



NWCH

Domestic Abuse & Suicide, links and how to help

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What is domestic abuse?

- ▶ The Home Office defines Domestic Abuse as:
- ▶ Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:
 - ▶ 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.’
- ▶ This is not a legal definition. Taken from: <https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

How prevalent is it?

Statistics for the uk

- ▶ One incident of domestic abuse is reported to the police every 30 seconds.
- ▶ On average a woman won't report to the police until the 35th incident.
- ▶ Domestic abuse-related crime is 8% of total crime
- ▶ Domestic cases now account for 14.1% of all court prosecutions, and the volume of prosecutions rose this year to the highest level ever of 92,779 . 92.4% of defendants were male and 7.6% were women. 84% of victims were female and 16% were male
- ▶ 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience Domestic Abuse in their lifetime
- ▶ On average, 2 women a week are killed by a current or former male partner in England & Wales.
- ▶ (Women's Aid, 2017)

What are the links between DA and suicide?

- ▶ Every day almost 30 women attempt suicide as a result of experiencing domestic abuse
- ▶ Every week three women take their own lives to escape abuse
- ▶ There is currently no 'liability for suicide' law under which an abusive partner can be prosecuted for the suicide of their victim
- ▶ Domestic abuse survivors have higher-than-average rates of suicidal thoughts, with as many as 23 percent of survivors having attempted suicide compared to 3 percent among populations with no prior domestic abuse exposure
- ▶ It's not just physical violence that's linked with an increase in suicide. Verbal and emotional abuse are also connected with higher risk, as well as the duration, frequency and severity of abuse

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- ▶ Cambridge research programme in A&E found that Women who self-harmed were 75 times more likely to have suffered partner abuse
- ▶ Men who self-harmed were over twice as likely to have suffered partner abuse
- ▶ Some reasons include:
 - ▶ To distract themselves from emotional pain by causing physical pain
 - ▶ To punish themselves
 - ▶ To relieve tension
 - ▶ To feel “real” by feeling pain or seeing evidence of injury
 - ▶ To feel numb, zoned out, calm or at peace
 - ▶ To experience euphoric feelings (associated with release of endorphins)
 - ▶ To communicate their pain, anger or other emotions to others
 - ▶ To nurture themselves (through the process of healing the wounds)

Disclosure

- ▶ Your immediate response is very important:
- ▶ Listen carefully and let them tell you what happened in their own time
- ▶ Reassure them they are not to blame for what happened (or is happening).
- ▶ Let them know they are doing the right thing in telling you
- ▶ Try to stay calm and do not let them see how shocked you are
- ▶ Keep accurate notes
- ▶ Inform of next steps
- ▶ Devise a safe plan

What can we do to help?

- ▶ Risk assess / DASH RIC / Signpost - MARAC, IDVA, Social Services, agencies - Harmless, Domestic Abuse Services
- ▶ Ask the questions - people generally want to work more with people they are already engaged with - it is all of ours responsibility not just DA services
- ▶ Multi-agency working is recommended and communication between agencies is key
- ▶ Help the survivor connect with support groups and other community resources
- ▶ Encourage the survivor to seek help for the domestic abuse so they can break the cycle that's fostering the suicidal thoughts
- ▶ Encourage the survivor to reduce dependency on drugs or alcohol, if these factors are present, substances can increase suicidal urges
- ▶ Build a strong social bond with the survivor and help the survivor build solid relationships with others outside of the abusive relationship
- ▶ Seek advice from other services
- ▶ You may want to talk to your local [Women's Aid organisation](#), or to the Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge) on 0808 2000 247 to help you decide what you should do next

Safety planning

- ▶ Plan in advance how you might respond in different situations, including crisis situations.
- ▶ Think about the different options that may be available to you.
- ▶ Keep with you any important and emergency telephone numbers (for example, your [local Women's Aid refuge organisation or other domestic violence service](#); the police domestic violence unit; your GP; your social worker, if you have one; your children's school; your solicitor; and the Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge: 0808 2000 247).
- ▶ Teach your children to call 999 in an emergency, and what they would need to say (for example, their full name, address and telephone number).
- ▶ Are there neighbours you could trust, and where you could go in an emergency? If so, tell them what is going on, and ask them to call the police if they hear sounds of a violent attack.
- ▶ Rehearse an escape plan, so in an emergency you and the children can get away safely.

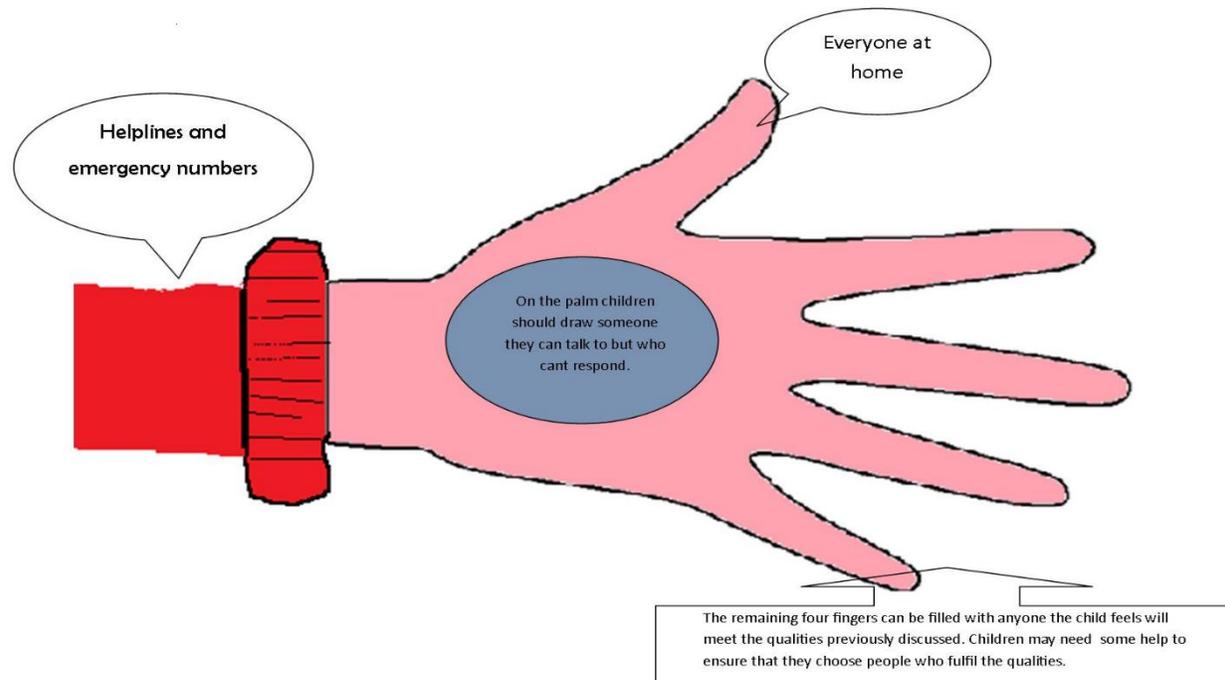
Cont.

- ▶ Pack an emergency bag for yourself and your children, and hide it somewhere safe (for example, at a neighbour's or friend's house). Try to avoid mutual friends or family. See the suggestions below on What to pack if you are planning to leave your partner.
- ▶ Try to keep a small amount of money on you at all times - including change for the phone and for bus fares.
- ▶ Know where the nearest phone is, and if you have a mobile phone, try to keep it with you.
- ▶ If you suspect that your partner is about to attack you, try to go to a lower risk area of the house - for example where there is a way out and access to a telephone. Avoid the kitchen or garage where there are likely to be knives or other weapons; and avoid rooms where you might be trapped, such as the bathroom, or where you might be shut into a cupboard or other small space.
- ▶ Be prepared to leave the house in an emergency.

Summary

- ▶ Have an emergency safety plan which includes:
- ▶ Making sure you have access to:
 - A phone/emergency numbers
 - Money/proof of your Identity
 - Think of somewhere you can go to keep safe - friends house, trusted family member
 - Call one of the local agencies for support
 - In an emergency always call 999
 - Tell someone you can trust

Support Networks



Further Contact Details

NW Counselling Hub CIC (Reg no: 10632025)

Add: Unit 10, Allenby Business Park, Crofton Road, Lincoln, LN3 4NL

Tel: 01522 253809

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