

# Domestic Abuse

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# Domestic Abuse

**‘ Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.**

**This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:  
Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional**

- ‘ 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.” \***



# Sexual Violence

**‘ Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.**

**Sexual violence includes rape, defined as physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration, even if slight – of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object. The attempt to do so is known as attempted rape.**

**Sexual violence can include other forms of assault involving a sexual organ, including coerced contact between the mouth and penis, vulva or anus.**

World Health Organisation



Domestic abuse and sexual violence is very much prevalent in today's society with an estimated 1.2 million women and 800,000 men experiencing domestic abuse and over 333,000 women being sexually assaulted in a year. Government statistics state 1.3 women and 1.6 men will be victims of domestic violence at some stage of their life. (UK statistics)

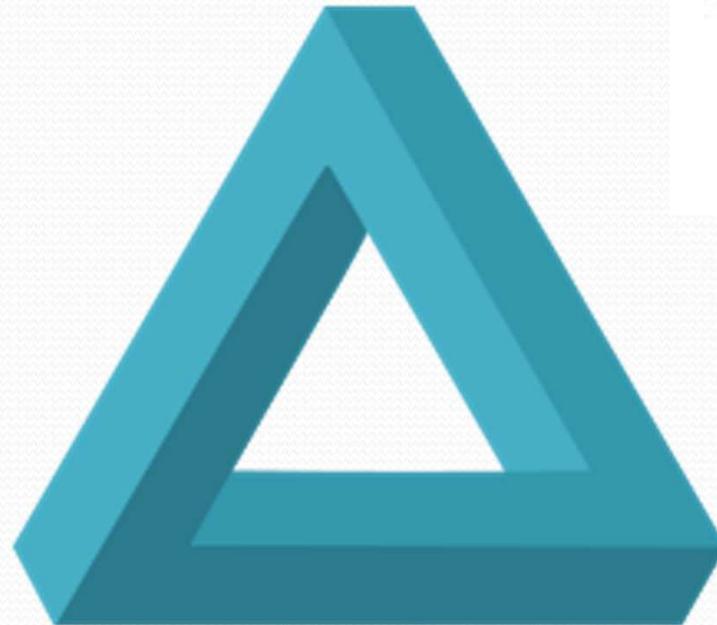
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- Domestic and sexual violence, problematic substance use and mental ill-health are three issues that often co-exist.

### **Problematic substance use**

- is the use of substances (such as
- illegal drugs, prescription medicines
- or alcohol) in such a way that
- results in harm to the individual user
- or to the wider community.

# Complex needs, a toxic trio and the trilogy of risk??

Domestic abuse



Mental Health

Substance Misuse

# Women are more at risk of violence and abuse than men

- 45% of women in the UK will experience domestic or sexual violence in their lifetime.
- 17% of men will experience at least one incident of threat, force, financial or emotional abuse and 2% have been sexually victimised since the age of 16.8
- Violence against women has affected almost 1 in 2 women in the UK.



# Impact upon Children

The links between child poverty and women who have survived abusive relationships are quite significant– for example, 14.9% of lone mothers have experienced violence from a former partner.

Almost three quarters of the children in [the two-yearly overview report of] serious case reviews had been living with past or current domestic violence and/or parental mental ill health and or substance misuse – often in combination.

# Substance misuse

- There is a strong statistical correlation between the use/misuse of drugs / alcohol and the prevalence of domestic abuse.
- The a recent British Crime Survey (BCS) found that 21% of those who had experienced partner abuse in the last year thought that the offender was under the influence of alcohol, while 8% thought they were under the influence of illicit drugs. However, the BCS also warns that 'levels of alcohol consumption and illicit drug use may be an indicator of lifestyle that may affect or be affected by vulnerability to partner abuse,' rather than causality of the abuse. (2013)

# Think family

## **A survivor's**

- parenting abilities may be affected by all three issues, so their children's safety and well-being must be taken into consideration
- evidence suggests that domestic abuse impacts on mothers' confidence, self-esteem and parenting capacity (Mullender et al 2002 cited in Stanley et al, 2010).
- The greatest risk of harm, however, comes from the perpetrator
- Any non-abusing parent should be supported to improve their skills and confidence in looking after their children, and
- not blamed for 'failing to keep the perpetrator away'.



# Children and young people

- Children who have experienced, witnessed or lived with domestic violence are at risk. They are at greater risk of exposure to poverty and homelessness, and detrimental effects on their short term welfare and long term life chances.”
- 39,000 babies under the age of one year are living in households which are affected by domestic violence (*NSPCC 2011*)
- 30% of domestic violence starts in pregnancy (WA 2013)
- Between 4 and 9 women in every 100 are abused during their pregnancies and/or after the birth

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- Children may also experience physical neglect if, for example, parents cannot manage money or finances are used on substances, and food, basic hygiene and utilities are not prioritised.
  - Children and young people can experience both short and long term cognitive, behavioural and emotional effects
  - Each child/young person will respond differently to trauma and some may be resilient and not show signs of any negative effects.
  - Perpetrators may also purposefully disrupt daily routines as part of the abuse
  - Remember the power and control held and used by perpetrators



# Children and Young people

The most effective intervention for ensuring safe and positive outcomes for children living with domestic abuse is usually to plan a package of support that incorporates;

- Risk Assessment
- Trained domestic abuse or sexual violence support
- Advocacy
- Safety planning (for the non abusing parent who is experiencing domestic abuse)
- Protection and support for the child



We have to work together to achieve our goal of ending violence against women and girls. It is not a task for central government alone. We will need to work with families and communities to change attitudes. Local authorities, police and crime commissioners, voluntary and community organisations, community safety partnerships, the NHS and more, will need to work together to meet the needs of their local communities.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-action-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-action-plan).



# Practitioners need to :

- understand the definitions of safeguarding and domestic abuse,
- be alert to patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour, as well as incidents of abuse
- always act to safeguard children who are living with or witnessing domestic abuse
- avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes, particularly around older age, mental health and substance misuse
- there is a risk of serious harm in forced marriage situations where one or both parties have care and support needs
- domestic abuse can involve the wider family and take different forms according to different family dynamics, especially when caring responsibilities are involved.

# Why don't they just leave?

- They stay because the fear of leaving is greater than the fear of staying.
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# References

- [http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/lscb/info/6/domestic\\_abuse\\_forced\\_marriage\\_and\\_honour\\_based\\_violence](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/lscb/info/6/domestic_abuse_forced_marriage_and_honour_based_violence)
- <http://www.peterboroughlscb.org.uk/>
- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-action-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-action-plan).
- AVA Against Violence and Abuse <http://www.avaproject.org.uk/>  
(Complicated Matters: Stella Project Toolkit and e-learning, 2013)
- [http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document\\_library](http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library)  
(Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse A guide to support practitioners and managers)