



**BFSWS**

BRITISH FORCES SOCIAL WORK SERVICE OVERSEAS



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## **DOMESTIC ABUSE GUIDE**

Information for people using our services

## WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

The new definition of domestic violence and abuse now states: 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.

Abusive behaviour can occur in any relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Perpetrators may blame being drunk or say they have "anger management problems." These can be factors but they are not the only causes of the abuse.

Abuse against women and girls is a gender based crime; however, we must recognise that men and boys can be victims of Domestic Abuse and that it can affect whole families, including children.

Abusers have a key role in stopping the violence and helping to change the attitudes and actions of their peers.

Children of all ages can be affected by domestic abuse, even if they do not see the abuse directly.

## DOES DOMESTIC ABUSE ONLY HAPPEN IN CERTAIN CULTURE OR CLASSES?

Any person can experience domestic abuse regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, class, gender, disability or lifestyle.

Domestic abuse can also take place in lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender relationships, and can involve other family members, including children.

Domestic abuse can include:

- sexual abuse and rape (including within a relationship)
- punching, kicking, cutting, hitting with an object
- withholding money or preventing someone from earning money
- reading emails, text messages or letters
- taking control over aspects of someone's everyday life, which can include where they go and what they wear
- not letting someone leave the house
- threatening to kill or harm them, a partner, another family member or pet.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITNESSING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Witnessing domestic abuse is really distressing and scary for a child, and causes serious harm. Children living in a home where domestic abuse is happening are at risk of other types of abuse too. Children can experience domestic abuse or violence in lots of different ways. They might:

- see the abuse
- hear the abuse from another room
- see a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
- be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse



## TEENAGERS EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, and it affects young people too.

They may not realise that what's happening is abuse. Even if they do, they might not tell anyone about it because they're scared of what will happen, or ashamed about what people will think.

## WHY DO PEOPLE STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

There are many reasons for staying - fear, love, the risk of homelessness, returning to home country, loss of income or not wanting to split the family. These factors can make it very difficult for partners, especially with children, to leave and some may not want to.

## WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN?

Children, who witness, intervene or hear incidents are affected in many ways. We know that children are aware of abuse in the family even if they are not in the same room. Children learn by copying how adults act, they get frightened and worried and it affects them in many ways, for example:

- **Emotional Problems:** crying, anxiety and sadness, confusion, anger (which can be directed toward either parent or other children, etc), depression, suicidal behaviour, nightmares, fears and phobias. In younger children and babies eating and sleeping disorders are common. Children can also suffer from PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).
- **Behavioural Problems:** aggression, becoming troublesome at home or at school, withdrawing into or isolating themselves, regressive behaviour (such as baby-talk, wanting bottles or dummies, etc), lower academic achievements.
- **Physical Problems:** bed-wetting, nervous ticks, headaches or stomach aches, nausea or vomiting, eating disorders, insomnia.

Infants & pre-school children	Schoolchildren	Adolescents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delayed development</li><li>• Sleep disturbance</li><li>• Temper tantrums</li><li>• Distress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behaviour problems</li><li>• Difficulties with peers</li><li>• Concentration problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depression</li><li>• Delinquency</li><li>• Aggression towards peers and others</li></ul>

## WHAT CAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DO?

Talk to someone in a position of trust at school, talk to a member of the health service (doctors or nurses) or ring the **Central Referral Team** on **+44(0) 808 168 3111** and discuss with the duty social worker.



## HOW CHIDLIN CAN HELP

We understand how difficult it is for children to talk about domestic abuse. Whether it's happening now or happened in the past, Childline can be contacted 24/7. Calls to 0800 1111 are free and confidential. Children can also contact Childline online ([www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)).



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Call the **Central Referral Team** on **+44(0) 808 168 3111**

They can also put you in touch with other agencies that can help you with safety planning, housing issues, and drug or alcohol problems, or give details of legal advisors who can assist by discussing options with you.

Domestic abuse is often a crime. Never hesitate to call the **Military Police** who can help you on **07973 729297**.

## WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ABUSE?

Contact the **BFSWS Central Referral Team** on **+44(0) 808 168 3111** they can help you too - or talk to your local Army Welfare Worker.

Also there is help available from Respect: [www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

Respect's key focus is on increasing the safety of those experiencing domestic violence through promoting effective interventions with those who commit the abuse.

### Respect phone lines open:

Monday - Friday 10 am-1 pm and 2 pm-5pm

Call respect on 00 44 808 802 4040

Email at [info@respectphonenumber.org.uk](mailto:info@respectphonenumber.org.uk)



# USEFUL CONTACTS

## **BFSWS Central Referral Team**

+44(0) 808 168 3111

## **Women's Aid**

+44(0)808 2000 247

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

[www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/)

## **Children**

[www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

## **Male Victims**

+44(0)808 801 0327

[www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

## **Male/Female Perpetrators**

+44(0)808 802 4040

[phoneline@respect.uk.net](mailto:phoneline@respect.uk.net)

## **NSPCC**

[www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/)

## **Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

+44 (0) 808 2000 247

[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

## **Galop (for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people)**

0800 999 5428

[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

## **Men's Advice Line**

0808 801 0327

[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)



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