that of Joseph and Mary. Joseph was faced with a brutal decision. To believe what the angel said to him concerning Mary's pregnancy and what he knew to be true of her – and risk public humiliation and mocking, probably for life. Or to stand by his legal rights and disown her, thus totally isolating her from her community. Joseph is a man who is true to both his God and to the woman he loves and puts her before his own pride and personal standing. What can we learn from Joseph?

There are many more stories about the use and abuse of women in the Bible and passages which shed light on how the relationship should be.

Marriage preparation

The principles of understanding humanity (female and male) as made in God's image and of equal worth; of equality amongst people and within relationships; of not condoning of any form of abuse should undergird any marriage preparation offered by the Church. Some theological ideas such as headship and submission models of men and women have been expressed in the liturgy in the past in the different promises expressed by the man and the woman. A promise to obey was in the past part of different standards or expectations of women and men within marriage, e.g. the fact that women had no standing in law until 1926. A mutuality expressed through the marriage partners being encouraged to be themselves rather than sticking to gendered roles offers a better interpretation of love and a better opportunity for both partners to grow and flourish in the relationship than does the differentiated model, in which one partner takes responsibility for the others growth, but not vice versa.

Given the high incidence of domestic abuse within marriage, we recommend that clergy and lay people who offer marriage and wedding preparation should have attended some training on issues of domestic abuse. It is important that there is a clear understanding amongst those who offer marriage preparation that domestic abuse is always unacceptable and that domestic abuse breaks the sanctity of marriage.

There is considerable evidence that marriage can lead to the beginning or the escalation of domestic abuse, as it brings a heightened sense of 'ownership'. Marriage preparation offers an opportunity to challenge inappropriate behaviour and assumptions about domination, control or abuse, while making it clear that some degree of conflict within an intimate relationship is natural and healthy, if dealt with appropriately.

The subjects regularly dealt with when preparing couples for marriage, e.g. communication, conflict and in particular 'How do you deal with your anger?' offer an opportunity for couples to discuss together how their parents dealt with anger, rows and conflict or how the couple might have dealt with these in previous relationships. Sometimes those who have experienced domestic abuse as children have a very idealized view of marriage.

It is possible that those working with couples hoping to marry may become aware or suspect that abuse is taking place or may take place between the partners. This is always a difficult area to deal with and illustrates the need for training for people involved in this work, but one or more of the following ideas might help in such a situation.

The facilitator might include a statement at the beginning of the 'course' or conversation and again before dealing with a subject such as 'marital conflict' or anger. The following, which may need amending depending on the circumstances, is an example of a form of words that might be appropriate.

When we think about relationships in general and our own in particular, there is always a chance that issues may be raised that touch us in a way that leaves us feeling disturbed, uncomfortable or anxious. If this happens you may wish to speak to one of us today more privately or to seek help from a counsellor or other helping organization. We will hand out a resource list at the end of the day, which may be helpful..

If a domestic abuse issue is raised directly or indirectly by one of the couple, the facilitator should not pursue it in the presence of the other: this could be highly dangerous. They may need to find a way to give the person a chance to say more in private, with the object of encouraging them to get one-to-one help from a competent person or organization. Again, an available resource list is helpful.

Annexe 1

Honour based violence

“Honour based violence is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/ or community.” (*Crown Prosecution Service/ Asociation of Chief Police Officers*) It is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. FGM constitutes a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls, and has severe short-term and long-term physical and psychological consequences. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the *Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003*.

CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

There are many services working in the area of domestic abuse throughout the UK.

Please note: Some of the numbers below may appear on the phone bill of the person who calls them. Please ensure anybody advised to use them is aware of this.

Always check the numbers as they do change from time to time.

IN AN EMERGENCY, ALWAYS DIAL 999.

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) – website for professionals, including an up to date service directory for domestic abuse and related services.

www.hdaf.org.uk

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) – website for the public, giving advice for victims of abuse, support for children, advice to perpetrators and advice for families and friends. This website includes an up to date service directory for domestic abuse and related services.

www.hampshiredomesticabuse.org.uk

Local Refuge and Outreach / Floating Support Services

www.hampshiredomesticabuse.org.uk

Police:

999 in an emergency

101 for all other calls/enquiries (including Public Protection Department Safeguarding Units)

MARAC coordinators: use directory at www.hdaf.org.uk for your local area's details

For information on services and support in Bournemouth

<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/PeopleLiving/CrimeDisorder/DomesticAbuse.aspx>.

For information on services and support in Dorset

Dorset County Council 01305 221016

For information on services and support in Guernsey

Guernsey Health and Social Services ++ (0) 1481 725241

<http://www.gov.gg/domestic-abuse>

For information on services and support in Jersey

Jersey Health and Social Services ++(0) 1534 442000

Victim Support: 0845 389 9528

National Domestic Violence Helpline - Free 24 hour helpline and information on refuge and outreach support.

www.womensaid.org.uk

0800 2000 247

Southampton City Council **023 8083 8008**

National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV).

A free, fast, emergency service to survivors of domestic violence enabling them to apply for an injunction within 24 hours of first contact (in most circumstances).

<http://www.ncdv.org.uk>

0844 8044 999

National Stalking Helpline.

Practical advice and information to anyone who is currently or previously been affected by harassment or stalking.

<http://www.stalkinghelpline.org>

0300 636 0300

Refuge

Refuge's network of safe houses provides emergency accommodation for women and children when they are most in need.

www.refuge.org.uk

Reunite

Advice for those who have had or fear child abduction

0116 2556 234

Rights of Women

Rights of Women is a women's voluntary organisation committed to informing, educating and empowering women concerning their legal rights.

www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

Samaritans

24 hour confidential emotional support

0345 90 90 90, 08457 90 90 90

Shelterline

24 hour free national housing helpline

0808 800 4444

Men's Advice Line

A confidential helpline for any man experiencing domestic violence and abuse from a partner (or ex-partner). A team of skilled professionals offering practical advice, information and emotional support to male victims of domestic violence, as well as to concerned friends and family and frontline workers.

0808 801 0327 (free from landlines and most mobile phones)

info@mensadviceline.org.uk

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

RESPECT Helpline

A service for people who are looking for information and advice to help them stop their abusive or violent behaviour towards their partners.

0845 122 8609

info@respect.uk.net

www.respect.uk.net

The Hideout

Information and support for children and young people for those experiencing it or helping others
www.thehideout.org.uk

Childline

Advice and support for children on abuse

0800 11 11 11

Digital stalking:

http://www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100280003§ionTitle=Digital+stalking&dm_i=674.1GNE3.KIPU8.4YSOC.1