

# Domestic abuse

**Domestic abuse is usually when one partner (or ex-partner) acts towards another in a way that is physically, sexually or psychologically harmful. Domestic abuse happens in all cultures. People of all races, religions, ages and backgrounds can suffer domestic abuse.**

Domestic abuse is rarely a 'one-off' event, and it can often become more serious over time. As well as physical abuse, domestic abuse can be other abusive and controlling behaviours, including:

- threats
- harassment
- keeping someone short of money
- emotional abuse.

## **What can you do if you are in an abusive relationship?**

There are four important steps that you can take if you are being abused:

- Accept the fact that it is happening to you
- Accept that you are not to blame
- Talk to someone you trust (such as your doctor or health visitor)
- Get help and support.

Never be afraid to ask for help again, and in an emergency call the police by dialing 999. The police have specialist units and officers who are experienced in dealing with domestic violence.

It is important for you to know that:

- people will believe you
- you are not alone
- it is not your fault
- you have the right to feel safe and live free of abuse.

## Living with domestic abuse

There are a number of things you should start doing which could help you if you need to leave your relationship, particularly if you need to leave in a hurry. These include:

- keeping a diary of the abuse, as you may need it later
- thinking about your 'safety plan' - how will you get out of your home if the situation becomes violent? Arrange a safe place to go, such as a friend or family member you can trust. Make sure you include any children in your safety plan, and practice it if you think you need to
- collecting or copying important documents, such as your birth or marriage documents, bank details, medical cards, national insurance numbers and any documents about your children
- it may be difficult, but try to save some money and ask someone you trust to keep it for you. Also, ask them to keep some clothes for you and your children
- if appropriate, get advice from a solicitor about an injunction (court order) and any child custody issues.

## Leaving the relationship

Try to get some advice on how to leave safely. Leaving the relationship may be one of the most risky times and may lead to an increase in violence and abuse. Doing it with support is vital. There is a list of contacts, helplines and websites in the next sections of this guide.

## What about my children?

Victims of domestic abuse often worry that if they tell someone about the abuse, their children will be taken away from them. Social services will not take your children away solely for this reason, so it is important to seek help to make sure your children are not put at risk.

## Where to get help and advice

### In an emergency

999

### National Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours)

0808 2000 247

### Victim Support

0845 30 30 900

### Man's Advice Line

0808 801 0327

### ManKind Initiative

01823 334 244

### Kiran Asian Women's Aid

020 8558 1986

### Karma Nirvana - for those fleeing honour-based violence

01332 604 098

### IKWO - support for forced marriages

020 7920 6460

### Forced Marriage Unit

020 7008 0151

### Rights of Women

020 7251 6577

### NSPCC Childline

0800 1111

### Broken Rainbow (support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people)

0300 999 5428

### London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard (LLGS)

020 7837 7324

### Respect Hotline

020 7549 0578

### Deaf Hope UK - support for Deaf victims of domestic abuse (SMS/text service)

07970 350 366 (SMS/text service)

020 8772 3241 (voice/textphone)

## Useful websites

### For advice, help and contacts

[www.reducingtherisk.org.uk](http://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk)

### If you have English as a second language

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

### For male victims

[www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk)

### For women and children facing a forced marriage

[www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage](http://www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage)

### For general help and advice

[www.hiddenhurt.co.uk](http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk)

## How can A2Dominion help?

Your Housing Officer will be able to give you confidential advice about your housing options if you have left, or are thinking of leaving your home due to domestic abuse.

We will:

- give you back your freedom of choice by telling you what your options are, and giving you advice so that you can make your own decisions
- refer you to other agencies that can offer more specialist advice and support, and if they need us to we will work with them to help you. We will only involve other agencies with your permission
- arrange for you to talk to a member of staff somewhere private and safe. If we can, we will arrange for the member of staff to be the same sex or ethnic origin as you, if you feel more comfortable with this
- provide an interpreter when we meet you, if you need one
- urgently repair any damage caused to your home. If you want to stay in your home, we will provide extra security if needed
- tell you your choices if you want to go to a place of safety. We will work with other agencies to find temporary accommodation for you
- take action to remove the abuser from the property, if you have left your home
- keep in regular contact with you.

To set up a confidential meeting with your Housing Officer to get more advice on your housing options, please contact our Customer Services Centre. They will put you in touch with the appropriate member of staff.

## Contact us

**Online:** [www.a2dominion.co.uk/customers](http://www.a2dominion.co.uk/customers)

**By email:** [customer.services@a2dominion.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@a2dominion.co.uk)

**By phone:** 0800 432 0077 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm)

In person or by post by visiting or writing to one of our main or local offices.

## Translations

We'll consider requests for translations into other languages and formats including large print, audio and Braille.