

7 Minute Briefing: Domestic Abuse

Resources

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>

<https://safelives.org.uk/>

<https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/pkost/regional-safeguarding-guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

Definition

Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer.

Domestic Abuse can happen to anyone but statistics indicate that it disproportionately affects females. In 2018, women were around twice as likely as men to have experienced domestic abuse (ONS)

When might Domestic Abuse risk increase or escalate?

- Separation or discovery of a new relationship
- Disputes over child custody
- Pregnancy/new birth
- Community issues + isolation
- Credible threats to kill
- Use of alcohol and drugs

One in four women experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives. This risk increases when pregnant /becoming a mother or when the relationship ends.



Leaving abusive relationships:

Fear of safety can be a reason not to leave abusive relationships. 55% of women killed by their ex-partner or spouse were killed within the first month of separation (Femicide Census, 2018).

Other reasons include:

- Isolation
- Shame
- Low confidence
- Practicality e.g. finance, immigration status
- Lack of support

Discovery of new relationships:

Entering a new relationship can create increased risks for families who have experienced domestic abuse even if the relationship with the previous partner finished some time ago.

Practitioners need to remain professionally curious and understand that because the victim is no longer in a relationship with the perpetrator there may be continued risks to the victim and children when the victim enters a new relationship.

Children in DA households:

When there is domestic abuse, the implications for children and young people in the household must be considered.

Research indicates that there is a strong link between domestic abuse and all types of child abuse and neglect.

Domestic abuse can impact a child's development and emotional well-being. They may be physically harmed or face emotional suffering that can lead to behavioural issues, low self-esteem, bullying, self-harm or anti-social behaviour.

Practitioners need to understand, identify and record the nature of domestic abuse and risks to children in referrals and assessments and take steps to ensure victims and their children have adequate support.

Impact of Domestic Abuse:

Domestic Abuse rarely occurs in isolation of other issues. For example, it may exacerbate or cause mental or physical health concerns, substance misuse or family breakdown.

Similarly, issues such as these can be risk factors of domestic abuse. Everyone working with victims, perpetrators and children should be aware of the inter-relationship between domestic abuse and other issues such as mental ill health, drug and/or alcohol misuse, homelessness and housing need, deprivation and social exclusion and child and/or animal abuse.