

Domestic Abuse

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behavior, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.

Different types of abuse

- **Physical abuse** - Physical abuse (violence) can include pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, choking and using weapons.
- **Verbal abuse** - Verbal abuse is the use of harsh or insulting language directed at a person. You might be called names or constantly put down by your partner.
- **Coercive & controlling behaviour** - Control and coercion are forms of emotional abuse. They often go together, but are slightly different. **Coercion** is a pattern of behaviour designed to make someone feel intimidated, scared, humiliated or threatened.

Controlling behaviour happens when someone sets out to make the victim subordinate or dependent on them by cutting them off from their support networks, regulating their behaviour and reducing their independence.

Behaviours include withholding money, blackmailing, constantly criticising someone, checking up on or monitoring someone, isolating someone from friends and family, and playing mind games such as gas lighting.

Controlling or coercive behaviour is now a criminal offence under the Serious Crime Act 2015.

- **Mental abuse** - Psychological or mental abuse is when someone is subjected or exposed to a situation that can result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- **Sexual abuse** - sexual abuse is when you're forced or pressured to have sex without your consent or any form of unwanted sexual activity.

The impact the perpetrators domestic abuse behaviour, has on their children

The following explains the impact on the child when a primary caregiver is the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

- **Pregnancy** - the unborn child's exposure during pregnancy can negatively affect the physical and neurological development of the fetus and undermine the formation of secure attachment after the birth.
- **Infancy** - Exposure to the perpetrators behaviour during the first two years of life significantly impacts the infant's developing attachment to the caregivers, their understanding of the world, themselves and others. and the infant's ability to manage their emotions and how they respond to stress over the course of their lifetime.
- **Early Childhood (2-5)** - In this period, when a child's personality is still developing, the trauma of exposure to domestic abuse can lead to intense emotion which may affect behaviour and key relationships. The trauma can resurface throughout an individual's lifetime, contributing to a tendency for violence or victimisation.
- **Middle childhood (6-12 Years)** - As they reach school age, a child's exposure to domestic abuse may interfere with important academic and social milestones.

Keeping the child safe

We understand the impact of the perpetrators behaviour on their child and so will support the child in partnership with the parent survivor to ensure the child is safe and has opportunity to access emotional support.

Intervening with the perpetrator

We recognise that the perpetrators behaviour is harming the child and can impede on the survivor's ability to parent. We will intervene with the perpetrator, challenging their parenting choices.

Working with the survivor

We recognise that survivors of domestic abuse, are already taking action to protect their child, but we also know that the perpetrators behaviour can interfere with parenting. We will work in partnership with the survivor to strengthen the safety already in place and explore support that is available.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, no matter your age, race, class, culture, disability, gender, sexuality or lifestyle.

We understand that telling someone domestic abuse is happening to you, will be frightening. You may worry that speaking about it could make it worse or have repercussions from your community, but... everyone has a right to live free from fear in their own homes.

If you are in a relationship where domestic abuse/violence is happening or you are worried for a friend, you can either contact someone in the Safeguarding Team or if you say, "**Oak Tree**" to any member of staff and a member of the safeguarding team will make contact with you in a safe way.

Support / Helplines in Greater Manchester

End the Fear

Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0161 636 7525 10am - 4pm. 0808 200 247, 24hrs 7 days a week

Saheli

www.saheli.org.uk. 0161 945 4187, Email: help@saheli.org.uk

Provides safe spaces, culturally sensitive support, language assistance, and a voice and identity to Black Asian and minoritised women facing violence in their lives.

Manchester Women's Aid

www.pankhursttrust.org. 0161 660 7999, 9:30am - 7pm

How to make a silent 999 call

If you're in danger, call 999 and try to speak to the operator if you can, even by whispering. You may also be asked to cough or tap the keys on your phone to answer questions.

Calling 999 from a mobile

- If you don't speak or answer questions, press 55 when prompted and your call will be transferred to the police.
- Pressing 55 only works on mobiles and doesn't allow the police to track your location.
- If you don't press 55 your call will be ended.

Calling 999 from a landline

- If you don't speak or answer questions and the operator can only hear background noise, they'll transfer your call to the police.
- If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick it up again.
- Calling 999 from a landline automatically gives the police information about your location.