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# Domestic Violence and Abuse



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## Definition

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

*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.*

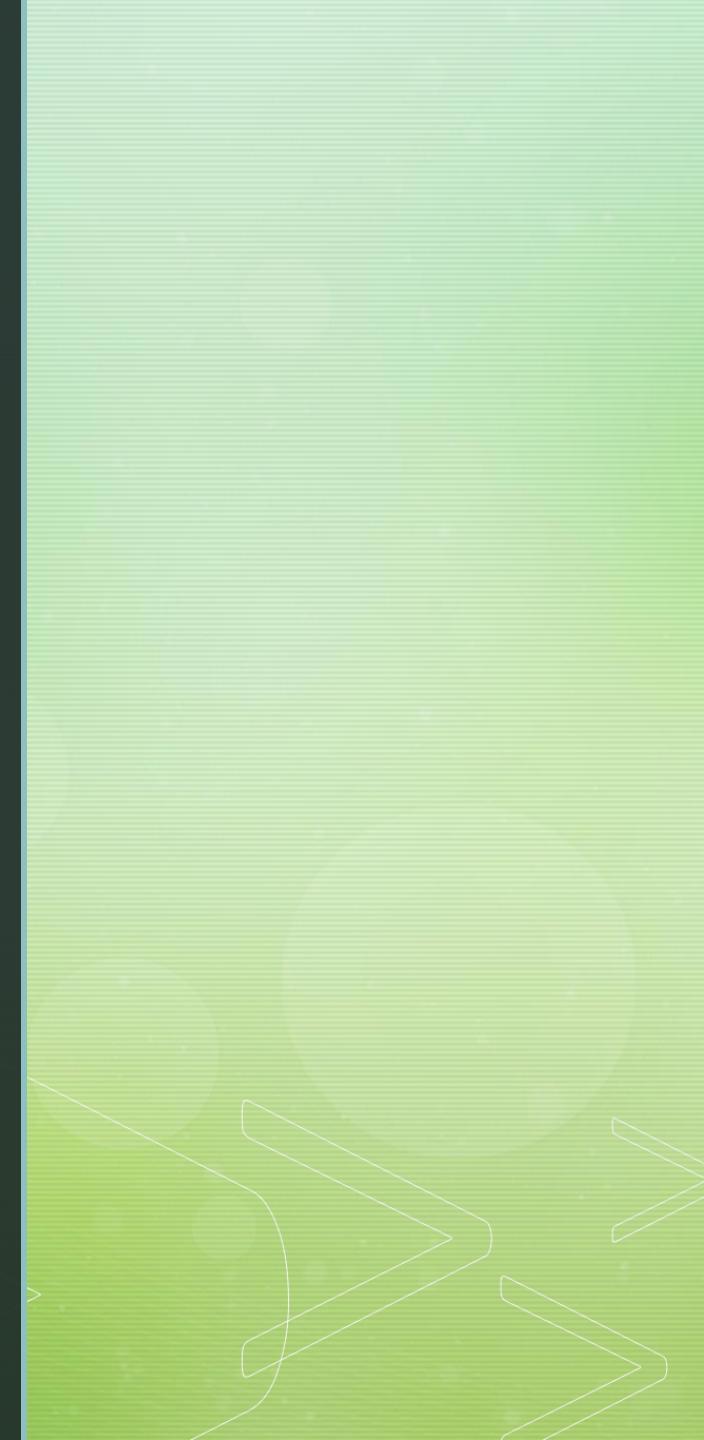
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## Forms of Domestic Violence and Abuse

- **Coercive control**
- **Psychological and/or emotional abuse**
- **Physical and sexual abuse**
- **Financial or economic abuse**
- **Harassment and stalking**
- **Online or digital abuse**

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# Coercive control



# What is it?

- Coercive control 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 controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour

# The impact

- Coercive control creates invisible chains and a sense of fear that pervades all elements of a victim's life. It works to limit their human rights by depriving them of their liberty and reducing their ability for action.

# Possible forms of coercive control

- Isolating you from friends and family
- Depriving you of basic needs, such as food
- Monitoring your time
- Monitoring you via online communication tools or spyware
- Taking control over aspects of your everyday life, such as where you can go, who you can see, what you can wear and when you can sleep

# Possible forms of coercive control

- Depriving you access to support services, such as medical services
- Repeatedly putting you down, such as saying you're worthless
- Humiliating, degrading or dehumanising you
- Controlling your finances
- Making threats or intimidating you

# Coercive control

- <https://youtu.be/KHyCSG5Ath8>

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Psychological  
and/or emotional  
abuse





## Possible forms – Humiliation, negating, criticizing

- Name calling
- Derogatory ‘pet names’
- Character assassination
- Yelling
- Patronizing
- Insults of your appearance
- Dismissiveness
- Sarcasm
- Belittling accomplishments
- Put down interests
- Public embarrassment



## Possible forms – Control and shame

- Threats
- Monitoring of whereabouts
- Digital spying
- Unilateral decision-making
- Lecturing
- Financial control
- Direct orders outbursts
- Unpredictability
- Using others
- Walking out



## Possible forms – Accusing, blaming, and denial

- Jealousy
- ‘turning the tables’
- Denying something you know is true
- Using guilt
- Goading then blaming
- Denying their abuse
- Accusing you of abuse
- Trivialising
- Blaming you for their problems
- Destroying and denying



## Possible forms – Emotional neglect and isolation

- Shutting down communication
- Shutting down communication
- Keeping you from socializing
- Interrupting
- Threatening to harm the children
- Coming in between you and your family
- Withholding affection
- Calling you needy
- Actively working to turn others against you
- Indifference
- Hurting pets



## Possible forms – Co-dependency

A codependent relationship is when everything you do is in reaction to your abuser's behaviour. And they need you just as much to boost their own self-esteem. You've forgotten how to be any other way. It's a vicious circle of unhealthy behaviour.



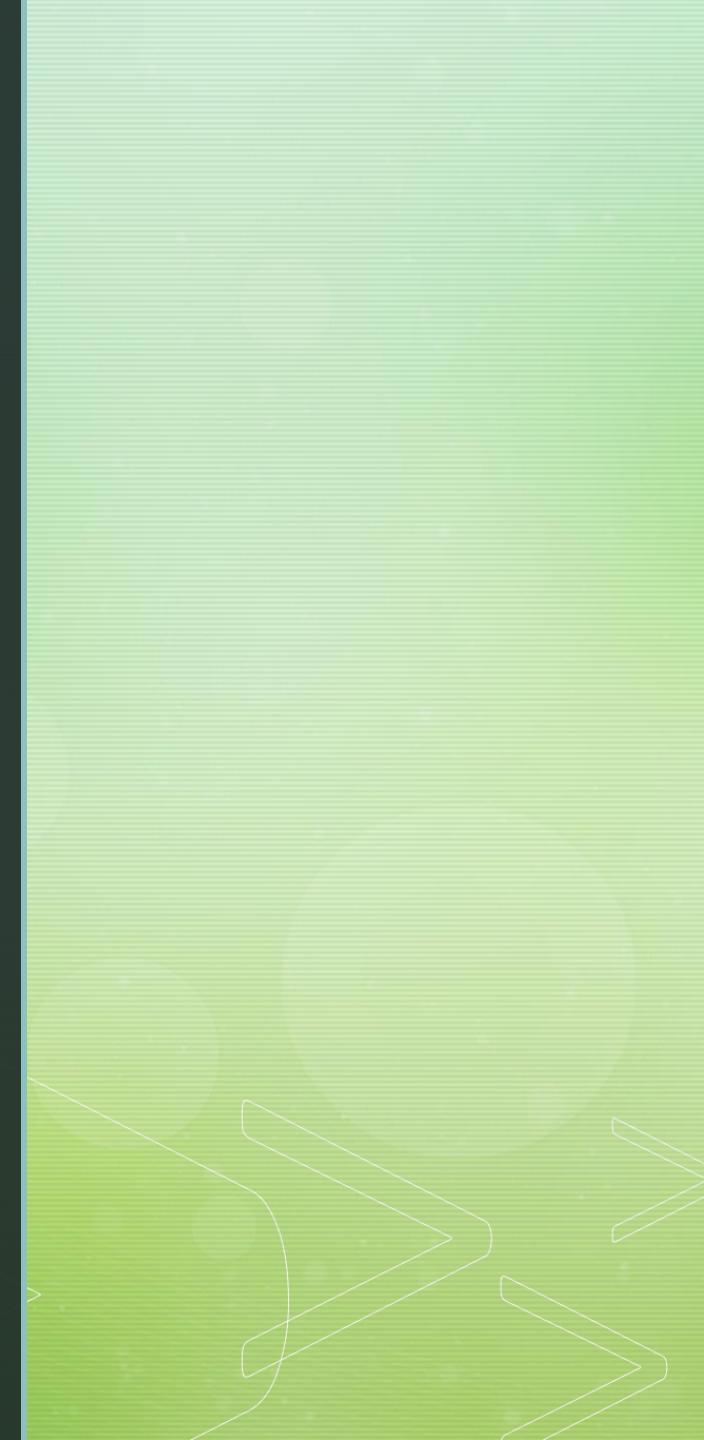
# You might be codependent if you:

- are unhappy in the relationship, but fear alternatives
- consistently neglect your own needs for the sake of theirs
- ditch friends and sideline your family to please your partner
- frequently seek out your partner's approval
- critique yourself through your abuser's eyes, ignoring your own instincts
- make a lot of sacrifices to please the other person, but it's not reciprocated
- would rather live in the current state of chaos than be alone
- bite your tongue and repress your feelings to keep the peace

# You might be codependent if you:

- feel responsible and take the blame for something they did
- defend your abuser when others point out what's happening
- try to “rescue” them from themselves
- feel guilty when you stand up for yourself
- think you deserve this treatment
- believe that nobody else could ever want to be with you
- change your behaviour in response to guilt; your abuser says, “I can't live without you,” so you stay

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Physical or  
sexual abuse



# Physical abuse

1. Physical abuse in a relationship is more than just battering
2. Physical abuse in a relationship rarely comes alone
3. Physical abuse in a relationship often develops gradually
4. It is extremely difficult to leave an abuser
5. Physical abuse in a relationship has long-lasting consequences

## Possible forms –Physical abuse

- Slapping
- Hipping burning
- Spitting
- Hair pulling
- Burning
- Scalding
- Kicking
- Stabbing
- Using weapons
- Biting
- FGM
- Any form of physical harm

## Sexual abuse /violence

Perpetrators who are physically violent toward their intimate partners are often sexually abusive as well.

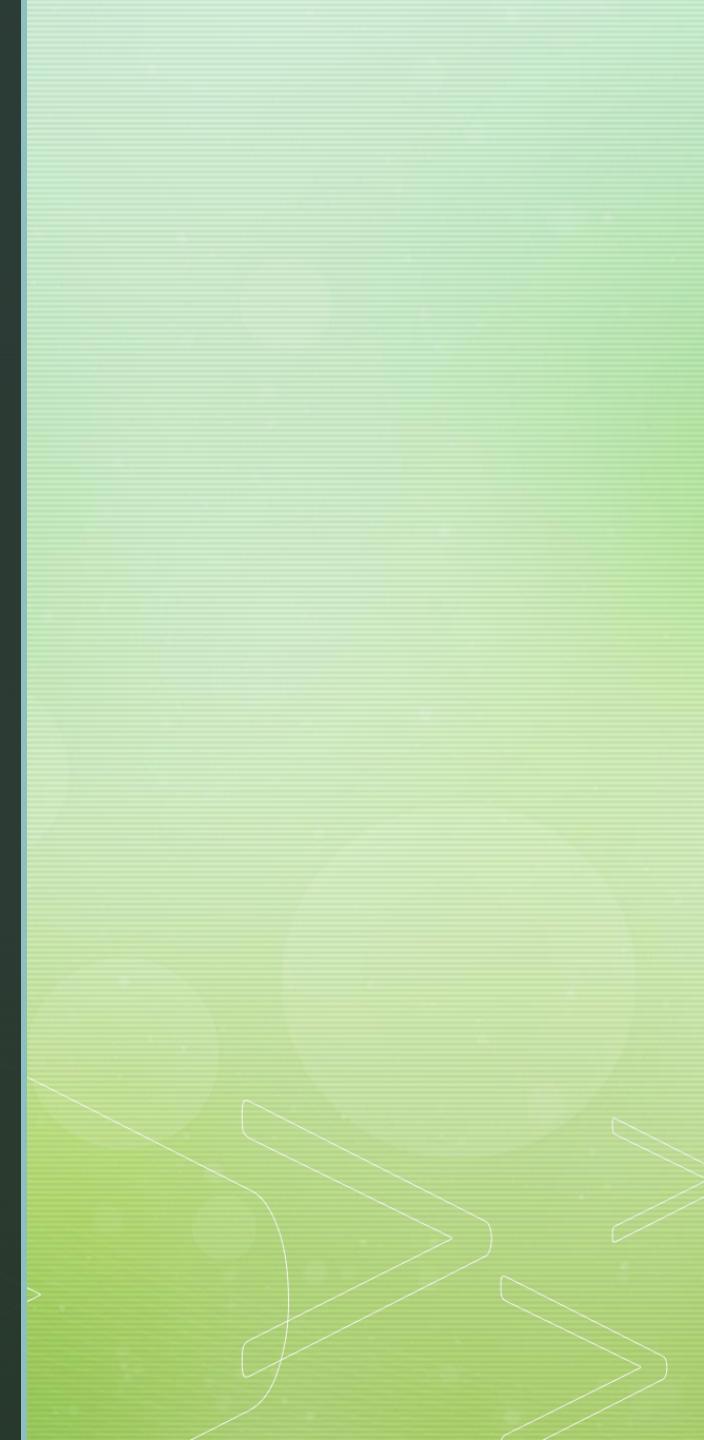
Victims who are both physically and sexually abused are more likely to be injured or killed than victims who experience one form of abuse.

Abusers assault people of all genders, races, ages, social classes, and ethnicities. Women who are disabled, pregnant, or attempting to leave their abusers are at greatest risk for intimate partner rape.

# Possible forms – Sexual abuse

- Sexual harassment/pressure
- Forcing sex after physical assaults
- Sexually degrading language
- •Rape
- • Forcing you to have sex (or commit a sexual act) against your will
- Forced pregnancy
- Forced termination
- Unprotected sex
- Involving others
- Demanding or sending sexual imaging or distributing them

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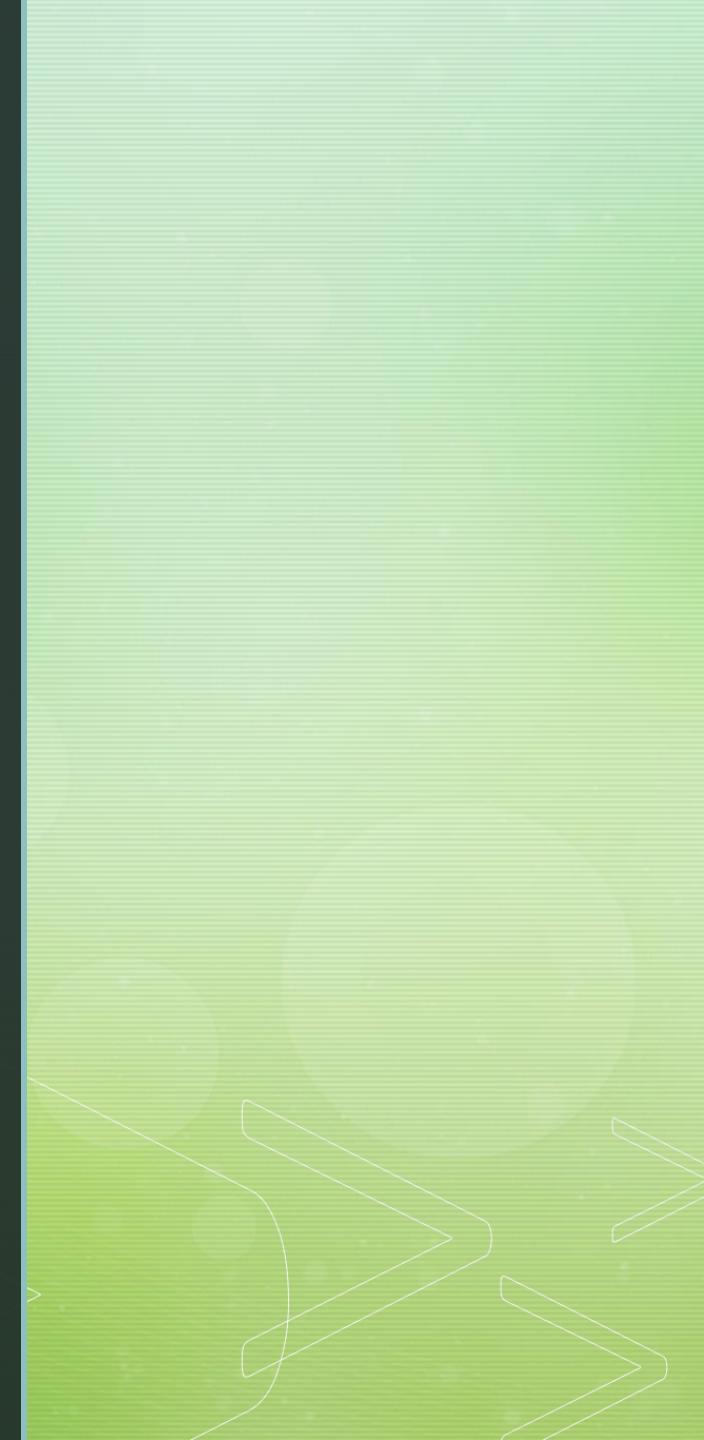
► Financial or  
economic abuse

- Financial abuse is an aspect of ‘coercive control’ – a pattern of controlling, threatening and degrading behaviour that restricts a victims’ freedom.
- It’s important to understand that financial abuse seldom happens in isolation: in most cases perpetrators use other abusive behaviours to threaten and reinforce the financial abuse.

# Possible forms – Financial and economic abuse

- Restricting access to essential resources (food, clothing, transport)
- Forcing to take out loans
- Making the person ask for money
- Forcing to work
- Denying means to improve one 'status'
- Stopping the person from working
- Controlling money and all expenditures.
- Checking use of cards

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# Harassment and stalking



# Harassment – What is it?

The law states that harassment is when a person behaves in a way which is intended to cause you distress or alarm. The behaviour must happen on more than one occasion. It can be the same type of behaviour or different types of behaviour on each occasion. ... One text message and one phone call may also be harassment.

# Possible forms

- •Sexual harassment.
- •Physical harassment.
- •Psychological harassment.
- •Third-party harassment.

# Stalking - What is it?

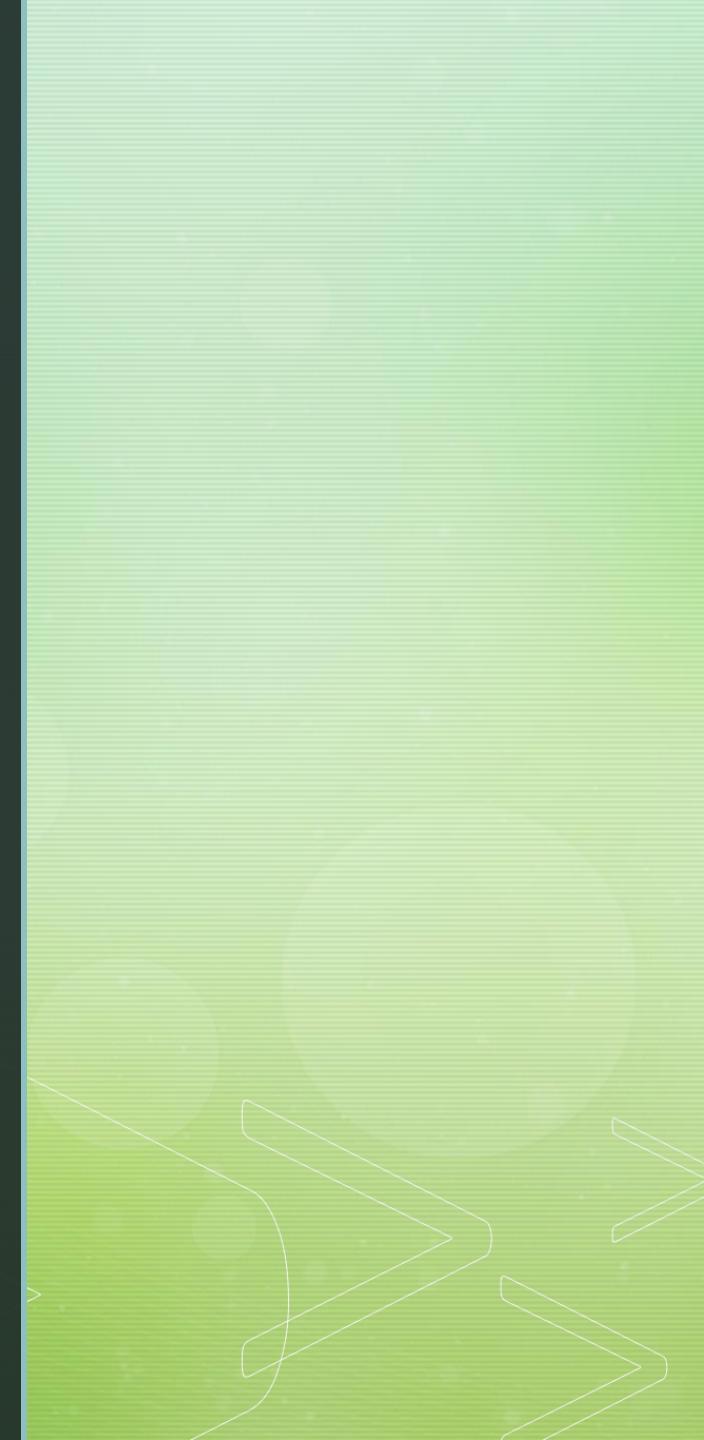
- Stalking can be defined as persistent and unwanted attention that makes you feel pestered and harassed. It includes behaviour that happens two or more times, directed at or towards you by another person, which causes you to feel alarmed or distressed or to fear that violence might be used against you.
- What makes the problem particularly hard to cope with is that it can go on for a long period of time, making you feel constantly anxious and afraid. Sometimes the problem can build up slowly and it can take a while for you to realise you are caught up in an ongoing campaign of abuse.

- The problem isn't always 'physical' — stalking can affect you psychologically as well. Social media and the internet are often used for stalking and harassment, and 'cyber-stalking' or online threats can be just as intimidating.

## Possible forms

- Following you around or spying on you
- Sending you unwanted emails or letters
- Calling you often
- Showing up uninvited at your house, school, or work
- Leaving you unwanted gifts
- Damaging your home, car, or other property
- Threatening you, your family, or pets with violence
- Persistent texting

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Online or digital  
abuse

# What is it?

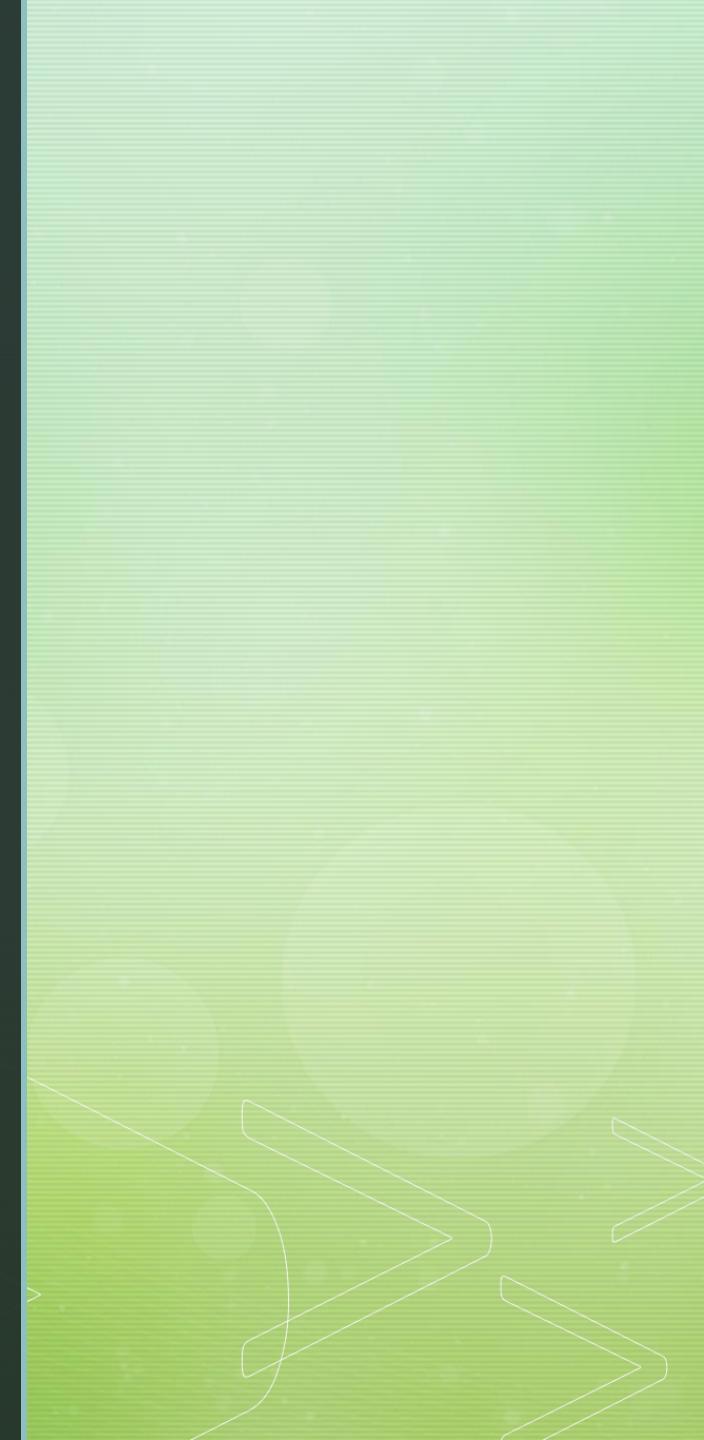
Perpetrators of domestic abuse and violence can also use social media or email and messaging services to abuse their victims as well as monitor what they are doing and prevent them seeking help and contacting relevant agencies and the police.

## Possible forms

- Revenge porn (non consensual image sharing)
- Sexually harassing a partner online
- controlling a partner's social media accounts
- requiring that a partner keep their phone with them at all times to respond to calls and texts
- using technology to monitor the other person's actions both on and offline

- Although social media can offer victims of abuse a support network, it can also potentially be used by abusers to harass, intimidate and monitor people. Facebook and Twitter are the two major social media platforms and both have different ways to manage your privacy and safety when using them. It is worth visiting the Facebook Safety Centre and reading their privacy basics as well as reading the information on the Twitter Safety Centre website.
- There are other social media platforms and mobile applications that store data in different ways. You should always read carefully the guidance on privacy and terms of usage for any new resource you plan to use to ensure that you are using it safely.

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Staying safe

# The Barriers a victim will face

- Victims find it hard to report or tell anyone. The average victim is assaulted 35 times before reporting the abuse to anyone.
- Language
- Culture (in some countries you do not go to “authorities”)
- Shame that the abuse is happening
- Trying to keep the family together
- Faith
- Travelling Community
- Children
- Shame
- Financial dependency
- On average, it takes 7 attempts to leave the relationship
-

# Effects of Domestic Violence & abuse on victims

- Depression
- Lack of self-esteem / 'I deserved it'
- Feeling of helplessness
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Alcohol & drug misuse
- Mental health problems
- Increased risk of suicide
- Friends, family, children may not be supportive, or don't understand why she doesn't leave
- Victim might fear retribution from perpetrator
- Aggression and avoidance are coping mechanisms

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# Possible impact of children and young people 1

- •They may become anxious or depressed
- •They may have difficulty sleeping
- •They have nightmares or flashbacks
- •They can be easily startled
- •They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches and may start to wet their bed
- •They may have temper tantrums and problems with school

# Possible impact of children and young people 2

- •They may behave as though they are much younger than they are
- •They may become aggressive or they may internalise their distress and withdraw from other people
- •They may have a lowered sense of self-worth
- •Older children may begin to play truant, start to use alcohol or drugs, begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves or have an eating disorder
- Children may also feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless or confused.
- They may have ambivalent feelings towards both the abuser and the non-abusing parent.

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# What can you do?....

- Ask the question.... “are you experiencing domestic violence?  
How is the relationship?
- Active listening with the person in front of you or on the phone
- Non judgemental – do not judge the situation
- Don’t ignore the person in front of you or on the phone - What ever is happening could seriously harm that person!
- Do not Collude with perpetrator (where agencies have to see both parties)
- Believe the person in front of you or on the phone
- Consider High risk factors:  
Pregnancy, Women murdered at point of leaving or shortly after.
- Talk with other agencies to get advice if you don’t have the answers.

# Safety Planning 1

- Plan in advance how you might respond in different situations, including crisis situations.
- Think about the different options that may be available to you.
- Keep with you any important and emergency telephone numbers
- •Try to keep a small amount of money on you at all times – including change for the phone and for bus fares.
- Teach your children to call 999 in an emergency, and what they would need to say
- Are there neighbours you could trust, and where you could go in an emergency?
- •Rehearse an escape plan, so in an emergency you and the children can get away safely.
- •Pack an emergency bag for yourself and your children, and hide it somewhere safe

## Safety Planning 2

- •Know where the nearest phone is, and if you have a mobile phone, try to keep it with you.
- •If you suspect that your partner is about to attack you, try to go to a lower risk area of the house – for example where there is a way out and access to a telephone. Avoid the kitchen or garage where there are likely to be knives or other weapons; and avoid rooms where you might be trapped, such as the bathroom, or where you might be shut into a cupboard or other small space.
- Be prepared to leave the house in an emergency.

# Safety Planning for children and young people

**Everyone has the right to be safe from harm and if there's violence in the home it's important that children and young people can stay safe when there is a fight.**

- Tell someone
- Talking helps
- Find a safe place

<https://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk/cms/sites/default/files/resources/children/SafetyPlanningChildWorkbook2015.pdf>

<https://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk/cms/sites/default/files/resources/children/SafetyPlanningYoungPersonActionPlan2015.pdf>

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## Contacting the Merton Team

**Victim Support Merton – Independent Domestic  
Abuse Advisors (IDVAs)**

**0207 801 1777**

**If you are concerned about a Child or Young Person  
– contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub  
(MASH)**

**0208 545 4226/4227**

# Services available

- **Met Police – Community Safety Unit 020 8649 3170**
- **Victim Support Merton IDVA – Independent Domestic Violence Advisors – 020 7801 1777**  
[merton.communityidva@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:merton.communityidva@victimsupport.org.uk)
- **Merton Refuge (for non Merton residents)**
- **One Stop Shop – Morden Baptist Church, Monday's 9.30 – 12.00**

## Non Molestation Orders/ civil injunctions

- **National Domestic Violence Helpline (including refuge) - 0808 2000 247**
- **Men's Advice Line (for male victims) – 0808 801 0327**
- [www.merton.gov.uk/domesticviolence](http://www.merton.gov.uk/domesticviolence)

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