

# Domestic Abuse Awareness Training

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**Cambridgeshire  
& Peterborough**  
Domestic Abuse & Sexual  
Violence Partnership

## Domestic Abuse Definition

Behaviour of a person (A) towards another person (B) is 'domestic abuse' if they are **both aged 16 or over** and are **personally connected** to each other.

Personally connected includes **current or former intimate partners**, and close **relatives**

The behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following-

- **Physical or sexual abuse**
- **Violent or threatening behaviour**
- **Controlling or coercive behaviour**
- **Economic abuse**
- **Psychological, emotional or other abuse**

The behaviour will still be considered 'domestic abuse' whether it consists of a **single incident or a course of conduct**.

(DA Bill 2021)



## Domestic Abuse Definition cont'd

- Person A's behaviour may be regarded as abusive to person B, even though it consists of conduct directed at a third person (e.g. the child of B)
- Economic abuse means behaviour that has an adverse affect on the persons ability to acquire, use or maintain money, property, goods or services.
- 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



# Children as victims of domestic abuse

- A child will be considered a victim of DA where they see, hear, or experience the effects of the domestic abuse between the current/ former intimate persons in question
- The child can be related to either person in the abusive relationship
- Related covers parents, someone who has parental responsibility for the child or a relative of the child
- Child means someone under the age of 18

(DA Bill 2021)



## Domestic Abuse as a preventable health condition

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men (annually over 2 million people)
- The cost of domestic abuse to the NHS is £2.3 billion annually.
- 2 women a week are murdered by their partner or ex-partner
- 1 in 8 of all suicides and suicide attempts by women in the UK are due to domestic abuse



## Domestic Abuse through the lifetime

- 30% of domestic abuse starts during pregnancy, strong links to miscarriage and premature birth
- At least 827,000 children in the UK experience DA each year
- CSEW data on prevalence by age group:
  - **16 to 19 years:** 8.7% experienced DA
  - **20 to 24 years:** 7.1% experienced DA
  - **55 to 59 years:** 3.8% experienced DA
  - **Overall (16 years and over):** 4.8% experienced DA



## Older people and people with disabilities

- In the last year, 2.1% of people 60-74 reported IP abuse and 1.1% family (3% total, compared to 6% 16-59 year olds)
- Familial abuse victims were almost even split male/female
- Older adults with poor reported general health with limiting disabilities or long term illnesses have three times higher DA risk – twice as likely for IP and 4 times for familial
- Women with disabilities three times more likely to experience domestic abuse
- Isolation and rurality
- Caring relationships



## Domestic Abuse Facts

- Emotional abuse and coercive control is more common than physical violence – and can be more dangerous
- Abuse is about power and control – what happens when that control is threatened?
- Women are more likely to experience more than one type





## Key Headlines 2024-2025

### Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

- There were **4599** referrals to the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Service for domestic abuse, a 31% increase on the previous year
- A total of **1237** cases were heard at MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences,
- A total of **13,861** domestic abuse incidents were reported to Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- **2033** serious sexual offences reported to police
- Refuges across the county housed 98 women, and 107 children
- **772** referrals were made to the Domestic Abuse Support Service
- Cambridge & Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership supported **1936** survivors, **305** were under 18



## The value of a Health Response

- 80% of women in a violent relationship seek help from health services - these are often a woman's first, or only, point of contact.
- GPs are considered to be the professional that patients most trust to disclose to, comparable only to friends and family.
- The cost of DA to health services in the UK is estimated at 2.3 billion a year
- Recommendations for Health agencies feature highly in DHR/DARDRs
- Low referrals from some Health agencies
- Crossing Pathways report 2025



## What are the challenges?

- Differing priorities
- Patient likely to present with other issues – ie MH, child concerns
- Staff turnover
- Time!
- Lack of services (ie post abuse, male victims)
- Overlapping systems – ie safeguarding
- Funding (general and for interventions like IRIS)
- Inconsistencies in Guidance – Nice, HO, RCGPs etc



Direct disclosure of assault

Gastrointestinal  
symptoms

Insomnia

Neurological  
Symptoms

Unwanted pregnancy

Eating disorders

Chronic pain

Suicide ideation

Depression

Substance misuse

Lower back pain

Gynaecological problems

PTSD

Anxiety

STIs

UTIs

Self harm

Cardiovascular risk

## Non-Fatal Strangulation

- Voice changes
- Difficulty or pain swallowing
- Petechial Haemorrhage
- Amnesia
- Neurological symptoms
- Visual symptoms
- Severe headache
- 50% of NFS leaves no visible mark

Guidance [Non-Fatal-Strangulation-Guidelines AcuteEmergency Feb24.pdf](#)



Its not uncommon  
for patients with  
these symptoms to  
be experiencing  
abuse from  
someone, is  
everything okay at  
home?


Is anyone controlling  
or belittling you?

Sometimes patients  
who have these  
injuries have been  
hurt by someone,  
has that happened  
to you?

How are things at  
home? Anyone  
frightening you or  
making you feel  
bad?

Is anyone hurting or  
frightening you?

Because domestic  
abuse & sexual  
violence are so  
common I like to ask  
my patients if that's  
something that's  
happened to them...



Thank you for telling  
me, it takes courage

This is not your fault,  
you don't deserve  
this

## Helpful responses

You've done the  
right thing in telling  
me, I am going to  
help you get the  
right support

I can imagine this  
feels very  
overwhelming but  
there is help  
available

A central dark blue circle labeled "Unhelpful responses" is surrounded by four other circles. The top-left circle is grey and contains the text "Why would you put up with that?". The top-right circle is blue and contains the text "You need to leave him/her" and "You have to report to the police". The bottom-left circle is blue and contains the text "Have you thought how damaging this is to your children?". The bottom-right circle is green and contains the text "We all have arguments in relationships" and "What did you do to provoke that?".

Why would you put  
up with that?

## Unhelpful responses

You need to leave  
him/her

You have to report to  
the police

Have you thought  
how damaging this is  
to your children?

We all have  
arguments in  
relationships

What did you do to  
provoke that?



# Assessing Current Risk of homicide or suicide

- Pregnancy
  - Strangulation
  - Isolation – friends, family, services
  - Escalation – more often, more victims, weapons
  - Separation – increases risk
  - Stalking & post separation abuse
- 
- Abuse is about power and control – losing those = high risk



# DASH Risk Assessment – for current DA

- 27 questions, based on known risks identified in Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Preferable to complete with the victim, consent
- Older People's DASH for those aged 60+
- 17 ticks = high risk, 14-16 can refer to IDVA with consent
- Professional judgement is important – victim may not understand language used or may minimise the impact



# MARAC and the Role of the IDVA

- MARAC – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference for the most high risk victims
- IDVA – Independent Domestic Violence Adviser – for those at high risk of homicide or significant harm
- Specialist IDVAs for Young People, Migrants and Housing providers
- ISVAs – Independent Sexual Violence Advisers – based with Rape Crisis






# What does an IDVA/Domestic Abuse Specialist do?

- An IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) works with victims of domestic abuse to:
  - identify and assess risks
  - understand and access options
  - devise bespoke safety plans
  - navigate criminal and civil justice processes
- IDVAs have an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse, including the impact on victim/survivors and the tactics and behaviours of perpetrators.

# Responding to perpetrators

- Don't collude with them
- Don't make excuses
- Consider carer perpetrators
- Abusers don't stop once they reach a certain age!
- Beware of abusers seeking information about victims
- Signpost to support – Respect Phoneline





How are things in  
your relationship?

Have you ever been  
worried at how  
you've reacted?

Are you struggling  
with feelings of  
anger or jealousy?

It's very positive  
you've been able to  
talk about this

This must be making  
you very unhappy,  
there is confidential  
support available

I'm so glad you've  
told me, I want to  
put you in touch  
with someone who  
can help

# Case Study 1

- 36 years old female with one child. Pakastani ethnicity of Muslim faith
- Client had been married to her husband for 10 years, marriage arranged by families
- Abuse started early in the marriage – physical and sexual
- Disclosed to GP who referred into Health IDVA
- the case was allocated to the BAME IDVA for specialist support but client raised concerns of shame related to shared faith
- client raised concerns about being supported by a person within her own community
- Client was unaware of criminal elements and of support available but disclosed to police after meeting with IDVA, non mol put in place
- Target hardening measures

***'Words cannot explain how you have changed our lives'***



# Case Study 2

- Male, aged 63, Complex health needs: 3 X Heart attacks within 1 year, depression and anxiety.
- client had been in a domestic abuse relationship with his female partner for around 10 years
- Abuse was getting worse and impacting his health – physical, emotional and coercive control
- He was also his wife's carer and felt guilt and concern about leaving her
- Abuse disclosed to hospital staff
- IDVA worked with Housing to apply for temporary housing, pending bidding for permanent property
- IDVA liaised with Adult Social Care about care for wife
- Client able to re-establish relationship with his daughter
- Client's health significantly improved





# IDVA Referrals

- Separate IDVA Service for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- Requires a DASH to be completed

Training on completing a DASH [Completing a DASH Risk Indicator Checklist | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#)

Professional queries to the Duty IDVA:

[idva.referrals@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:idva.referrals@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

[peterboroughidvas@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:peterboroughidvas@peterborough.gov.uk)

- **Referral Forms:** [Cambridgeshire County Council DASV Partnership - Make a Referral](#)



# DASS Outreach

- **Domestic Abuse Support Service**
- All levels of Risk
- Accept Self Referrals
- 0300 373 073 – 9-5, Mon-Fri
  - [DASS | IMPAKT Housing & Support](#)



# Other local specialist support

- Cambridge Rape Crisis 01223 245888 [www.caprcp.org.uk](http://www.caprcp.org.uk)
- The Elms Sexual Assault Referral Centre 0800 193 5434 [www.theelmssarc.org](http://www.theelmssarc.org)
- Victim & Witness Hub 0800 781 6818 <https://www.cambsvictimservices.co.uk/support-for-victims/victims-and-witness-hub>
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse Partnership [www.cambsdasv.org.uk](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk)



# National sources of support

- National Domestic Violence Helpline - **0808 2000 247**  
<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/>
- Rape Crisis 24/7 Support Line 0808 500 2222 [24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line](#)
- Men's Advice Line - **0808 801 0327** [www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)
- Male Victims of Sexual Violence [Contact SurvivorsUK | SurvivorsUK](#)
- Karma Nirvana (victims of honour crimes) - **0800 5999247**  
[www.karmanirvana.org.uk/](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/)
- Galop (LGBT support) - **0300 999 5428** [www.galop.org.uk/](http://www.galop.org.uk/)
- Hourglass (older people) - 0808 808 8141 [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)
- The Respect Phoneline – **0808 802 4040** [www.respectphoneline.org.uk](http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk) (For domestic violence perpetrators)



# Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Champions Network

- Be the link between your organisation and the work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership.
- Promote discussion and best practice around the issue of domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Provide support to peers when working with adults, children and young people and families affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Receive our monthly newsletter

Quarterly online session with two speakers on relevant topics.

- Email [DASVChampions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:DASVChampions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)





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# Any questions?

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