



Is someone you know experiencing Domestic Abuse?



Information for friends, family, and work colleagues who are worried about someone suffering from domestic abuse.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, emotional, psychological. A person is being abused if they are scared to be themselves or they don't do things because they fear what their partner might do.

Here are some examples of domestic abuse and signs someone is in an abusive relationship: -

Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, strangling. You may notice bruises or other injuries and they may lie about how they received them;

Sexual –forcing them to make unwanted videos or photos of a sexual nature, rape;

Financial – Controlling their finances, not allowing them to have any money or a job;

Emotional – calling the person nasty names, making them feel they are useless and can't do anything right. Partner withholds affection.

Psychological - The person may be very scared, nervous or distracted. The abuser can make threats to harm the person, making them scared to go anywhere or do anything.

Anyone can experience domestic abuse. It happens to women and men; young and older people; straight and LGBTQ and people of all ethnicities and religion. Some victims may be at higher risk e.g. those who need help to care for themselves.

Signs that someone is experiencing domestic abuse:

- ✚ You may notice that their appearance has changed;
- ✚ They are less confident or behave differently when their partner is there;
- ✚ They may cancel plans/spend less time with you;
- ✚ If they are out with you, they may receive texts or calls from their partner all the time they are with you and may need to leave suddenly;
- ✚ They may be taking more time off sick from work than usual;
- ✚ They may be more tearful, angry, anxious, confused and feeling low;
- ✚ They may have physical injuries;
- ✚ They may give excuses for frequent injuries;
- ✚ They may be using different ways to cope with the abuse e.g. increased alcohol or drug use

If you are worried about a child's safety, report it to any of these people:

- ❖ School staff
- ❖ GP
- ❖ Health Visitor
- ❖ Police
- ❖ Children's Social Care

If you think a child is in immediate danger and needs help urgently call the police on 999.

Here are some examples of signs someone is in a controlling relationship:

- ✚ They blame themselves for the abuse and feel it's their fault;
- ✚ The person has said their partner is jealous and controlling;
- ✚ They aren't visiting you or their friends or coming to the usual planned family gatherings or work events they would normally attend;
- ✚ They are always picked up and dropped off wherever they go, and the partner gets angry if the person is late;
- ✚ They don't call you or they don't call you as much as they used to and there isn't a good reason;
- ✚ They must 'check in' with their partner at specific times;
- ✚ They aren't using social media e.g. Facebook as often as they would do normally and there isn't a good reason why.

A person experiencing domestic abuse may: -

- ✚ feel like everything is their fault and they are walking on eggshells waiting for something to happen;
- ✚ be scared that they and their children aren't safe;
- ✚ think that if they change for their partner the abuse will stop;
- ✚ still love their partner and hope they will change.

It may take the person a long time before they will talk to you about what they are experiencing. They may not know what to say or how to describe what they are feeling - give them time to open up.

What you can do to give support: -

- if you are worried about someone you could say "I am worried about you because...." or "I am worried about your safety"
- believe what they are saying and build their confidence;
- encourage them to make decisions at the right time for them;
- (if safe to do so) report anything that happens to their GP or the police.

Try not to: -

- tell them what to do;
- get in the middle of the relationship or mediate for them;
- put pressure on them to leave the relationship

It can be a dangerous time for a victim and their children when they leave an abusive relationship.

Practical things you can do to help:

- Offer to keep a set of keys, important documents such as passports, benefit books, a set of clothes and money in case the person needs to leave quickly;
- If the person has been hurt offer to go to the hospital with them, to their GP or another professional they can talk to, like a counsellor;
- Help them to talk/visit Women's Aid to find out how they can help

Organisations who can help: Always call 999 in an emergency.

Black Country Women's Aid / Refuge
Support men and women experiencing domestic violence and abuse.
0121 553 0090 or 0121 552 6448
Text or WhatsApp: 07384 466181
Email: idva@blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk
Live chat www.blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk

West Midlands Forced Marriage
24hr helpline to support victims of Forced Marriage and Honour-based Abuse.
0800 953 9777

National Domestic Violence Helpline
www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
0808 2000 247

Honour Network Helpline
Provide support for victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage.
www.karmanirvana.org.uk
0800 5999 247

Men's Advice Line
www.mensadvice.org.uk
0808 801 0327

Childline
www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111

National LGBT helpline
0800 999 5428
www.galop.org.uk

Rape Crisis England and Wales
0808 802 9999
www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Your Best Friend <https://yourbestfriend.org.uk/>
helps young girls, women and non-binary people aged 13-24 to spot and stop abuse in their intimate relationships.

There are a number of Sandwell based agencies who can support you. For more information please go to
www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse