

Are you experiencing domestic abuse?



Experiencing domestic abuse as a young person can be confusing, frightening and upsetting, here you will find resources and links that will hopefully help you to understand what happened to you and which will help you to heal.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is when someone tries to control, hurt or scare their partner or family member. This can happen between people who are dating, in a relationship or related to each other, no matter what their gender or sexuality is. It can be **emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological**.

Controlling behaviour is when someone does things to make the other person feel weak and powerless. This can include stopping them from seeing friends and family, taking their money or controlling what they do and say.

Coercive behaviour is when someone uses violence, threats or humiliation to hurt, punish or scare the other person. This can be a pattern of behaviour or just one incident. It can include things like hitting, threatening to hurt them or making them do things they don't want to do.

“My boyfriend was exactly like this, he was really nice the first couple of months, but when sex came into the picture, I told him I wasn't ready ... he started saying I was frigid to everyone as well as every time we saw each other, he'd hit me more for the stupidest reason”

Quote from: *This is Abuse* message board

It's important to know that domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of gender or background. **It's also important to know that it's not your fault and you don't have to put up with it.** If you're experiencing domestic abuse, it can have a big impact on your mental and physical health. So it's really important to reach out for help and support. You deserve to be safe and happy.

Teenage Relationship Abuse (TRA)



How common is it?

Unfortunately, it's more common than we might think. In fact, the 2021 Crime Survey for England and Wales found that 16-19-year-olds were the age group most likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the past year (13.4%), followed by 20-24-year-olds (10.4%).

Domestic violence and abuse are serious issues in our society, but it's often hidden from view. This can be especially true for teenagers, who may be more accepting of or dismissive of abusive behaviour than adults, not realising that in fact what they are experiencing is domestic abuse and the seriousness of the situation.

A 2018 survey by the NSPCC found that 1 in 5 young people in the UK had experienced domestic abuse in a relationship.

It's important to note that domestic abuse can take many different forms and that these statistics only capture reported incidents. The actual real figure is likely to be higher. Many young people may not feel comfortable disclosing their experiences, or may not recognise that what they are experiencing is

abuse. It's essential to raise awareness about domestic abuse and provide support and resources for those who may be affected by it.

Technology – as a context for abuse and a tool for change



Communicating online is a normal way of life for many young people and the UK's internet access is amongst the highest in Europe with teenagers' usage higher than that of adults.

It is becoming more evident that there are numerous ways that technology can be used to abuse young people. These include:

- Gifts of expensive smartphones which can be used in exchange for gang membership, sexual favours and abuse
- Cyberbullying
- Online grooming
- Digital stalking
- Naming of rape victims online
- Social location services whereby perpetrators can keep track of where victims are
- Harassment
- Sexting – the “exchange of sexual messages or images” and “creating, sharing and forwarding sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images” through mobile phones and the internet.

However, it is also important to recognise that technology and the internet also offer unique ways of accessing and providing support and information. The Home Office Teenage Relationship Abuse campaign (thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk) is an example of using the media and internet to provide useful information directly to young people.

Further information and videos

For safety planning advice – [click here](#)

Love Respect (Women's Aid) - have put a few videos together to help identify abuse and control coercive behaviour, if you would like to watch them for further understanding, click on the links below:

<https://loverspect.co.uk/advice/red-flags/>

<https://loverspect.co.uk/advice/what-is-gaslighting/>

<https://loverspect.co.uk/advice/what-is-coercive-control/>