Domestic violence

Information from Victim Support
What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is threats, violence or abuse between people who have a relationship with each other (or have had in the past). It can happen between partners, within families or shared homes. Men and women in both straight and gay relationships can be affected. It happens between people of all cultures, religions or classes. It’s based on one person having power or control over another, and it often gets worse over time.

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

Domestic violence takes many forms including physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse, and being cut off from your family and friends. It is very common. The police get a call every minute from someone who is a victim of domestic violence. At Victim Support we help thousands of domestic violence victims every year. Studies show that one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic violence during their life.

Domestic violence is unacceptable. No one deserves to be abused.

People who are abused

Many people who suffer domestic violence live relatively normal lives in very difficult circumstances. Some people
find that leaving an abusive relationship (for example by moving away) stops the threats and violence. But we know this can be a hard thing to do and you may be afraid it will make things worse.

On average a victim of domestic violence will have been assaulted 35 times before contacting the police.

**We can help**

Victim Support is the independent national charity for people affected by crime. Our volunteers are specially trained to give information, practical help and emotional support to people who have been threatened or abused.

Our services are confidential, free and available to everyone.

Victims are usually put in touch with us by the police. But you can also contact us directly, whether or not you want to report the crime to the police and regardless of when it happened. We'll help you, whatever decision you make.

If you do go to the police, our volunteers can go to the police station with you. They can give you information about court procedures and applying for compensation. They can help you to contact other organisations if you need different kinds of help. If you prefer, you can talk to someone anonymously on our
Victim Supportline. The details are on the back page of this leaflet.

You can also contact us if you know someone who needs help. Research shows that just under half of victims will tell a relative or friend. Please see the list of things you can do to help others on pages 6-7.

**How we can help**

A lot of people find it very hard to accept that they are a victim of domestic violence. It can take a long time for someone to admit it to themselves, but it is a vital first step in getting help.

If you are a victim of domestic violence, we want to help you. We will:

- always prioritise your safety and confidentiality
- give you time to think and to make decisions
- offer continuous support whatever decisions you make
- put you in touch with other agencies that can help, for example, with housing, benefits and legal advice
- help you to explore your options for dealing with the abuse.
The effects on children
We should not underestimate the impact of domestic violence on children. In a large number of cases children are present in the home when a parent is being abused. We will do everything we can to help abused parents to support their children effectively.

Your safety
If you can’t keep this leaflet at home you may want to use the detachable card with telephone helpline numbers on the back page.

We have left one side of the card blank so you can write the details of local organisations.

All the organisations listed on pages 7-8 will be able to offer information on staying safe.

If you are facing an emergency, phone the police on 999.

How to help others
If you suspect or know that someone is affected by domestic violence you should:

• listen to them and take them seriously
• be there for them, whatever decisions they make
• not judge them
• help them to find support and advice
• not try to intervene or sort out the situation yourself as this can make things worse
• respect their need to be secretive
• not expect them to simply leave, because:
  – they may need help to leave safely
  – they may not want to leave
  – they may want the abuser to leave.

Whatever their circumstances they may need legal, financial and emotional support.

Do not put yourself in a dangerous position and be careful not to further endanger them. You can contact Victim Support for support and advice.

**Useful contacts**

**Victim Supportline – 0845 30 30 900**

Information and support for anyone affected by crime. Can also put you in touch with your local Victim Support office. Open 9am–9pm weekdays, 9am–7pm weekends, 9–5pm bank holidays.

You can contact us using Text Relay by adding 18001 before any of our phone numbers.
National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247
A 24-hour freephone service for women provided by Refuge and Women’s Aid.

Broken Rainbow Helpline – 0300 999 5428 (LGBT)
Open Mon 2pm-8pm, Wed 10am-5pm, Thur 2pm-8pm. A national helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence.

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 80 10 800
Freephone service run by Welsh Women’s Aid open 24 hours a day.

Men’s Advice Line – 0808 801 0327
A freephone service offering advice and support for men in abusive relationships. Open 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.
Help us support other victims and witnesses. Text VISU13 and an amount to 70070 to make a donation.

Published by Victim Support
President HRH The Princess Royal

Victim Support, Hallam House,
56-60 Hallam Street, London, W1W 6JL
Telephone: 020 7268 0200 Fax: 020 7268 0210
www.victimsupport.org.uk

Charity registration: 298028 Company no: 2158780
Registered office as above.

July 2011

Victim Supportline: 0845 30 30 900
National Domestic Violence Helpline:
0808 2000 247
Broken Rainbow Helpline:
0300 999 5428 (LGBT)
Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline:
0808 80 10 800
Men’s Advice Line: 0808 801 0327