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Domestic abuse

is a broad term that describes a pattern and range of behaviour used to control someone. Domestic abuse can happen in all kinds of relationships. It is rarely a one off event and usually gets more serious and severe. There may be no bruises, sometimes there is no violence at all. We've produced this leaflet with service users to help women identify warning signs of domestic abuse because we understand that recognising and validating your experiences can make it easier to get help.

How to contact us

You can contact us to arrange an appointment with a support worker. Appointments are available Monday - Friday. We'll arrange to meet you at a safe place or you're welcome at any of our support offices.

Women's Support Line: 0131 561 5800

(Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm)

Dalkeith Office:

3 Eskview Villas
(loop system,
wheelchair accessible)

Tranent Office:

Unit 5, Macmerry Business Park
(wheelchair accessible,
loop system)

Penicuik Office:

10 Carnethy Avenue
(wheelchair accessible)

Registered Office:

3 Eskview Villas
Dalkeith Midlothian EH22 3BN

Deaf or hard of hearing?

Mobile phone service: **07711 591894**

This leaflet was produced by Julie Watson (Women's Aid East and Midlothian) and service users Kirsti, Andrea, Elaine, Margaret and Janet. The purpose was to write material by service users for service users to make it easier to identify what domestic abuse is and ways to get help.



WHAT IS domestic abuse?

Funding and support



WHAT IS domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse can be **putting you down, constantly criticising you, name calling, withholding money, physical attack or sexual assault**. You can be **made to do things** you don't want to do either through **physical force** or through **threats**. Your partner might use bribery or promises to change their behaviour. You might be constantly trying to make things better only... it never is. No matter what you do it's **never enough** or it's never right. Your partner might be jealous, they want to know where you are and who you've spoken to all the time. They may call you all the time or follow you everywhere. They may do this even if you have tried to end the relationship.

Domestic abuse can be **dangerous**. It can cause injury and sadly, some women are killed by their partner. It can cause **emotional and physical** pain. It can make you feel **sad** or **"mad"**. Many women experience mental ill health, or use drink or drugs to cope. Your partner might then use this against you. Domestic abuse can be **frightening** and **exhausting**. It can make you feel **ashamed, embarrassed, vulnerable** and **worthless** - it can make you **feel alone**.

It's when...

QUOTES FROM SERVICE USERS

You have sex when you don't want to, just so you can get peace

You hear their key in the lock and you start to shake

You never do anything or go anywhere on your own because 'when you love each other' you should do everything together

Once they get their foot in the door, none of your stuff matters and it's got to be all their way

They go to pick up the kids from school when they're not allowed to, and it makes the kids upset because they want to see them

You worry what will happen all the time

They say you're the only one that understands them and everyone else is against them so you can't leave

They deny any knowledge about something you told them about and you begin doubting your sanity

What the law says

In Scotland, the *Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018* recognises domestic abuse as a crime. The law can prosecute and punish perpetrators if behavior is abusive and violent, threatening or intimidating and if this behavior is towards a partner or ex-partner (that includes a boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, civil partner or anyone in an intimate relationship - living in the same or separate household).

The law also recognises the impact that domestic abuse has on children (defined as any person under the age of 18 years). The law recognises the abuse as worse if a child has been adversely affected when the abuse happened - even if they were not the focus of the abuse.

If you wish to report domestic abuse you should contact 101 or in an emergency call 999.

Staff at Women's Aid can also provide details of helplines and services, as well as information about a variety of other laws and legal protections that are available to protect you from harm and abusive behaviours, including rape and sexual abuse, stalking and the sharing of intimate images.

FACTS

- Domestic abuse is never your fault.
- You do not deserve it. It is never OK.
- Being stressed, drunk or high on drugs is not an excuse - there is no excuse for domestic abuse.
- You're not alone, there is help available and there are options available to help you keep safe. There are people to talk to. There are many women who have similar experiences.