



Friend, family
or work colleague
experiencing
Domestic Abuse?

“ Even if I keep going back,
don’t give up on me ”

Strangely enough, despite thinking I hid everything well, it was my dad who put me in touch with my local Domestic Abuse Service

Produced by Lincolnshire County Council

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What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is not just an argument, a fall out or two people not getting along. It is a pattern of power and control and manipulation of someone they are supposed to love and care about. This can include, but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- **Controlling behaviour** is a range of acts designed to make a person feel inferior to the other person to lower their self-esteem, by belittling them and making them feel stupid or even that they have a mental health issue. They may make the person dependant on them financially or physically by isolating them from sources of support i.e. family or Doctor, maybe stopping them from working or having their own bank account. Regulating their everyday behaviour, by not allowing them out of the house without them being present. If they do go out, the abuser may keep asking them who they are with and what they are doing, not allowing the individual to wear what they wish.
- **Coercive behaviour** which is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats of assault, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten the person they are abusing. Sometimes they may never be physically assaulted but the threat to hurt is enough to intimidate someone into fearing that person. They may threaten to take the children away and use this to frighten the person into submitting to what they say.
- **Stalking or harassment** such as obsessively following a person, appearing at that person's home or workplace unwanted, repeatedly making unwanted phone calls, unwanted texts and emails.

“ After keeping it quiet throughout the whole relationship, I confided in my family after a physical attack. I moved back into the family home and my Dad saved my life by putting me through to my local Domestic Abuse Service ”

Types of Domestic Abuse

Psychological/Emotional

Intimidation, insulting, isolating a person from friends and family, criticising, denying abuse, treating a person as inferior, threatening to harm children or take them away, forced marriage.

Undermining a person's confidence, making racist remarks, making a person feel unattractive, calling them stupid or useless, eroding their independence, threatening suicide if the person leaves them.

I only sought help when a colleague at work picked up on something I said and mentioned it to the Manager. The Manager then asked me and I broke down. She immediately referred me to the GP and my local Domestic Abuse Service

Sexual

Forced sex/rape, forced into prostitution, ignoring religious prohibitions about sex, refusal to practice safe sex, sexual insults sexually transmitted infections, preventing breastfeeding, forced to be filmed or photographed naked.

Physical

Shaking, smacking, punching, kicking, grabbing and biting, starving, tying up, stabbing, suffocation, throwing things, using objects as weapons, female genital mutilation, 'honour violence'.

Financial

Not letting a person work, undermining their efforts to find work or study, refusing to give them money, asking for an explanation of how every penny is spent, making them beg for money, gambling, not paying bills.

Help & Support

If you know someone who is experiencing any of the above mentioned in this leaflet there is support for them locally.

Tell them they are **NOT** to blame for any of this behaviour and that they **CAN** get emotional support for themselves and any children they may have.

Why people stay in abusive relationships

As a family member, friend or colleague you may have wondered why the person has shared with you they are in an abusive relationship but not left the relationship.

Most people start a relationship being in love with that other person. Those experiencing abuse may still have feelings for them and want the relationship to continue; they may feel that the other person may change and things will 'go back to what they used to be like'; they may have children with that person and don't want to break the family up; they may not have the strength to leave the relationship or confidence to leave.

They may not have the finances to leave the relationship; they may be scared of what to expect if they leave as they have been in that situation for so long.

The person abusing them may not be their partner - it could be their adult or teenage child, parent or sibling. It could be a carer who is also a family member, for example, and the bond between them could make it harder to leave that relationship.

They may have pets that they are unsure what to do with if they move properties.

The list of reasons is endless and even if you do not understand them you should still try to empathise with that person and help them the best you can.

*“ What did I want?
Not to be pushed,
I needed to make my own
decisions and needed to
be really ready to
leave.”*

Practical support you can offer

- Approach the issue in a sensitive and caring way, say something like 'I am worried about you because...' and 'how can I help?'
- Let them know that you are concerned and want to support and help them [not advise].
- Believe what they tell you.
- Do not be judgmental or expect them to make a sudden decision. Support them do not judge them.
- Help them with practical things like being a babysitter, if safe to do so, so they can attend appointments with professionals; offer them an excuse to leave the house so they can have respite from the abuse; be a taxi or offer them money so they can get to appointments. This will allow them to get the specialised support they need and see you as reinforcing that they are believed.

- Remember that supporting someone is a challenge. They may not make decisions that you feel are right - they may choose to stay with the abusive person. Don't judge them for this, keep believing in them and be there for them when they need you.
- Stay in contact with them over time, help them to explore the choices they have, and try to focus on theirs and your safety rather than the abuser or the relationship.

- Reassure them that the abuse isn't their fault. Violence is a choice the abuser makes and the abuser is responsible for their behaviour.
- Acknowledge their strengths and constantly remind them of the fact that they are coping well with a challenging and stressful situation.
- Do not mediate or be the contact person between them and the abuser.

- Offer practical help such as the use of your address for post, telephone or computer.
- Offer to keep safe copies of important documents and other items like money, clothing etc. in case they decide to leave in a hurry.

Encourage the development of a safety plan - for them and for any children or other vulnerable people in the house:

- An agreement with you that they and any children can go stay with you for a night or two in an emergency, preferably at an address the perpetrator is not aware of.
- A secret pay as you go cheap mobile phone, as it is really common for perpetrators to take phones off people, or end contracts so the mobile phone cannot be used.
- Agree a code word or action that they can use to signal that they need help.

Suggest a 'survival kit':

- It could include some money – either in cash or a 'secret' bank account, you could hold that money or the bank details for them so the abuser is unaware of it. If they don't have their own bank account in their own name it is a good idea to get one if possible. Having access to some money solves a lot of problems if they are planning to leave.
- A bag of clothing, if they need to flee in a hurry.
- Passport, benefit information, birth certificates, marriage certificates etc.
- Suggest they keep a bag or box with all medicines for them and any children together. They could even keep an extra set at your house if needed.

It is important to remember... supporting someone is a challenge, take things easy and look after yourself while supporting your friend, family member or work colleague. Remember to keep yourself safe at all times. Most of all be very patient and do not give up on them because your help and support can make a difference.

Specialist Domestic Abuse Agencies

These Lincolnshire agencies provide support for female and male victims over the age of 16 years and for children that may be affected by the domestic abuse they are witnessing. Support is available via their website or telephone.

If they live in...

Boston and South Holland:

www.bostonmayflower.org.uk
01205 318600 or
www.bostonwomensaid.org.uk
01205 311272

East Lindsey:

www.personalisedsupport.co.uk
01507 609830

Lincoln, North Kesteven,

South Kesteven & West Lindsey:
www.wldas.org.uk
01522 510014 or
01427 616219

For general support and information regarding domestic abuse as a friend, family member or work colleague who has concerns of an abusive relationship, please visit our **How You Can Help** page on our website www.domesticabuselincolnshire.com

Also if you are concerned for a work colleague you could check if your employer has a Domestic Abuse policy in place, for those who are experiencing domestic abuse, with your Personnel department. This could offer useful support with work issues for the person you are concerned for.

If you believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer any form of abuse you should **ALWAYS** report your concerns, so the appropriate support can be offered to the child and its parents/carers. If you suspect abuse or if you need some advice or information, you can contact the **Children Services Customer Service Centre** on **01522 782111**

If it is outside normal office hours you can contact the **Emergency Duty Team** on **01522 782333** OR go to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board website for more information www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lscb

In the same way if you have concerns that your friend, family member or colleague has additional Safeguarding care and support needs please call the **Adult Services Customer Service Centre** on **01522 782155**. If it is outside normal office hours you can contact the **Emergency Duty Team** on **01522 782333**, or go to their website www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lscb

REMEMBER - IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999