

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

It might be nothing,  
but it could mean  
everything



**A guide for people in Swindon  
& Wiltshire who think someone they  
know may be in an abusive relationship**

# WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Domestic abuse could be physical abuse, sexual abuse, violence or threats, financial/ economic, coercive or controlling behaviour or psychological/ emotional abuse between people who have a relationship with each other (or have had in the past). Domestic abuse also includes digital abuse (using smartphones and social networking to harass and intimidate). It can happen between partners, within families or shared homes.

It happens within relationships regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. It happens between people of all cultures, religions or social groups. It's based on one person having power or control over another, and it often gets worse over time.

Some organisations use the word 'violence' instead of 'abuse'. These terms are interchangeable.



# YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE THIS IS HAPPENING TO

- 1 in 5 adults experience domestic abuse during their life-time. This equates to: 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6-7 men.
  - Last year 2.4 million adults were victims. (1.7 million women and 699,000 men)
  - A domestic abuse related call is made to the police every 30 seconds.
- The police recorded 1,500,369 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales in the year ending March 2022. The number of domestic abuse-related crimes increased 7.7% compared to the previous year.
- People who experience domestic abuse often leave and return to the relationship several times. If this happens, remember that each time they will gain a little more understanding, and given enough ongoing support – may eventually decide to make the final break.
  - Domestic abuse is a largely hidden crime which goes unreported to the police.
  - It is estimated that less than 24% of domestic abuse crime is reported to the Police.

# SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT TO ASK

Don't wait for your abused friend to tell you about their situation. Bring the subject up yourself when their abusive partner isn't around. The importance of helping your friend break the silence and end the isolation should never be underestimated. Listen and let them show you, how you can be supportive.

Approach them about the abuse in a sensitive way, for example by saying:

"I'm worried about you.. I saw the way they looked at you and you seemed scared."

"We haven't seen much of you recently, is everything ok?"

"Are you afraid of your partner?" If yes, ask "why?"

"Does your partner/ former partner, repeatedly belittle you, put you down, or say you are worthless?  
Blame you for the abuse or arguments?"

"I've noticed you seem a bit down, has anyone upset you?"

"Wow, they text you a lot, do they do that all the time?"

"I'm worried about you..."

# SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT TO SAY

“Domestic abuse is totally unacceptable. Every person has the right to live their life free of violence, abuse, intimidation and fear.”

“Domestic abuse is about power and control. Abusive, violent and sexually abusive behaviour is wide-ranging and subtle in what it tries to achieve.”

“Domestic abuse is intentional behaviour. It is about scaring someone into doing something that they do not want to do, or scaring them out of doing something that they do want to.”

“The abuser is 100% responsible for their abuse. Alcohol, culture, or unemployment are not excuses. Their abuse is their own problem and their own responsibility.”

“It is not your fault. No one deserves to be abused, regardless of what they say or do.”

“An abuser can change if they want to. Their behaviour is within their control and they can choose to stop.”

“You cannot change the perpetrator. They are the only person who can stop their violence.”

“You don’t have to put up with it. You have the right to safety and respect, to put yourself and your children first and to focus on your needs.”

“You can increase your safety. If the abuser is intent on being violent, you will not be able to stop them.” However, there are things the victim/survivor can do to increase their safety.

Suggest they talk to someone independent, for example a counsellor but only when they are ready to do this.

# DO

Let your friend talk about their situation as many times as they need.

Let your friend try to improve things or give their partner several 'last' chances.

Build your friend's self-esteem. Remind them of their good points, challenge them if they put them self down or blame them self, praise them for every step they take, and let them know they have your support.

Support your abused friend in whatever decision they are currently making about their relationship, while being clear that the abuse is wrong. It's ok to be truthful or give your opinion, but bear in mind that your friend needs to be supported rather than judged. Maintain contact with them, helping them think about all the options on offer.

Believe what they tell you: it will have taken a lot for them to talk to you and trust you.

Take the abuse seriously. Abuse can be physical and emotional, and can destroy someone's self-confidence. Their partner could be placing them in real physical danger.

Focus on their safety. Talk to them about it and how they could protect their self.

Help them recognise the abuse and understand how it may be affecting them and their mental health.

Help them to understand that the abuse is not their fault and that no one deserves to be abused, no matter what they do.

Maintain a relationship with both victim and abuser—this might be your only way in and will keep the victim safe.

# DON'T

Encourage them to leave the relationship without support, as this time is often very high risk for victims.

Blame them or ask judgmental questions, such as, 'what did you do to make them treat you like that?' or 'why don't you just break up with them?'

Focus on why they are abusing them. Concentrate on supporting them and discussing what they can do to protect themselves.

Be impatient or critical of them. If they are confused about what to do, or if they say that they still love them. It's difficult for anyone to break up a relationship, and especially hard if they are being abused.

## **Above all, be patient.**

Supporting someone experiencing domestic abuse is not easy. You don't want to see your friend/relative get hurt, but may have to watch them carry on with their partner when you think they should leave the relationship or have their partner arrested.

As their friend, make sure you offer something the abuser doesn't. For example, if their partner tells your friend/ relative what to do all the time, it's no use you doing the same.

Never underestimate how difficult, complex and unsafe it can be for the victim to leave a domestic abuse situation for good.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Men can play a particularly important role in helping to stop domestic abuse. As well as being part of dealing with the violence, men are the majority of the police officers, and doctors who work with families in crisis. Some are the neighbours, friends, and family members who support victims by reaching out and lending a hand.

Domestic abuse is everyone's concern, and there are many opportunities for men to be involved in making communities safer. They are more likely to hear other men saying that violence towards your partner is OK. Making a clear statement that violence in a relationship is unacceptable is important. In addition, fathers have enormous influence over the development of their children.

## Make a difference by:

- **Being role models.** Men are in a good position to talk to male abusers of domestic abuse, letting them know that their behaviour is not acceptable, that they need help, and that help is available.
- **Speaking out against domestic abuse.** This can have an enormous effect in helping to change views and opinions that support and allow the continuation of abuse.
- **Being a role model to a child** who lacks a positive male figure in their life.



# IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999

Organisation	Telephone Numbers	Website
Support in Swindon		
Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service	01793 610610	<a href="http://www.swadomesticabuse.org">www.swadomesticabuse.org</a>
Wiltshire Police	101	<a href="http://www.wiltshire.police.uk">www.wiltshire.police.uk</a>
The Nelson Trust	01793 495812	<a href="http://www.nelsontrust.com">www.nelsontrust.com</a>
Change Grow Live	01793 328150	<a href="http://www.changegrowlive.org">www.changegrowlive.org</a>
SBC Housing Needs Team	01793 464498	<a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20025/homes_and_property">www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20025/homes_and_property</a>
Children & Families (Social Services)	01793 466903	<a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20018/children_and_young_people">www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20018/children_and_young_people</a>
Adult Services	0800 085 6666	<a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20011/adult_social_care_and_support">www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20011/adult_social_care_and_support</a>
Bobby Van Trust	01225 256867	<a href="http://www.wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk/about-us">www.wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk/about-us</a>

# IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999

Organisation	Telephone Numbers	Website
Support in Wiltshire		
Wiltshire Police	101	<a href="http://www.wiltshire.police.uk">www.wiltshire.police.uk</a>
Bobby Van Trust	01225 256867	<a href="http://www.wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk/about-us">www.wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk/about-us</a>
FearFree	01225 775 276 (9am-5pm – landline call rate)	<a href="http://www.fearfree.org.uk">www.fearfree.org.uk</a>
Victim Support	Wiltshire - 0808 281 0113 Outside normal hours - 08081 689111	<a href="http://www.victimsupport.org.uk">www.victimsupport.org.uk</a>
Connect	0300 555 0157	<a href="http://www.turning-point.co.uk/services/connect-wiltshire">www.turning-point.co.uk/services/connect-wiltshire</a>
GreenSquare Accord	0300 111 7000	<a href="http://www.greensquareaccord.co.uk/care-and-support/find-a-service/domestic-abuse/">www.greensquareaccord.co.uk/care-and-support/find-a-service/domestic-abuse/</a>
Julian House	01380 738 006	<a href="http://www.julianhouse.org.uk/service/wiltshire-domestic-abuse-service/">www.julianhouse.org.uk/service/wiltshire-domestic-abuse-service/</a>
Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living	0300 123 3442	<a href="http://www.wiltshirecil.org.uk/community-connecting">www.wiltshirecil.org.uk/community-connecting</a>

# IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999

Organisation	Telephone Numbers	Website
<b>National Support</b>		
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247	<a href="http://www.refuge.org.uk">www.refuge.org.uk</a>
Respect Working with male victims, young people and perpetrators	Respect Phone line 0808 8024040 Men's advice line 0808 8010327	<a href="http://www.respect.uk.net">www.respect.uk.net</a> <a href="http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk">www.mensadviceline.org.uk</a>
ManKind Initiative	01823 334244 to speak to us confidentially	<a href="http://www.mankind.org.uk">www.mankind.org.uk</a>
GALOP for theLGBTQIA+ Community	0800 999 5428 help@galop.org.uk	<a href="http://www.galop.org.uk">www.galop.org.uk</a>
Karma Nirvana Working to end honour based abuse in the UK	0800 5999 247	<a href="http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk">www.karmanirvana.org.uk</a>
Hourglass (Elder Abuse)	Free text 07860 052906 24/7 Helpline 0808 808 8141	<a href="http://www.elderabuse.org.uk">www.elderabuse.org.uk</a>
NSPCC	0808 800 5000 email-help@NSPCC.org.uk	<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>

## Published by:

Swindon Community Safety Partnership  
&  
Wiltshire Council

If you would like a summary of this document in your language, please email us and supply the title of this leaflet which is... 'What would you do?' with what language you require:

FAO Community Safety Partnership  
Civic Offices,  
Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 2JH

Email: [SwindonCSP@Swindon.gov.uk](mailto:SwindonCSP@Swindon.gov.uk)

FOI number 3448/08

In an emergency always dial 999 or 112 from your mobile (dialling 112 will search for the nearest provider in areas of poor reception)



SWINDON

# COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

# Wiltshire Council



Change  
Grow  
Live

Drug and Alcohol Service

Swindon



SWINDON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ABUSE

# NSPCC



Great Western Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust



Wiltshire and Swindon  
pcc



STONEWATER



THE NELSON TRUST



**CrimeStoppers.**

**0800 555 111**

100% anonymous. Always.

# WITH THANKS TO THESE AGENCIES