

Reaching out for support in abusive relationships at Home

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is generally defined as incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening and violent behaviour between individuals that have been in an intimate relationship, that includes family members. Stereotypically women are considered to be the most common victims of domestic abuse, however known cases of men and children being victims of domestic abuse have risen significantly in recent years.

What are the different forms of domestic abuse?

Psychological abuse

Includes name-calling, threats and manipulation, blaming you for the abuse or 'gas-lighting' you.

Psychological or emotional abuse can range from belittling comments and put downs to accusations. This kind of abuse can lead the victim to believe they're imagining things.

Economic abuse

Controlling your access to money or resources. An abuser might take your wages, stop you working, or put you in debt.

If someone is controlling or misusing your money in a way that limits your freedom, they are financially abusing you.

Economic abuse is broader than financial abuse. An economic abuser might be limiting your access to basic resources like food, shelter, clothing or transport, creating instability and threatening your safety.

Sexual abuse

Doesn't have to be physical. An abuser might manipulate or coerce you into doing things you don't want to do.

Sexual abuse can happen in or outside of relationships, including within marriage. Your abuser may be pressuring you to have sex or to engage in sexual acts, hurting you during sex, pressuring you to have unprotected sex and more.

Coercive control

When an abuser uses a pattern of behaviour over time to exert power and control. It is a criminal offence.

Physical abuse

Not only hitting. An abuser might restrain you or throw objects. The abuser might pinch or shove you and claim it's a 'joke'.

If an abuser is hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, using a weapon against you or causing you any kind of physical harm, minor or extreme, you're being physically abused.

Tech abuse

The abuser might send abusive texts, demand access to your devices, track you with spyware, or share images of you online.

If your accounts are being monitored, intimate videos or photos have been shared online or someone is using software that monitors what you're doing or where you're going, you're being digitally abused.

Gaslighting

Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse that discredits your memory, perception and sanity. An abuser might use lies, denial, contradiction, false information and manipulation to exert control.

If you are aware of someone whose partner exhibits the behaviours below the person could be a victim of domestic abuse:

Partner is jealous and possessive

They are nice one minute and then abusive in the next

Tells the individual what to wear, where they can go and who they can see

Constantly puts them down

Puts pressure onto the individual to have sex when they don't want to

Plays mind games and makes them doubt their judgement

Isolates the individual from friends and family

Controls the money

Tracks their movement and messages

The individual feels as if they have to walk on eggshells, so they don't upset partner

Partner uses anger and intimidation to frighten the individual

Victims of domestic abuse can often experience domestic abuse for several years before finding the strength to seek help and support to get away from the abusive partner. The impact of domestic abuse on an individual can last for several years.

It is also important not to forget the impact on children who live in a household where there is domestic abuse, a child witnessing domestic is child abuse. A child's mental and physical wellbeing, and their behaviour can suffer through witnessing domestic abuse with the impact possibly lasting into their adulthood.

We all have a role in trying to identify when someone is being abused and if possible support or encourage them to seek the appropriate help to leave an abusive relationship.

If you are experiencing abuse or believe you are in an abusive relationship, talking to someone can be the first step to leaving an abusive relationship. Care first have counsellors and advisers who can listen, support, or sign post you to where you can get assistance. You could also talk to a trusted, family member, friend or colleague. If you wish to contact the Care first telephone counselling and information line then please don't hesitate to call the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

There are other national agencies that provide support:

If it is safe to do so, call a telephone helpline for support, either with mental health generally or with difficult relationships in particular:

Freephone 24/7 National Domestic Violence Helpline, run by Refuge: 0808 2000 247

The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327

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

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428

Rights of Women advice lines, there are a range of services available

Sources of information:

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/domestic-abuse>

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

If you would like to view the Webinar on **'Reaching out for support in abusive relationships at Home'** this is being delivered live on **Friday 12th February at 12pm**, join us on the day or register now by clicking on the link below to ensure your place:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1814376017839274507>

Please be assured that registrant information is held confidentially and your organisation is not notified of your attendance/non-attendance to these webinars.

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.