

STOP ABUSE

THE DOMESTIC DOES NOT MATTER, IT IS THE ABUSE

"Everyone has the human right to live in safety and free from violence and abuse. Society has a duty to recognise and defend this right."
 Women's Aid

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. It can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, race, economic status, or sexual orientation. Domestic abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or psychological abuse. It can also include stalking and cyberstalking. Abusive behaviour is rarely about one incident. It's usually a series of ongoing behaviours that escalates over time. Domestic abuse often starts with controlling behaviours, such as jealousy and possessiveness, that are meant to isolate the victim and gain power over them. These controlling behaviours can quickly escalate to include other forms of abuse, such as physical violence or sexual assault.

It's important to be informed about the realities of domestic abuse so that we can better support those who are affected by it. Let's take a look at different common myths and misconceptions about domestic abuse.

#1: Alcohol and drugs can make existing abuse worse or be a catalyst for an attack. Alcohol does not cause domestic abuse, but it does sometimes facilitate bad behaviour in those who are already prone to physical or psychological abuse. When someone abuses their partner, they deserve to be held accountable for any violent or controlling actions. It is never an excuse that drugs were involved in the abuse - only the person performing these acts can take responsibility for themselves

#2: Abuse rarely starts at the beginning of a relationship, but when it is established and often harder to leave. Women stay in abusive relationships for many different reasons. And it can be very difficult for a woman to leave an abusive partner - even if she wants to. A woman may feel like it is her fault, that she can change her partner, or that he will change on his own. She may be financially dependent on him, have children with him, or be afraid of what he will do if she leaves. He may have threatened to kill her or the children, himself, or even his pets. He may have told her no one else would want her. She may believe him.

#3: This is a common misconception that needs to be addressed. The myth says men are superior and deserve respect, but this idea is not correct because they are also human with flaws like everyone else; it excuses abusers from taking responsibility for their actions when something goes wrong in the relationship or family setting (such as abuse). There's no way you can provoke someone into beating on your wife/mother if she does not want him. The only person at fault here would naturally have been himself!

#4: Unfortunately, Domestic abuse can take many forms, and it is not always easy to spot. Even though physical violence may be one form, there are others such as psychological or emotional; financial-related incidents which would fall under the category of coercive control (ex: demanding money); sexual touching/ genital fondling without consent, harassment; stalking; and/or online or digital abuse. In other words, any behaviour that is used to control, intimidate or hurt a partner can be considered domestic abuse.



Rachael Bishop
 RB Safeguarding consultancy & training

Who is Rachael Bishop?

Rachael is well-known and respected in the world of safeguarding people of all ages after working with organisations for 18 years in many different sectors. She has a thriving company that supports a wide range of people and organisations across a variety of industries by supporting them to safeguard service users and employees. Rachael's experience and successes with clients have made her a valuable consultant and trainer and she is widely admired for her achievements.

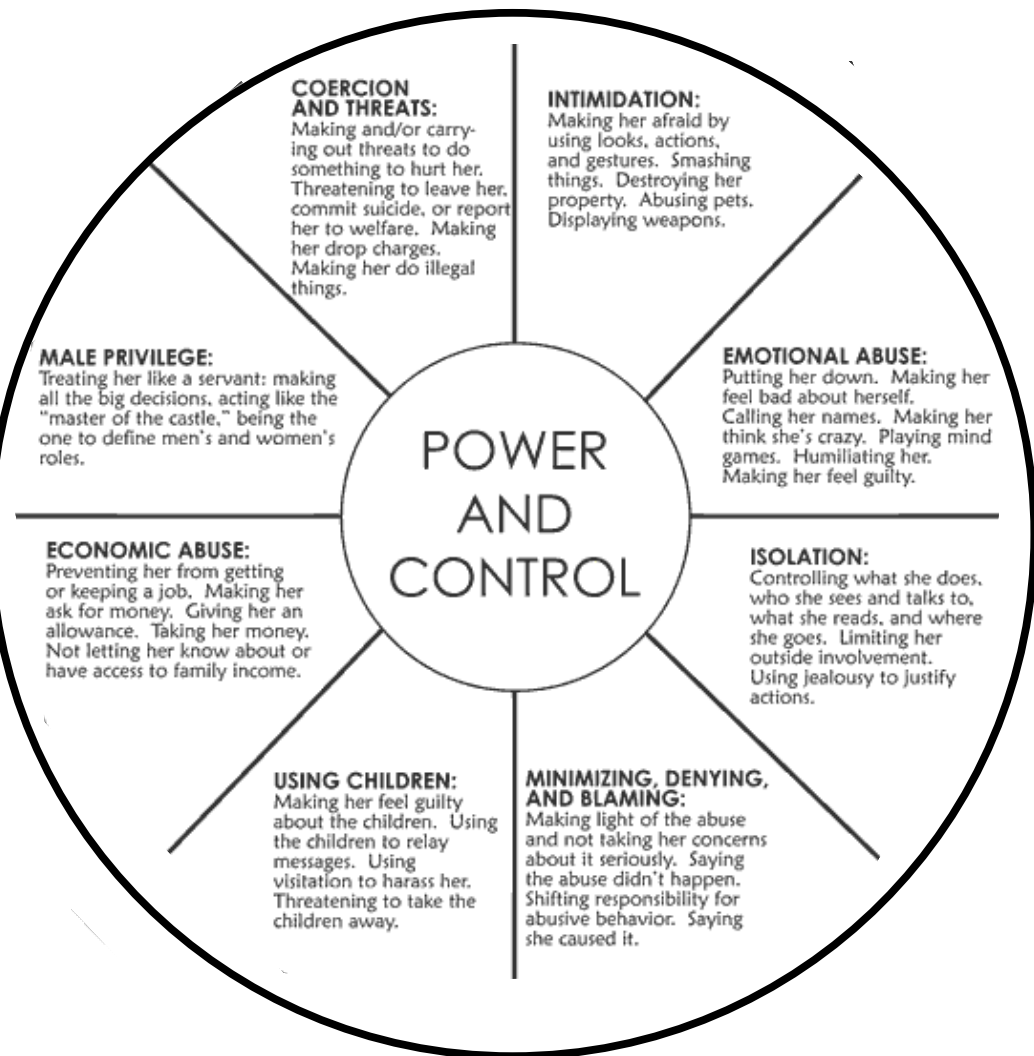


THE DOMESTIC DOES NOT MATTER, IT IS THE VIOLENCE

#5: Some women are particularly attracted to abusive men. This is not a true myth; a perpetrator of domestic abuse can be charming and charismatic when he first meets a new partner; many would not suspect him of ever being domestically violent in any relationship when they are introduced to friends and family. It's only after they have been dating or being with someone for an extended period of time that these individuals may start showing their true colours as abusers themselves

#6: Healthy relationships require the ability to have healthy discussions with those who disagree. It is important not only for us as individuals but also in order that our partnerships may thrive and last; we must be able freely to express ourselves without fear or repercussions--this includes different opinions! Abuse has no place when it comes down to discussing differing points of view. This helps foster growth by opening up lines of communication which can lead towards understanding one another better through dialogue.

A healthier dimension involves two equals interacting together on both personal levels. It is important to offer support to someone going through domestic violence. One of the best things you can do is listen to them and be there for them. It can be a very scary and confusing time, and they need all the support they can get. You can also help by providing resources and information about domestic violence and letting them know they are not alone. Keep in mind that women are capable of being abusers just like men. Abuse is gender-neutral, and while men may statistically be more likely to commit certain types of abuse, this does not mean that women can not contribute. Physical and emotional abuse can come from both genders with equal degrees of harm. It's important to remember that victim support does not just apply strictly to male victims or female perpetrators; it could be the reverse in any situation.



National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV)

Telephone: 0800 970 2070

Email: office@ncdv.org.uk

Website: www.ncdv.org.uk



Citizen Advice

Website:

Domestic violence and abuse - getting help - Citizens Advice



NHS-Domestic Abuse

Website:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/getting-help-for-domestic-violence/ww.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk



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Rachael was asked some questions to help us better understand how to support those going through domestic violence. As a teacher, I am passionate about making sure that my students are informed about difficult topics that we may not feel comfortable approaching. Rachael's professional background and experiences have given her a unique perspective on this issue, and I believe that her advice can be very helpful for people who are trying to support a friend or family member who is dealing with domestic violence. Here are some of the things that Rachael had to say:

1. Many people do not like talking about domestic abuse because it makes them feel uncomfortable, why do you feel it is important for people to open up?

It can be extremely difficult for an individual to open up about their experience of domestic abuse but society can also shy away from the issue by adopting the view that it is not their business to get involved or that there may be negative consequences associated with doing so. It is crucial that people open up about domestic abuse on all levels, especially those who are victims or survivors.

2. Why is it important that in a workplace we are supportive of those experiencing domestic abuse and to be aware that some people feel that they break the cycle or leave?

Domestic abuse can have a significant impact on a person's physical and emotional wellbeing. When considering the workplace it is important to note that the abuser may be harassing or abusing the employee at work also. Employers have a duty of care to ensure that their employees are safe and well. It can be so difficult to leave as not only does it put them at further risk but they may be emotionally drawn to the abuser, scared of the potential consequences if they were to leave or they may feel they have nowhere to go and there may be family or financial reasons etc.

3. What are some of the key tools, information or advice that you feel could help others reading this?

It is important to note that a person experiencing this is never alone. It may feel impossible to comprehend what is happening to them and that they will ever be free of the abuse but there is help available. It is important to reach out so that support can be accessed, to take things at their own pace and to try to break the cycle. Domestic abuse also has a significant impact upon children who are growing up in these households and it is important that we protect children from this.

4. How do people protect themselves from abuse?

Fundamentally the individual may need to understand that what they are experiencing is abuse. This then empowers a person to realise what is happening to them. People can start by ensuring boundaries for healthy relationships are in place, access counselling or support to build confidence and esteem, tell someone, access support from a domestic abuse charity and contact the police if they are in danger

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>



5. What are some of the different types of domestic abuse?

Physical, emotional, sexual, financial, economic, coercive control, digital abuse, stalking and harassment. Domestic abuse is not just between partners or ex-partners, it can happen to teenagers over 16, it can include familial domestic abuse, forced marriage, and so called honour based violence.

6. Are there any up-to-date domestic abuse statistics?

It is difficult to really give exact figures because as we know most abuse is hidden and not disclosed. However, according to the Office for National Statistics, the crime survey states that it is estimated that 5.0% of adults (6.9%, 3.0%) aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022. This equates to 2.4 million adults.

Refuge

Telephone: 0808 200 0247
(24hours)
Email: info@refuge.org.uk
Website: www.refuge.org.uk



Women's Aid

Telephone: 0808 200 0247 (24 hours)
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Website: www.womensaid.org.uk



The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is an independent voice that speaks on behalf of victims and survivors. The Commissioner will use her statutory powers, which are set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill, to raise public awareness and hold both agencies and government to account in tackling domestic abuse.

www.domesticabusecommissioner.uk

