

UNSAFE
RELATIONSHIPS
SUPPORTING
YOUR
FRIENDS

IS YOUR FRIEND EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE OR ABUSE?

This booklet is for young people worried that their friends may be in an unsafe situation. This can include an abusive relationship, a possible forced marriage, so-called 'honour' based violence or sexual violence.



WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence happens between people who are in, or have been in a relationship, or are family members.

Physical abuse

Hitting, punching, kicking, using weapons.

Sexual violence

Forcing or pressuring someone to have sex (rape), unwanted sexual activity, touching or groping someone or making them watch pornography.

Financial abuse

Taking money, controlling, not letting someone work

Emotional abuse

Making someone feel bad or scared, stalking, blackmailing, constantly checking up on someone, threats.

Social abuse

Isolation, controlling who someone can and can't see.

WHAT IS FORCED MARRIAGE AND 'HONOUR' BASED VIOLENCE?

Forced marriage - is when one or both partners do not consent to the marriage and they are pressured or forced to agree. This can include physical, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

'Honour' based violence - is a crime or incident against a person (usually a young woman) carried out to punish them for behaviour that the family or community believe is inappropriate.

Why does it matter to me?

Some people think it only happens to adults but it can happen at any age.

- » 40% of teenagers know girls whose boyfriends pressured them to have sex
- » 42% know girls whose boyfriends have hit them
- » 59% said they didn't know how to help their friends

Usually women and girls are the victims and men and boys are the abusers, but it can happen to anyone.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY FRIEND

You should watch out for the following signs. Remember, these don't necessarily mean your friend is experiencing violence.

- » depression and anxiety
- » cancelling plans at the last minute
- » argumentative or upset
- » fearful or withdrawn
- » unexplained injuries
- » use of drugs and alcohol
- » early sexual activity/risk taking
- » getting upset when receiving texts or calls from a particular person
- » afraid of making partner angry
- » Makes excuses for partner's behaviour

Find out more at: www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

Warning signs of a forced marriage or 'honour' based violence can include:

- » family history of relatives going missing, self-harming or committing suicide
- » relatives making decisions on behalf of the victim
- » your friend may start to truant or have extended absences from school
- » your friend may tell you that they are being kept at home against their will
- » a decline in their school grades
- » your friend may mention death threats
- » your friend may report they are being emotionally blackmailed
- » your friend may suffer from depression, self harm or attempt suicide
- » emotional and/or physical abuse

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- » it can be very hard to discuss abuse and it can also be hard to support someone
- » you must look after yourself as well as them
- » if you want to approach them be sensitive, say 'I am worried about you because...'
- » don't judge them, believe them
- » let them know they're not alone, it's not their fault and you know how tough it is to talk about
- » help them to see what is happening is unacceptable and that they don't have to put up with it
- » decide together what to do to make things safer - this can involve making a safety plan (see below or next page)
- » make a list of all the good things about your friend to help improve their confidence

Make a safety plan

Here are some things you can do to be safe when you're out and about.

- » ring the police (999) or a trusted adult
- » think of safe places to go
- » always have phones charged
- » make up a code word they can use to ask for help
- » try not to let them go home on their own, try to know where they are
- » plan when and how to leave
- » if they want to end the relationship, suggest that other people be around when they do

Who can I talk to?

Find an adult you trust. It can be anyone; a teacher, parent, relative, youth worker, doctor etc.

- » contact a specialist - see below or next page
- » inform your friend what you are doing and who you are going to tell
- » even if they ask you not to let anyone know, it's ok to tell an adult you trust

USEFUL

CONTACTS

Focuses on teenage relationship abuse

www.direct.gov.uk/thisisabuse

Childline

0800 1111

Parentlineplus

0808 800 2222

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Men's Advice Line

0808 801 0327

www.mensadvice.org.uk

Survivors UK (sexual violence)

0845 122 1201

www.survivorsuk.org

Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 2000 247

www.womensaid.org.uk

Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Help line

0161 636 7525

End the Fear Website

For anybody who is experiencing domestic or sexual violence can find help, support and advice here. We also provide support to people who know someone who may be being abused. We want to encourage victims of domestic and sexual violence in Greater Manchester to find the courage to come forward and seek support and help.

www.endthefear.co.uk

Rape Crisis

Rape crisis centres provide crucial crisis and long term specialised counselling, support and independent advocacy for all women and girls of all ages.

60 Nelson Street,
Greater Manchester
M13 9WP

Free phone 0808 802 9999

www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Victim Support

A national charity giving free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses, their family, friends

Victim Support
Wigan Life Centre,
The Wiend, Wigan WN1 1NH

01942 489936

Email: wigan@victimsupport.org.uk

www.victimsupport.org.uk