

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is very common and currently claims the life of two women a week and affects millions of people. One incident of domestic abuse is reported to the Police every minute.

Domestic abuse is defined as

'Any incident of threatening behavior, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'.

Incidents of Domestic abuse can vary significantly which makes it difficult to identify. Below are some patterns of domestic abuse that may indicate a problem.

Physical abuse is abuse involving contact intended to cause feelings of intimidation, pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, punching, choking, pushing, and

other types of contact that result in physical injury to the victim. Physical abuse can also include behaviors such as denying the victim of medical care when needed, depriving the victim of sleep or other functions necessary to live, or forcing the victim to engage in drug/alcohol use against his/her will.

Emotional or mental abuse can include humiliating the victim privately or publicly, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, withholding information from the victim, deliberately doing something to make the victim feel diminished or embarrassed, isolating the victim from friends and family, implicitly blackmailing the victim by harming others when the victim expresses independence or happiness.

Sexual abuse: Any situation in which force is used to obtain participation in unwanted, unsafe,

or degrading sexual activity constitutes sexual abuse.

Domestic abuse happens in all cultures; people of all races, ethnicities, religions, ages and backgrounds can experience domestic abuse.

It is most commonly carried out by men against women. But it can happen to men and to people in same sex relationships. It applies to married couples, co-habitees, boyfriend/girlfriends, ex-partners and teenage children. It can be linked to other offences such as Elder abuse and child abuse.

Remember

Domestic Abuse is far more widespread that you may think and is rarely a one off incident and will usually escalate over time. It becomes a pattern of

behavior that allows one partner to establish, maintain power and control over the other.

If you recognise any of the behavioral traits mentioned in this leaflet, try not to ignore the signs and seek help for the sake of you and your children.

If you are in an abusive relationship, there are important steps you must take:

- Recognise that it is happening to you.
- Accept that you are not to blame.
- Get help and support.

If you would like this information in large print, Braille or another language please contact
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