

Asking about and responding to domestic violence and abuse

24 January 2020

Webinar starting at 1pm

Please ask any questions in the chat box but please be aware that they will be publicly available via the recording



Overview

The webinar will cover:

- Defining domestic abuse and coercive control
- Creating the right environment
- Responding to disclosures and tailoring support to people's needs
- Trauma-informed approach
- Domestic abuse and children
- Safeguarding
- Domestic Abuse Bill

Presenters

- Michelle O’Keeffe – Domestic Violence Co-ordinator/Trainer, Leeds Council
- Karen Gorbitt – Specialist Domestic Abuse Social Worker, Croydon Council
- Claudia Megele, Head of Service for QA and Practice, Hertfordshire County Council

Guidance covered in webinar

Guideline: Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working (PH50)

Quality standard: Domestic violence and abuse (QS116)

Decision-making and mental capacity (NG 108)

Guideline: Post-traumatic stress disorder (NG116)

Quick guide: Recognising and responding to domestic violence and abuse

Prevalence of domestic abuse

In the year ending March 2019:

- an estimated 2.4 million adults experienced domestic abuse (1.6 million women, 786,000 men).
- the police recorded 746,219 domestic abuse-related crimes. This was an increase of 24% from the previous year. The increase in police recorded crime may reflect improved recording by the police and increased reporting by victims.

(Office for National Statistics)

Gender and domestic abuse

- Men are victims of domestic abuse
- Women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence and abuse
- Women are likely to experience higher risk, more serious violence (Smith et al. 2010)

Home office definition

- '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 definition includes so called “honour” based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.'

Types of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- 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
- ‘honour’ based abuse

Types of coercive control

- Isolating a person from their family and friends
- Depriving them of basic needs
- Monitoring their time
- Monitoring via online communication tools or spyware
- Taking control of everyday life – where they sleep, can go, who they can see, what to wear, when they can eat/sleep
- Depriving access to support services such as specialist support or medical services
- Repeatedly putting them down – telling them they are fat, ugly, worthless

Types of coercive control cont'd

- Forcing victim to take part in criminal activity such as drugs/shoplifting
- Enforcing rules that humiliate, degrade, dehumanise the victim
- Neglect or abuse of children
- Financial abuse
- Threats
- Rape
- Stalking

Coercive control in UK legislation

- The Serious Crime Act 2015 criminalised “Controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship”
- The crime carries a maximum punishment of up to 5 years imprisonment

Recognising coercive control

- Look at patterns and big picture
- Risk may not seem obvious or immediate
- Ongoing and chronic
- Impact is cumulative
- Victims likely to seek help repeatedly
- Abuse can be normalised by victims and services

Barriers to disclosing domestic abuse

- Fear/love
- Fear of not being believed, being judged
- Hope that an abusive partner will change
- Shame/failure
- Pressure from family/children/community
- Long term effects
- Religious/cultural norms
- Mental health issues/low self esteem/self worth
- Impact on children
- Lack of knowledge/access to support/inadequate specialist providers

Barriers cont'd

- Drug/alcohol addiction
- Financial constraints
- May have difficulty identifying themselves as abused
- Fear of consequences of intervention
- Reliant on the abuser
- Feel a sense of obligation to put up with the abuse
- Older adults more socially isolated, less able to escape, abuser may constantly accompany
- Older adults accept the abuse as the norm, may experience shame or stigma for having lived with abuse for so long
- Professionals often deal with presenting issues, rarely ask about domestic abuse directly

Creating an environment for disclosing domestic violence and abuse* - information

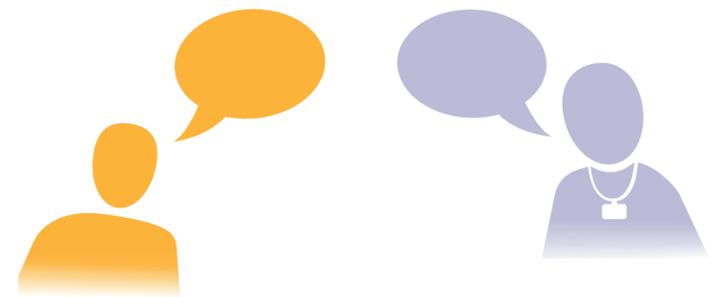
- Clearly display information in waiting areas and other suitable places about the support on offer for those affected by domestic violence and abuse.
- Ensure the information on where to get support is available in a range of formats and locally used languages.



*Recommendation 5 - Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working guideline (PH50)

Creating an environment for disclosing domestic violence and abuse – communicating

- Ensure people who use the service are given maximum privacy and feel safe. They should be seen on their own because they may have multiple abusers and friends or family members may be colluding in the abuse.
- If the person needs an interpreter, use a professional who is impartial and has a duty to maintain confidentiality.
Do not use family and friends.
- Ask relevant and sensitive questions that help the person talk about their experience.



Responding to a disclosure

Ensuring the safety of a person who has made a disclosure and anyone else who may be affected, including children, is the first priority

- Make sure you are aware of the Data Protection Act (2018), professional guidelines and local protocols about confidentiality and information sharing.
- Ensure that you know about:
 - Getting consent from people to share their information
 - Telling people when and with whom their information will be shared
 - When it may be necessary to share information without their consent in order to keep the person safe

Responding to a disclosure cont'd

- Share information about specialist services and offer to refer
- Consider the type of support needed, both immediately and longer-term
- If the person appears to have additional needs associated with alcohol or drug misuse or mental health problems offer to refer them to the relevant service, as well as to domestic violence and abuse support
- Record your discussion and the actions you have agreed

Responding to a disclosure is covered in recommendations 4,7 and 8 in the Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working guideline (PH50)



Help people who find it difficult to access services*

- Your assumptions about people's beliefs, values, gender identity or sexuality may affect how you recognise and respond to domestic violence and abuse
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people are also at risk of forced marriage
- 'Honour'-based violence may be triggered by someone's gender identity or sexuality
- Support should align with the person's needs

*Recommendation 9 - Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working guideline (PH50)

Mental capacity

- Consider whether the person may be subject to undue influence, duress or coercion regarding decisions - by a partner or other family members, for example.
- If this is the case, consider how the person can be supported to make decisions.
- Based on Recommendation 1.2.4 from the Decision-making and mental capacity (NG 108) guideline (see next slide)

Decision-making and mental capacity (NG 108)

Recommendation 1.2.4

Practitioners should take a personalised approach, accounting for any reasonable adjustments and the wide range of factors that can have an impact on a person's ability to make a decision. These should include:

- the involvement of others and being aware of the possibility that the person may be subject to undue influence, duress or coercion regarding the decision (*one factor from a list of eight*)

They should use this knowledge to develop a shared and personalised understanding of the factors that may help or hinder a person's decision-making, which can be used to identify ways in which the person's decision-making can be supported.

Trauma informed approach

“Trauma informed care is a strengths-based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.”

(Hopper et al (2010) Shelter from the storm, p.82)

What is trauma?

According to [SAMHSA](#), individual **trauma** results from an:

- **Event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is
- **Experienced** by an individual which can be physically and/or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse
- **Effects** on the individual's functioning and/or physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being

See also the NICE guideline on [Post-traumatic stress disorder \(NG116\)](#)

Taking a trauma informed approach

- Cultural shift not a treatment model
- Core principle of DO NO HARM
- Trauma awareness
- Emphasis on safety
- Rebuilding control
- Strengths based

Comments from women who have experienced domestic violence

- Remember that we feel isolated and anxious
- Please pay full attention to the person you are trying to help
- Professionals should work together when needed
- We would like full feedback from MARAC, we felt that we were being spoken about, but don't know what was said
- Professionals don't always understand how complicated being in an abusive relationship is – saying 'just leave' or 'just call the police' isn't always helpful
- In multi-agency meetings, women and men are often judged by different standards. For example, if a child's dad attended one meeting, he would be really praised, whereas if the mum attended all of her meetings, but missed one, she would be judged harshly.

Domestic abuse and children

- One in five children have been exposed to domestic violence and abuse (NSPCC 2011)
- 140,000 children live in households with high risk domestic violence and abuse (Safelives 2015)
- A third of children who witness domestic violence and abuse also experience another form of abuse (NSPCC 2011)



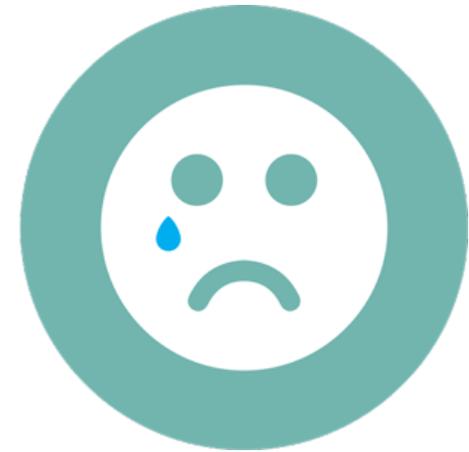
Domestic abuse and children cont'd

- Children and young people can be directly affected by domestic violence and abuse, including fearing, hearing or seeing it within their families or worrying about its effect on someone else.
- Children and young people may experience domestic violence and abuse in their own intimate relationships.

Based on recommendation 10 – Identify and, where necessary, refer children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse from the the Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working guideline (PH50)

Impact of domestic abuse on children

- They may become anxious or depressed
- They may have difficulty sleeping
- They have nightmares or flashbacks
- They can be easily startled
- They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches and may start to wet their bed
- They may have temper tantrums and problems with school



Impact cont'd

- They may behave as though they are much younger than they are
- They may become aggressive or they may internalise their distress and withdraw from other people
- They may have a lowered sense of self-worth
- Older children may begin to play truant, start to use alcohol or drugs, begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves or have an eating disorder

(Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2004)

Supporting children and young people

- Make sure you can recognise when children have been affected by domestic abuse and understand how it may affect them.
- Know how to talk to children and young people about domestic violence and abuse
- Gather and share information to form a clear picture of the circumstances, risks and needs of the child or young person
- Know when and how to refer to child protection services and who to contact for advice about whether a referral is needed
- Know about local policies and procedures in relation to domestic violence and abuse that affects children and young people, and how to access services that can provide support

Based on recommendation 10 – Identify and, where necessary, refer children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse from the Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working guideline (PH50)

Impact of ill-treatment that constitutes domestic abuse and violence

- Children who witness domestic abuse suffer emotional and psychological maltreatment (Note: Section 31 Children Act 1989: impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another [amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002]).
- The impact of domestic abuse on children is similar to the effects of any other abuse or trauma
- They tend to have low self-esteem and experience increased levels of anxiety, depression, anger and fear, aggressive and violent behaviours, including bullying, lack of conflict resolution skills, lack of empathy for others and poor peer relationships, poor school performance, anti-social behaviour, pregnancy, alcohol and substance misuse, self blame, hopelessness, shame and apathy, post traumatic stress disorder - symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, nightmares and intrusive thoughts - images of violence, insomnia, enuresis and over protectiveness of their mother and/or siblings.
- Adverse impact upon the parenting capacities of both survivor and perpetrator parent

Talking to children and young people about domestic violence and abuse

Similar barriers to disclosure as with adults, including fear:

- We think/Maybe your family has some problems/needs support
- Can Your Family Sort it Out? Yes/No
- If Yes How? If No how do you feel when your family can't sort it out?
- Does that make you worry about what will happen? (Yes/No/Sometimes/Don't Know)
- Do you worry about this when you are not at home, for example when you are at home? (Yes/No/Sometimes/Don't Know)
- We are worried that your family has arguments and fights
- We are worried that you might not feel safe and supported at home
- We are worried that one person in your family hurts another
- We're not sure we can trust the people in your family not to hurt each other or you

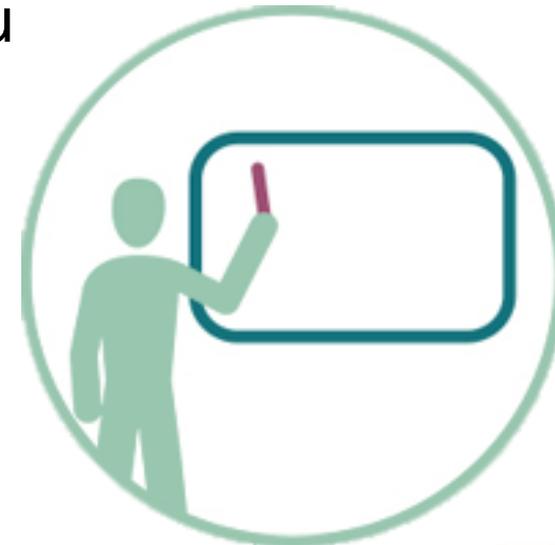
Talking to children and young people cont'd

- We're worried people in your family don't treat each other with respect
- We are worried home might be a place where people often feel scared
- We're not sure that everyone in the family is cared for and made to feel important
- We're worried that some people might call each other names which will be upsetting
- We are worried that one person might be making another feel bad
- We are wondering what some rules are in your house like:
 - Who might be able to come round? What friends/family?
 - What people in the family are allowed to do and not allowed to do? Children's clubs?
 - What rules are there about noise and mess? What happens if they are not followed?
 - What rules are there about meal times/bedtimes/weekends?
 - What happens if things break like a plate? Or a toy? Or if things are in the wrong place
 - Whose rules are they?

Training and supervision

- You should receive ongoing training and regular supervision to support you in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to understand domestic violence and abuse and the role of professionals in ensuring people's safety.
- If your role is specifically about safeguarding, you should also be confident in identifying and assessing risk, safety planning and liaising with specialist support services.

Based on recommendation 15 Provide specific training for health and social care professionals in how to respond to domestic violence and abuse the Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working guideline (PH50)



Further useful information for practitioners

- The role of the Safeguarding Partnership in leading and supporting domestic abuse strategy across partner agencies
- How perpetrators are using technology: online safeguarding and domestic abuse
- Domestic Abuse bill and its implications for practice

Safeguarding Partnership: Hertfordshire case study

- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (previously Board) continues to hold DA as a priority.
- In order to ensure coordination across the partnerships, the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Executive meets with the DA Executive and others that have a remit for safeguarding vulnerable children and adults.
- The HSCP Executive (Local Authority, Police and CCG's) and the DA Executive work across agencies focusing on improving the identification, assessment and response to domestic abuse and also raising awareness to reduce the prevalence of:
 - Honour based violence
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Modern day slavery
 - Trafficking
 - Forced marriage

Safeguarding Partnership: Hertfordshire Case Study

- There is a joint approach across the partnerships to delivering learning opportunities to front line staff. These include:
 - Forums
 - Conferences
 - Joint training pulling on specialist DA officers supporting the children's partnership
 - A Think Family approach
 - Supporting each other with delivering awareness raising campaigns
 - Herts Sunflower website has a specific section for children and young people
 - <https://www.hertssunflower.org/herts-sunflower.aspx>

Online abuse



The screenshot shows a text message conversation on a mobile phone. The sender's messages are in blue bubbles and the recipient's response is in a grey bubble. The abusive messages include: "Where are you?", "I can't believe you won't answer me...", "You're being so stupid.", and "You better not be with anyone I don't like. You know who I'm talking about." The recipient's response is: "I'm sorry... I was in class... Please don't be mad at me..."

25%
of teens experience digital abuse

DIGITAL ABUSE -
Digital dating abuse is the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behavior is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online.

Not all abuse is physical
#LearnTheSigns
#TeenDVAwareness



Online Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse

- Conviction data for ‘revenge pornography’ show that out of the 464 prosecutions for this offence recorded in the year ending March 2018, 86% (400) were flagged as being domestic abuse-related (ONS, 2018).
- Most commonly, Revenge Porn takes place following the dissolution of a romantic relationship as a way in which to control or ‘punish’ (Burris, 2014; Stroud, 2014).
- Sextortion, common theme of seeking power, control and to ‘punish’.
- One in five women and one in 10 men report being stalked at some point in their lives (British Crime Survey 2009/10).



Online Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse

- 85% of respondents received online abuse from a partner or ex-partner, it was part of a pattern of abuse.
- Almost a third of respondents (29%) experienced the use of spyware or GPS locators on their phone or computers.
- Half (50%) also experienced direct threats to them or someone they knew.
- Almost a third received threats; threats had been made online by a partner or ex-partner.

(Woman's Aid, 2014)

The Domestic Abuse Bill

- The Domestic Abuse Bill is landmark legislation that aims to raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and its impact; improve justice system to better protect victims; ensure consistency and strengthen the support for victims by statutory agencies.
- The Bill extends the definition of domestic abuse to include economic abuse which is a significant step forward. However, it requires individuals to report economic abuse and evidence suggests that there are many barriers for reporting by the victims ranging from coercive control to social stigma and community pressures that may hinder such reporting.
- It prohibits perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the family courts.
- The Bill provides additional protection for victims and a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal courts (for example, this enables the victims to give evidence via video link).
- The Domestic Abuse Bill places the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s law”) on a statutory footing.
- It extends the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences.

Domestic Abuse Bill and its Implications for Practice

- LA to publish strategies which set out in detail the range of support services available for domestic abuse survivors and their children.
- Councils will have a statutory duty to provide safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children from 2021. Ahead of the requirement, services will be given a £15m funding boost in 2020/21.
- Impact on children's services: increased referrals and greater demand on services as more women are likely to report abuse.

Domestic Abuse Bill and its Implications for Practice cont'd

- Housing security is critical for the health and wellbeing. Councils' homelessness services facing a funding gap of more than £100 million in 2019/20 and £421 million by 2024/25, the Government also needs to use its upcoming Spending Review to sustainably fund homelessness prevention.
- A multi-agency approach with flexibility in the new package of support to ensure services can be tailored to the needs of different areas.
- Interventions that are designed to reduce the number of perpetrators now and in the future.
- DA is the most commonly cited factor when children are assessed by children's social care services to determine whether they need support. Important to focus on the needs and experiences of children and young people, especially those who have experienced, or been affected by, domestic abuse.

Links and further information – NICE guidance

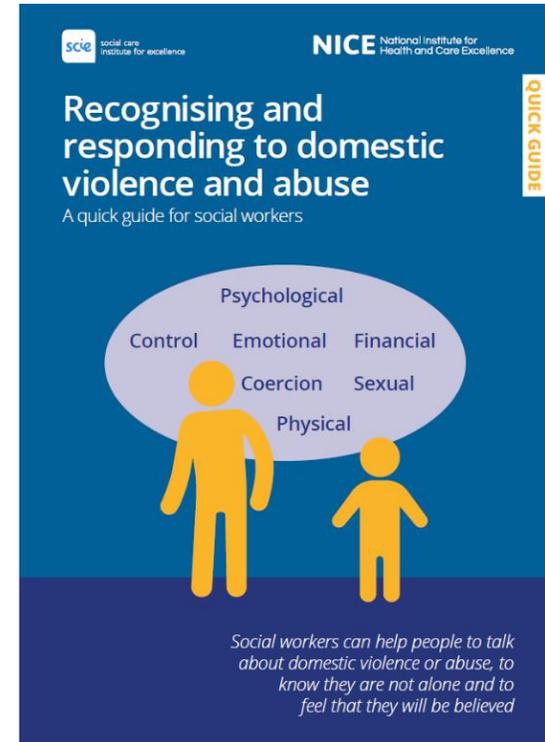
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- Quality standard: [Domestic violence and abuse \(QS116\)](#)
- Guideline: [Decision-making and mental capacity \(NG 108\)](#)
- Guideline: [Post-traumatic stress disorder \(NG116\)](#)

Links and further information – NICE resources

[NICE adults' social care resources](#)

[NICE/SCIE quick guides](#) - A quick, easy way to access key information from NICE on social care topics, including:

Recognising and responding to domestic violence and abuse (available 27 January)



Links and further information – other resources

[ADASS – Adult safeguarding and domestic abuse – a guide to support practitioners and managers](#)

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