

VIOLENCE AT HOME BASIC SAFETY INFORMATION

Below is some information to think about when considering how to keep yourself safe

Before another incident occurs, you could...

- Phone the helpline to talk through your options
- Identify who you would phone in a crisis
- Identify a safe person who could assist you if you had to leave at short notice.
- Agree on a 'code word' with a friend or family member that will act as a sign that you want them to phone the police
- Try and keep your mobile phone fully charged up and in credit at all times
- Identify where you would you make an emergency call from if your phone was snatched/broken
- Identify and practice an escape route from your home
- Try and keep car filled up with petrol and spare keys in a safe place
- Organise an 'escape' bag. Include passports, birth certificates, benefits information, bank account info, driving licence, NI number, details of any medications. Also include, money, change of clothes, list of important phone number, items such as children's favourite toys, important keepsakes etc
- Keep 'escape' bag in a safe place, possibly with a trusted neighbour/friend/family member
- If your children are old enough to understand and it is safe to do so, discuss with them what you would need to do in an emergency; teach them how to phone the police
- Reiterate that it is not their fault and that they must run for safety and where they should go
- Think about where and when you are most vulnerable to an attack and consider how you might reduce the risks

During a crisis you could.....

- Phone the Police (999)
- If you sense an attack, phone your agreed 'safe' person (if it will not put you more at risk) and use the agreed code word if you need them to call the Police immediately
- Try and move to a room that is near an external door; the front door is usually the better option as it usually leads to the road where you could then run for help
- Avoid rooms that are potentially dangerous, (e.g. the kitchen where there are sharp knives)
- Try and keep your mobile with you at all times
- Alert children to a potential attack with an agreed code word; this would then prompt them to hide or get help

HELPLINE: 0808 808 2241 IDVAS 2493920

SCC Domestic Abuse Co-ordination Team website at: www.sheffielddact.org.uk

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP BASED ON?

IS IT EQUALITY?

Non threatening Behaviour

Talking and acting so that you feel safe and comfortable expressing yourself

Respect

Listening to you non judgementally
Understanding and valuing your opinion

Trust and Support

Supporting your goals in life
Respecting your right to your own feelings, activities with friends and family
Respecting your right to your own opinion

Honesty and Accountability

Accepting responsibility for self
Acknowledging past use of violence
Communicating openly and truthfully
Admitting being wrong

Responsible Parenting

Sharing Parental responsibility
Being a positive non-violent role model for the children

Shared Responsibility

Mutually agreeing on sharing responsibility
Making joint decisions about family and home life

Economic Partnership

Making decisions about money together
Making sure both partners benefit from the relationship

Negotiation and Fairness

Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict
Being willing to compromise
Accepting change

OR POWER AND CONTROL?

Intimidation

Making you afraid by using 'looks', actions and gestures

Smashing things/Destroying your property

Abusing children and/or pets

Threatening with weapons or objects

Emotional Abuse

Putting you down/ Calling you names

Making you feel bad about yourself

Making you think you are 'crazy'

Playing mind games, humiliating you, making you feel guilty

Isolation

Controlling what you do, who you see and talk to, where you go

Limiting your contact with family and friends

Using jealousy and love to justify his actions

Minimising, Denying, Blaming

Making light of the abuse and not acknowledging how serious it is

Saying the abuse didn't happen

Shifting responsibility for his abusive behaviour – saying you caused it

Using Children

Making you feel guilty about the children

Using the children to relay messages

Using visitation rights to harass you

Threatening to take the children

Economic Abuse

Preventing you from getting or keeping a job

Making you ask for money

Taking your money

Taking out loans in your name

Preventing you from paying bills – getting you into debt

Male Privilege

Treating you like a servant

Making all the 'big' decisions

Deciding what are male and female 'roles'

Coercion & Threats

Making or carrying out threats to hurt you

Threatening to leave you

Threatening to commit suicide

Threatening to report you to welfare services

Making you drop charges

Making you do illegal things

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Stages of an abusive relationship

Like most people, you may have entered your relationship hoping it will last; often abuse creeps into the relationship gradually. You stay because you hope it will change and your partner can be very sorry and loving. This is called the **binding stage of abuse**. You may have invested a lot of time in the relationship and it is hard to admit that all is not perfect.

As time goes on, there will often be an increase in aggression or violence. You may start to feel like you are 'walking on eggshells' and can do nothing right. This is the **enduring stage of abuse**.

Domestic abuse usually escalates and increases in frequency. You may be confused and anxious as to why this is happening and may start to believe that it is your fault. You may also be starting to imagine what life could be like if you left. At this stage you are starting to **disengage** from the relationship and you should be aware that leaving can be a very dangerous time. Your partner will want to re-gain control and may become unpredictable. However, it can be possible to leave an abusive relationship and having support in place can assist with safety planning and identifying what your options are.

If you call the helpline....

- You can speak to a trained worker who will listen to you and believe you
- If they are very concerned about your safety, they will ask you some questions (a 'risk assessment') that will help them understand whether you need immediate help to stay safe
- If they assess you as being at high risk of immediate harm they will refer you to a specialist service (IDVAS) who can assist you with safety planning and managing risk.
- They can offer you advice and information in many areas, including housing, child contact, legal issues, e.g. injunctions
- They can offer referral to other agencies for advice and ongoing support

Some of your options....

- Stay in your relationship and design a safety plan to keep you and your children safer
- Create a 'Crisis Plan' so you know how best to react in a crisis
- Make your home more secure – get locks changed, panic alarms fitted, put an immediate police response 'tag' on your address
- Start a new life in a new location with your children
- Talk through what the process would be if you reported the abuse to the police
- Keep a diary of incidents that happened in case you need to use them as 'evidence' at a later date
- Obtain a court order to make your abuser keep away and/or to be arrested if he breaches the order
- Be supported through the Criminal Justice System if you do report the abuse to the Police
- Receive support to deal with other agencies
- Access group and 'one to one' support to help you come to terms with the abuse and move on with your life

Other places to get help:

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247

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