

## Domestic Violence & Abuse

### What is domestic abuse?

Women's Aid defines domestic abuse as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It is very common. In the vast majority of cases it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:

Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)

Psychological and/or emotional abuse

Physical or sexual abuse

Financial abuse

Harassment and stalking

Online or digital abuse

Domestic abuse is a gendered crime which is deeply rooted in the societal inequality between women and men. It takes place "because she is a woman and happens disproportionately to women."<sup>1</sup>

Women are more likely than men to experience multiple incidents of abuse, different types of domestic abuse (intimate partner violence, sexual assault and stalking) and in particular sexual violence. Any woman can experience domestic abuse regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, sexuality, class, or disability, but some women who experience other forms of oppression and discrimination may face further barriers to disclosing abuse and finding help.

Domestic abuse exists as part of violence against women and girls; which also includes different forms of family violence such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so called "honour crimes" that are perpetrated primarily by family members, often with multiple perpetrators.

### Perceptions of abuse

The Crime Survey of England and Wales data on violent crime and sexual offences, for the year ending March 2015, shows that of 4,564 adults questioned, 92% believe it is always unacceptable to hit or slap their partner in response to their partner constantly nagging or moaning (91% of men, 92% of women). These levels of objection decrease amongst adults when asked about partners cheating, 77% of adults surveyed

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations (UN) Declaration on the elimination of violence against women 1993.

believe it is always unacceptable to hit or slap their partner in response to their partner having an affair or cheating on them (76% of men and 78% of women).<sup>2</sup>

### Recognising Domestic Violence & Abuse: Signs and Symptoms

Although every situation is unique, there are common factors that link the experience of an abusive relationship. Acknowledging these factors is an important step in preventing and stopping the abuse. This list can help you to recognise if you, or someone you know, are in an abusive relationship.

They include:

Destructive criticism and verbal abuse: shouting; mocking; accusing; name calling; verbally threatening.

Pressure tactics: sulking; threatening to withhold money, disconnecting the phone and internet, taking away or destroying your mobile, tablet or laptop, taking the car away, taking the children away; threatening to report you to the police, social services or the mental health team unless you comply with his demands; threatening or attempting self-harm and suicide; withholding or pressuring you to use drugs or other substances; lying to your friends and family about you; telling you that you have no choice in any decisions.

Disrespect: persistently putting you down in front of other people; not listening or responding when you talk; interrupting your telephone calls; taking money from your purse without asking; refusing to help with childcare or housework.

Breaking trust: lying to you; withholding information from you; being jealous; having other relationships; breaking promises and shared agreements.

Isolation: monitoring or blocking your phone calls, e-mails and social media accounts, telling you where you can and cannot go; preventing you from seeing friends and relatives; shutting you in the house.

Harassment: following you; checking up on you; not allowing you any privacy (for example, opening your mail, going through your laptop, tablet or mobile), repeatedly checking to see who has phoned you; embarrassing you in public; accompanying you everywhere you go.

Threats: making angry gestures; using physical size to intimidate; shouting you down; destroying your possessions; breaking things; punching walls; wielding a knife or a gun; threatening to kill or harm you and the children; threatening to kill or harm family pets; threats of suicide.

Sexual violence: using force, threats or intimidation to make you perform sexual acts; having sex with you when you don't want it; forcing you to look at pornographic material; constant pressure and harassment into having sex when you don't want to, forcing you to have sex with other people; any degrading treatment related to your sexuality or to whether you are lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual.

Physical violence: punching; slapping; hitting; biting; pinching; kicking; pulling hair out; pushing; shoving; burning; strangling, pinning you down, holding you by the neck, restraining you.

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<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics Crime Statistics, Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2015/16. Chapter 4: Intimate personal violence and partner abuse (Published online: Office for National Statistics, 2016) Table 4.36

Denial: saying the abuse doesn't happen; saying you caused the abuse; saying you wind him up; saying he can't control his anger; being publicly gentle and patient; crying and begging for forgiveness; saying it will never happen again.

Taken from: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/recognising-domestic-abuse/>

## **Church of England Guidance**

Policy & Practice Guidance:

[www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/RespondingWellWeb.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/RespondingWellWeb.pdf)

Factsheet:

[www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/responding-well-to-domestic-abuse-practice-guidance-appendix-1-domestic-abuse-fact-sheet.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/responding-well-to-domestic-abuse-practice-guidance-appendix-1-domestic-abuse-fact-sheet.pdf)

## **Children & Domestic Abuse**

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/)