



THEME OF THE MONTH
FEBRUARY 2022

DOMESTIC ABUSE



WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

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.

Domestic abuse can take various forms, including:

- 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 or economic abuse
- Harassment and stalking
- Online or digital abuse



DOMESTIC ABUSE FIGURES:

- The police recorded a total of 1,459,663 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales in the year ending March 2021.
- Of these, 845,734 were recorded as domestic abuse-related crimes, an increase of 6% from the previous year, representing 18% of all offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2021.
- Estimates from the most recent Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2020 show 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years (2.3 million) experienced domestic abuse in the 12 months prior.
- There were 362 domestic homicides recorded by the police in the three-year period between year ending March 2018 and year ending March 2020. This represents 19% of all homicides where the victim was aged 16 years and over during this period.
- Of the 362 homicides, 214 (59%) were female victims who were killed by a partner or ex-partner. In contrast 33 (9%) were male victims who were killed by a partner or ex-partner. The remaining 115 (32%) were victims killed by a suspect in a family category.

RECOGNISING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Examples of domestic abuse 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 their 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.
- **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.
- **Denial:** saying the abuse doesn't happen; saying you caused the abuse; saying you wind them up; saying they can't control their anger; being publicly gentle and patient; crying and begging for forgiveness; saying it will never happen again.



SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

WHAT DOES SEXUAL HARASSMENT LOOK LIKE?

Sexual harassment can happen in a variety of circumstances. The harasser can identify with any gender and have any relationship to the victim.

Some forms of sexual harassment include:

- Physical acts of sexual assault
- Requests for sexual favors
- Verbal harassment of a sexual nature, including jokes referring to sexual acts or sexual orientation
- Unwanted touching or physical contact
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies at work, school, or in other inappropriate places
- Feeling pressured to engage with someone sexually
- Exposing oneself or performing sexual acts on oneself
- Unwanted sexually explicit photos, emails, or text messages

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Experiencing sexual harassment may cause some survivors to face emotional, physical, or mental health concerns. Some of them might include:

Emotional effects:

- Anger
- Fear
- Humiliation
- Shame
- Guilt
- Betrayal
- Violation
- Powerlessness and loss of control

Mental Health effects:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Panic attacks
- PTSD
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of motivation
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal ideation

Physical effects:

- Increased stress levels
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disturbances

ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE



Online sexual abuse can be any type of sexual harassment, exploitation, or abuse that takes place through screens.

Forms of online sexual harassment or abuse:

- Sending someone hateful or unwelcome comments based on sex
- Sending unwanted requests to partners or strangers to send nude photos or videos or livestream sexual acts
- Performing sexual acts on webcam without the consent of everyone involved or in inappropriate settings
- Sharing private images or videos without the consent of everyone involved, also known as revenge porn, which is illegal
- Sharing porn in spaces where everyone has not consented to view it (like in Zoom meetings or other inappropriate places, also called Zoom bombing)
- Grooming children to enable their sexual abuse either online or offline

Just because these forms of sexual abuse take place behind a screen doesn't make their impact on the victim any less real. While some of these behaviours are crimes, particularly any that involve sexual abuse of children, others are just as harmful. Additionally, as images of abuse could be reshared and recirculated on the internet, there is an added layer of re-victimisation.



CONSENT

Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent should be clearly and freely communicated. A verbal and affirmative expression of consent can help both you and your partner to understand and respect each other's boundaries.

Consent cannot be given by individuals who are under-age, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious. If someone agrees to an activity under pressure of intimidation or threat, that isn't considered consent because it was not given freely.

HOW DOES CONSENT WORK?

When you're engaging in sexual activity, consent is all about communication. This communication should happen every time for every type of activity. Consenting to one activity, one time, does not mean someone gives consent for other activities or for the same activity on other occasions.

WHAT IS ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT?

Enthusiastic consent is a newer model for understanding consent that focuses on a positive expression of consent. Simply put, enthusiastic consent means looking for the presence of a "yes" rather than the absence of a "no." Enthusiastic consent can be expressed verbally or through non-verbal cues, such as positive body language like smiling, maintaining eye contact, and nodding. These cues alone do not necessarily represent consent, but they are additional details that may reflect consent. It is necessary, however, to still seek verbal confirmation.

Enthusiastic consent can look like this:

- Asking permission before you change the type or degree of sexual activity with phrases like "Is this OK?"
- Confirming that there is reciprocal interest before initiating any physical touch.
- Letting your partner know that you can stop at any time.
- Periodically checking in with your partner, such as asking "Is this still okay?"
- Providing positive feedback when you're comfortable with an activity.
- Explicitly agreeing to certain activities, either by saying "yes" or another affirmative statement, like "I'm open to trying."
- Using physical cues to let the other person know you're comfortable taking things to the next level.

CONSENT DOES **NOT** LOOK LIKE THIS:

- Refusing to acknowledge “no”
- A partner who is disengaged, nonresponsive, or visibly upset
- Assuming that wearing certain clothes, flirting, or kissing is an invitation for anything more
- Someone being under the legal age of consent, as defined by the state
- Someone being incapacitated because of drugs or alcohol Pressuring someone into sexual activity by using fear or intimidation
- Assuming you have permission to engage in a sexual act because you’ve done it in the past

GASLIGHTING

Gaslighting is a form of manipulation that often occurs in abusive relationships. It is a type of emotional abuse where the bully or abuser misleads the victim, creating a false narrative and making them question their judgments and reality. Ultimately, the victim starts to feel unsure about their perceptions of the world and even wonder if they are losing their sanity.

Gaslighting primarily occurs in romantic relationships, but it can also occur in controlling friendships or among family members as well.

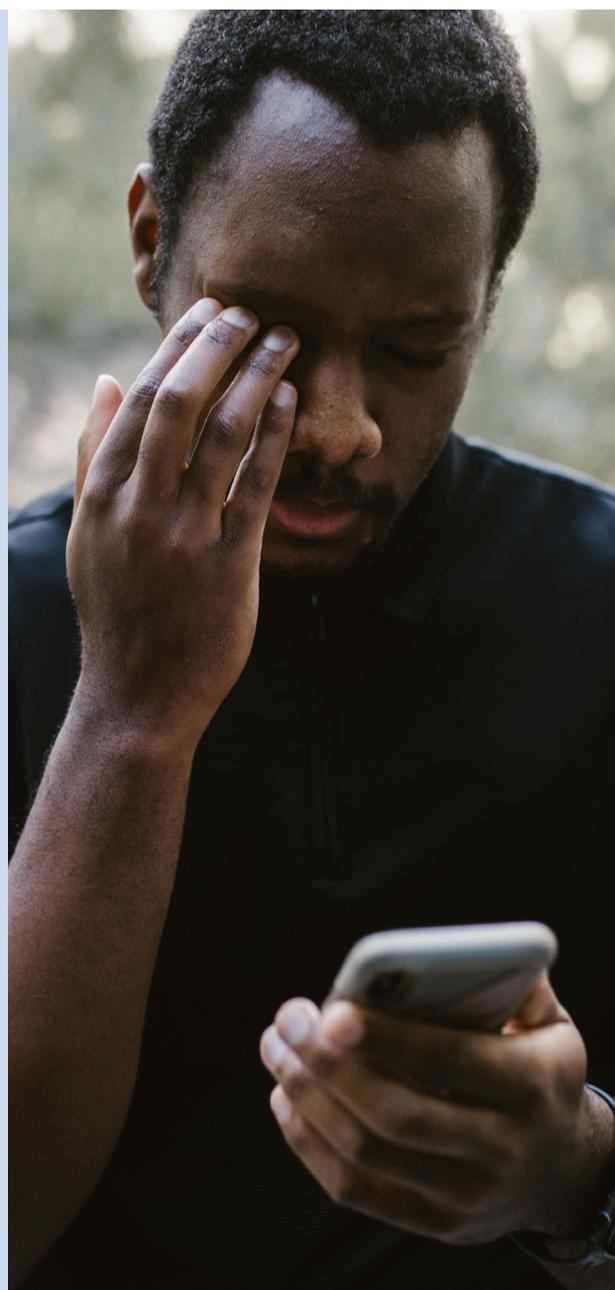
If any part of the list below resonates with you, you may be involved in a gaslighting relationship and need to look further.

- You ask yourself, “Am I too sensitive?” many times per day
- You often feel confused and even crazy in the relationship
- You’re always apologizing
- You can’t understand why you aren’t happier
- You frequently make excuses for your partner’s behaviour
- You know something is wrong but you just don’t know what
- You start lying to avoid put-downs and reality twists
- You have trouble making simple decisions
- You wonder if you are good enough

While all of these symptoms can occur with anxiety disorders, depression, or low self-esteem, the difference with gaslighting is that there is another person or group that’s actively engaged in trying to make you second-guess what you know is true.

SOME COMMON PHRASES YOU MAY HEAR FROM A GASLIGHTER ARE:

- You're so sensitive!
- You know that's just because you are so insecure
- Stop acting crazy. Or: You sound crazy, you know that, don't you?
- You are just paranoid
- You just love trying to throw me off track
- I was just joking!
- You are making that up
- It's no big deal
- You're imagining things
- You're overreacting
- You are always so dramatic
- Don't get so worked up
- That never happened
- You know you don't remember things clearly
- There's no pattern. Or: You are seeing a pattern that is not there
- You're hysterical
- There you go again, you are so ungrateful
- Nobody believes you, why should I?



LSP'S SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT TEAM

If you have any concerns at all, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our Safeguarding and Prevent team:

Safeguarding and Prevent Officer: Andy Hamer

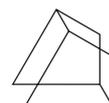
Email: andy.hamer@learningskillspartnership.com

Number: 07526 168286

Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Phil Cawthra

Email: phil.cawthra@learningskillspartnership.com

Number: 07773 537452



GET HELP

You do not have to wait for an emergency situation to find help. If domestic abuse is happening to you, it's important to tell someone and remember you're not alone.

- Women can call The Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge on 0808 2000 247 for free at any time, day or night. The staff will offer confidential, non-judgemental information and support
- Talk to a doctor, health visitor or midwife
- Men can call Men's Advice Line on 0808 8010 327 (Monday and Wednesday, 9am to 8pm, and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9am to 5pm) for non-judgemental information and support
- Men can also call ManKind on 0182 3334 244 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm)
- If you identify as LGBT+ you can call Galop on 0800 999 5428 for emotional and practical support
- Anyone can call Karma Nirvana on 0800 5999 247 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) for forced marriage and honour crimes. You can also call 020 7008 0151 to speak to the GOV.UK Forced Marriage Unit
- In an emergency, call 999

You can also email for support. It is important that you specify when and if it is safe to respond and to which email address:

- Women can email helpline@womensaid.org.uk. Staff will respond to your email within 5 working days
- Men can email info@mensadvice.org.uk
- LGBT+ people can email help@galop.org.uk





MORE INFORMATION

www.learningskillspartnership.com
info@learningskillspartnership.com

