

Domestic abuse is a serious and complex issue that affects individuals across all backgrounds, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. It can take many forms - physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or sexual; and it often occurs in relationships where trust and intimacy should offer safety.

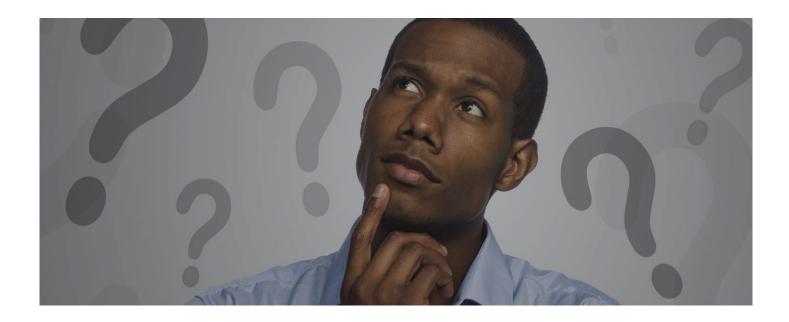
Some of you may not be sure whether you are experiencing domestic abuse. You may be worried about someone and not know where to go for help. You may be worried about your own behaviour in your relationships and want to change this.

This tutorial will aim to help you understand what domestic abuse is, how to better recognise it, the impact it can have on our mental health and wellbeing, how you can seek support for yourself or others and learn some ways of staying safe and accessing resources.

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# **How Should I Use This Tutorial?**



You should navigate through this tutorial using the 'continue' buttons at the bottom of each page or by the navigation on the left hand side of the screen. Additionally, you should complete activities along the way to check your understanding on the topic.

At the end of the tutorial, you will be asked to complete an assessment. If you pass the assessment, you will be awarded a digital badge to demonstrate your achievements with this tutorial.

This tutorial should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete.

**CONTINUE - Aims and Objectivies** 

# **Aims and Objectivies**

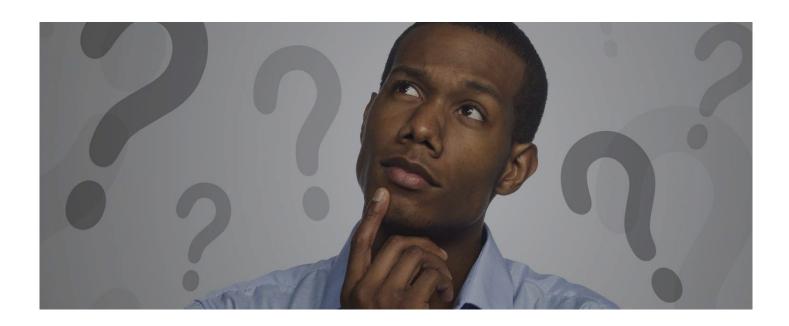


The aim of this tutorial is to help you:

- Develop your understanding of domestic bbuse
- 2 Recognise who is affected by domestic abuse
- Apply various support mechanisms to support those experiencing domestic abuse

By the end of this tutorial, you should be able to immediately apply the knowledge and skills learnt to your studies.

# **Who Should Complete This Tutorial?**



It is recommended that you should complete this tutorial if:

- You're a new student at the University of Greater Manchester
- 2 You're new to studying in the UK
- 3 Undergraduate or postgraduate student
- You have been advised to complete this tutorial by a member of staff

**CONTINUE - What is Domestic Abuse?** 

# What is Domestic Abuse?

'Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality).'

(NCVO, 2022, n.p.)

'We define domestic abuse as 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 expartner, but also by a family member or carer.'

(Women's aid, 2025, n.p.)

There are many different types of domestic abuse and you will see that there is often some crossover within categories of abuse. It's important to note that in some domestic abuse cases physical acts of violence do not occur and abuse takes prevalence more significantly in the context of coercion and control. Under UK legislation domestic abuse is a criminal act and this relates to all categories of abuse as below:

#### Coercive and controlling behaviour

This type of abuse is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim and is designed to make a person dependent upon their abuser who then dominates their life. Examples of this are:

- Isolating the victim from their support network
- Depriving the victim of their basic needs (water, food), not allowing them to shower, etc.

- · Monitoring how the victim spends their time
- Monitoring the victim's phone and online behaviour
- Controlling where the victim can go, who they see, what they can wear etc.
- Not allowing the victim to contact services as needed, such as a doctor, dentist, etc.
- · Controlling the victims finances
- Making threats or intimidating the victim
- The abuser may appear excessively jealous

### Psychological and/or emotional abuse

This type of abuse is where words and non-physical actions are used to manipulate, hurt or induce fear into the victim. Examples of this are:

- Calling the victim names, using derogatory language, mocking
- Gaslighting purposefully making the victim doubt their own sanity through making them believe that they're misremembering things, and manipulating situations to make the victim believe the abuser's version of events
- Making threats to destroy belongings, to report the victim to the police, mental health services, social care or other service, to end their own life, to hurt or kill the victim, and more
- Giving the 'silent treatment' until the victim does what they want

## Physical abuse \_

Use of force to cause harm and fear and a way for perpetrators to gain control over victims. Examples of this are:

- Any use of physical violence hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, biting, etc.
- · Strangulation or choking
- · Pulling hair
- Using objects or weapons to inflict physical violence
- Spitting
- Punching walls, breaking objects

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse can take place while in a romantic relationship or from family members. Examples of this are:

- Rape or sexual assault
- Having sex with the victim when they are unable to consent. For example, someone under the influence of drugs and alcohol may not be able to consent
- Using force, manipulation or intimidation to force the victim to perform sexual acts
- Forcing the victim to have sex with others or become a sex worker

• Degrading the victim during sex - name calling or use of physical force

#### Financial abuse

Financial abuse consists of controlling or threatening behaviours linked to money or finances. Perpetrators often use money as a way of controlling their partners freedom. Examples of this are:

- Controlling all household income and keeping financial information secretive
- Controlling spending, checking receipts
- · Taking out debts in the victim's name, this can be with or without their knowledge
- Stopping the victim from working, studying or restricting their hours at work

#### Online abuse \_

Perpetrators of domestic abuse are increasingly using social media platforms to abuse their victims:

- Monitoring and checking locations on social media posts, email and texts
- Sharing intimate photos or videos without consent as well as 'revenge pornography'
- Tracking the victim's location by GPS
- Installing spyware on the victim's phone and technological devices

#### Stalking and harassment \_

Stalking and harassment is when a perpetrator gives repeated and unwanted attention and exhibits intrusive behaviours that is used to maintain control over their victim by inducing fear or distress. Examples of this include:

- Unwanted contact the perpetrator is constantly messaging, calling or showing up unexpectedly
- Sending unwanted gifts or notes
- Following someone or appearing at places they visit regularly, such as driving past or showing up at their home, workplace or place of study
- Direct or implied threats to harm the victim
- GPS tracking, hacking or hidden cameras
- Damaging or breaking into the victim's property
- Contacting the victims family, friends, or workplace etc.
- Spreading false information about the victim

The government definition of domestic abuse also includes honour-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

#### Honour-based violence

Defined as:

'A crime or incident which has, or may have been, committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community' (Karma Nirvana, 2023, n.p.).

Motivated by the abuser's perception that a person has brought or may bring 'dishonour' or 'shame' to themselves, their family or community, with the abuser controlling an individual to behave in certain ways or agree with certain beliefs. It can take place in many forms of domestic abuse and can be difficult to identify.

#### **Female Genital Mutilation**

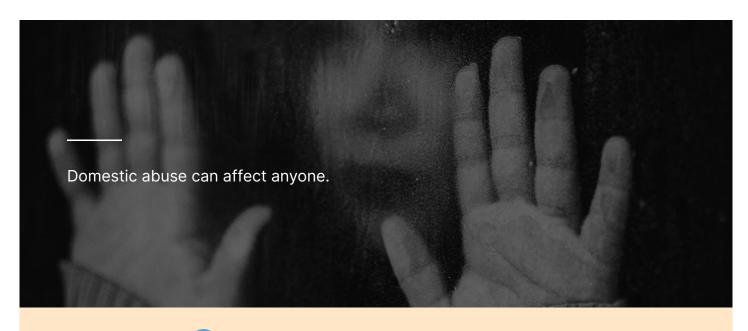
this consists of all procedures involving the removal of external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons. There are currently 4 different classifications of types of FGM. The procedures are normally practiced on young girls or women under 18.

### Forced marriage \_\_

Defined as when one or both people do not or cannot consent to marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into marriage. This includes taking someone overseas to force them into marriage, doing anything intended to cause a child to marry before age 18 and causing someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to marry.

**CONTINUE - Who is Affected by Domestic Abuse?** 

# Who is Affected by Domestic Abuse?



- You do not have to have been in a long-term relationship to be a victim of domestic abuse
- Domestic abuse can occur between family members
- Legislation recognises perpetrators to be criminally liable of domestic abuse from the age of 16
- 4 Perpetrators of domestic abuse can be of any gender
- Those who are vulnerable due to ill health or disability are at an increased risk of domestic abuse. In some cases the abuse is undertaken by a carer who the individual is reliant on in relation to their support
- 6 Children who witness abuse are likely to suffer emotional and psychological impact, even when not directly abused themselves

# What Factors May Increase the Risk of Domestic Abuse?



- Women are much more likely than men to be victims of high risk or severe domestic abuse. Approximately 1.6 million women aged 16 and over have experienced domestic abuse, equating to a prevalence rate of 6.6%. Approximately 712,000 men aged 16 and over have experienced domestic abuse, equating to a prevalence rate of 3.0% (Office for National Statistics, 2024)
- Low income households are 3.5 times more likely to experience abuse (Walby and Allen, 2004)
- Younger people are more likely to be subject to domestic abuse with the majority of high-risk victims being in their 20s or 30s with those under the age of 25 being most likely to suffer violence (Walby and Allen, 2004)
- Pregnancy Nearly 1 in 3 women report that the first instance of domestic violence occurred while they were pregnant (Lewis and Drife, 2001)
- Separation The breakdown of a relationship often leads to an escalation or emergence of domestic abuse (Walby and Allen, 2004)
- 6 If the perpetrator has a criminal history of any kind



Substance use – Alcohol and drug use can increase the risk of violent behavior in some individuals. Research also shows that victims of high-risk domestic abuse may use substances as a coping mechanism or as a result of trauma (Safelives, 2024)



Mental health issues – Perpetrators and victims are likely to identify as having a mental health issue (Safelives, 2024)

According to Craig and Kippert (2022), the Cycle of Abuse was first introduced in 1979 as a way of explaining patterns in abusive relationships:

1

### **Tension Building**

This is where tensions increase. A breakdown in communication may occur making the victim fearful, where they then feel the need to appease their abuser. Some victims may also provoke their abuser as a survival strategy as a way of getting the abusive incident over with, or to have some form of control over when the situation occurs. It's important to note that abusers may use everyday life stressors or bigger life events as an excuse to justify their abuse through a build in tensions. However, most people can cope with these stressors without taking them out on others.

2

### Incident

This is where the perpetrator of abuse will exert power and control over their victim using any of the types of abuse we've outlined.

3

### Reconciliation

This is where the abuser apologises, makes up excuses for the abuse, blames the victim, gaslights the victim by denying the abuse ever happened or that it wasn't as bad as the victim is making out or that it simply wasn't abuse.

4

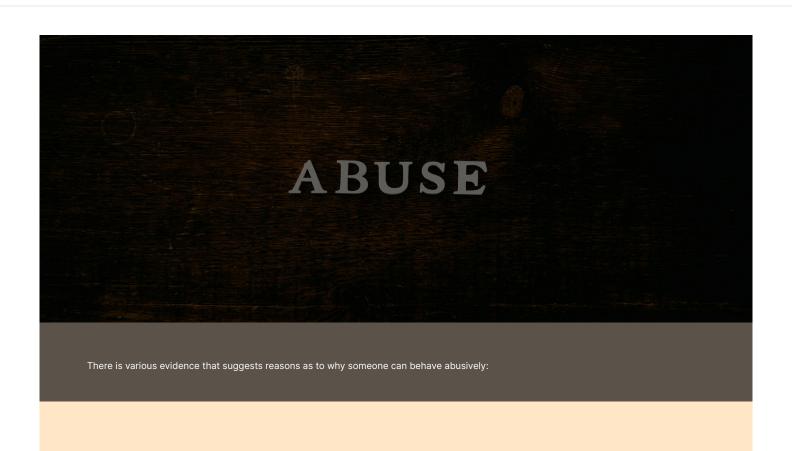
#### Calm

Incident is 'forgotten' or 'forgiven' – things may seem to be back to 'normal' – the abuser may even 'love bomb' the victim by showing extreme amounts of affection.

There are valid criticisms of this cycle, as few domestic abuse cases tend to follow this pattern exactly. All kinds of domestic abuse can be continuous, even if there is no explosive incident, and they can also occur when the abuser is being intimate or affectionate to their victim, as they may be using this intimacy or affection as a control mechanism over their victim through the victim's traumas and fears. The overall message of the cycle is still a valid one, however, as it can help victims to identify patterns and seek support.

**CONTINUE - Why Do People Abuse?** 

# Why Do People Abuse?



- Sometimes it is due to a desire to exert power and control over their partner
- 2 Entitlement, gender roles, cultural and social norms in some cultures or communities, traditional gender roles or attitudes may condone or excuse abusive behaviour
- Attachment issues leading to unhealthy ways to prevent the loss of the person they love
- In some cases, the abuser may have experienced previous abuse themselves, and this can be an underpinning factor in terms of seeing this form of behaviour as normal within interpersonal relationships
- Some people lack the skills to manage anger, stress, or frustration in healthy ways. Instead of communicating or resolving conflict, they resort to aggression or manipulation. Though it is important to note that not all individuals with mental health difficulties or difficulties regulating emotions are abusive and not all who are abusive have a mental health diagnosis

None of these reasons make it acceptable to be abusive, but they can help us understand why it is happening. It is not the case that victims are the reason perpetrators become abusive in relationships with family members and partners.

Many victims of domestic abuse report feeling responsible for what is happening to them. It is NOT their fault. Anyone suffering from abuse is encouraged to speak out to any support service or network. There are complex reasons why a victim may feel at fault, and that they can't leave.

People who recognise themselves to behave abusively can access support from services to change their behaviour – the charity Respect offer support for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

## CONTINUE

# **Early warning signs**

There can be early warning signs that you or someone else may be in an abusive relationship:

Fear around partner's reaction to situations, decisions you make, things you might say and feeling fearful of their behaviour if they're angry

Becoming more self-critical – that you are always wrong, are unattractive or unable to do things you used to do for yourself Feeling belittled, controlled or manipulated Feeling stressed or worried all the time which may impact how our body feels, how much we're eating and how much we're sleeping Withdrawing from our social network and activities as a way to avoid arguments with your partner Making excuses for injuries or bruises or not being able to explain how they occurred Feeling a pressure to change aspects of who you are or pressure to move the relationship along further than you would like to Feeling like you're walking on eggshells Feeling pressured of forced into sexual acts Feeling financially depenent on partner and unable to leave Being extremely apologetic or meek Increase in drug/alcohol use Loss of interest in daily activities Noticing partner constantly calls or texts them wanting to know where they are, what they're doing, who they're with Having little money available to them, not having access to debit/credit card, or having to account for every penny spent Cancelling meetups, meetings or appointments last minute Late to work or university often Exhibits excessive privacy concerns regarding their personal life or the person they're in a relationship with Asking permission to go places or meet people Referring to their partner as 'jealous' or 'possessive' or always accusing them of having affairs

### CONTINUE

# Barriers to leaving abusive relationships

People may wonder why people may not 'just leave' the relationship but there are significant barriers those in abusive relationships face that can stop them from leaving their abuser – understanding these can help reduce judgement and increase support for those in these relationships. Barriers include:

- Fear that leaving will put them in more danger
- Being solely dependent on their abuser for money and for somewhere to live
- Worries children will be taken away from them or they won't be allowed access to them or feeling a need to keep the family together
- Being emotionally manipulated and feeling guilt if they leave
- Genuine care and love for their abuser and hope that the abuser will change
- 6 Cultural or religious beliefs
- 7 No longer having a support network
- Normalised abuse if someone has grown up in an abusive household they may not be able to recognise signs of abuse
- 9 Feeling shame
- If the victim if disabled they may also rely on their partner for practical and physical support

(National Domestic Violence Hotline, n.d.)

## CONTINUE

# **Emotional and physical effects**

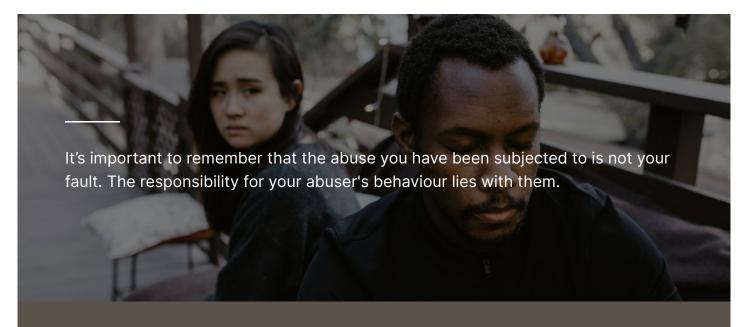
The emotional and psychological effects of being a victim of domestic abuse could be:

1	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
2	Depression
3	Anxiety
4	High levels of stress/distress
5	Struggles with regulating emotions
6	Self-doubt and low self-esteem
7	Difficulty trusting others and forming healthy relationships
8	Experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harming

As a university student this may also present as a decline in academic performance, difficulty focusing on studies, missing deadlines or not attending university.

CONTINUE - How Can I Seek Help if I'm in an Abusive Relationship?

# How Can I Seek Help if I'm in an Abusive Relationship?



If you are a victim of domestic abuse and you do not feel safe and in immediate danger, please contact the police on 999, and dial 55 if you are unable to speak. For non-urgent concerns you can report the abuse to 101.

You can also contact domestic abuse services including hotlines of which you will find numerous at the end of this tutorial. You could confide in someone you trust like a friend of family member when seeking support.

As a student you could talk to your personal tutor who with your consent would initially refer you to you academic school's Safeguarding Champion. They may contact you to discuss what support is available and how you can access it. If they felt they needed further advice and guidance they would contact the University's duty Senior Designated Safeguarding Champion to make sure you are given the right support. This will always be treated with the utmost sensitivity.

If there is evidence of an immediate risk to yourself or someone else, they will speak to you and explain what steps may need to be taken to keep you and/or others safe.

Alternatively, you could self-refer to the University's <u>Life Lounge</u> service, as most of the Life Lounge staff are Senior Designated Safeguarding Champions and will be able to provide further support and guidance, including considering options of mental health and wellbeing support should you wish to access this. You can also access the <u>Life Lounge referral form</u>.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the protection of people from the risk of harm. It includes the protection of children and adults at risk of harm (previously vulnerable adults) from acts of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and more, as well as the prevention of those who are deemed unsuitable to work with persons at risk from being able to do so. Safeguarding is also classed as acting upon situations where children and adults at risk may be caused harm.

You can read the University's safeguarding policies and procedures by visiting the Student Policy Zone for the current academic year.

You can also complete the <u>Safeguarding</u> Leap Online section for further understanding on safeguarding.

#### CONTINUE

## **Asking for help**

It can be overwhelming reaching out for help and speaking to someone about what is happening, causing feelings of anxiety and stress. It's ok to ask questions about what may happen next to help alleviate any uncertainties you may have.

It can also be helpful to start documenting incidents of abuse – this could include records of abusive messages, threats or injuries (IF this is safe to do so – do not keep notes of this on your phone if your phone is being monitored!). The mobile phone app <u>BrightSky</u> is a useful tool to help with this.

#### CONTINUE

## Safety plan

You could also create a safety plan – this is a personalised, practical strategy to help leave an abusive situation safely.

- 1 Identify emergency contacts friends, family, crisis helplines
- J Identify safe places trusted locations to go in an emergency
- Keep a bag in a safe place that will not put you at risk of harm with essential documents inside IDs, passports, bank details, and emergency money
- Create a code word system secret word or phrase to alert your support network you need help

Use technology safely when leaving an abusive relationship – use private browsing/incognito mode if searching help resources, change passwords regularly especially for email, bank and social media, turn off location tracking, check social media privacy settings, block tracking apps

6 Create an exit strategy – plan the safest way to leave when the time is right

**CONTINUE - How Do I Support a Friend Experiencing Domestic Abuse?** 

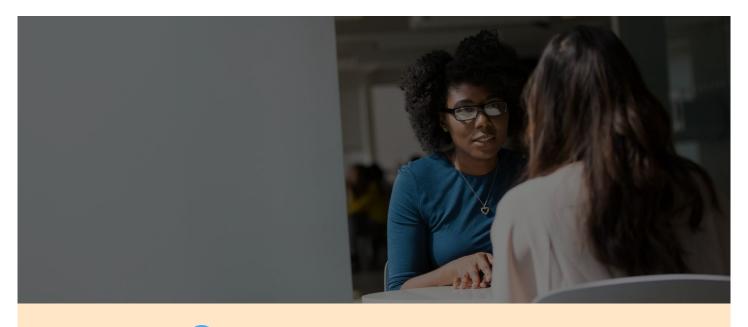
# **How Do I Support a Friend Experiencing Domestic Abuse?**



- Try to listen without judging them, placing blame on them or pressuring them to leave
- Make sure they know that you believe them and are there for them
- 3 Encourage them to seek support by contacting the Life Lounge (if they are a student), domestic abuse services, or legal aid
- Offer practical support help them research local shelters and services and help them make a safety plan
- Respect their decision leaving an abuser can be complex and dangerous; support them at their own pace

CONTINUE - What Do I do if I Want to Share My Concerns

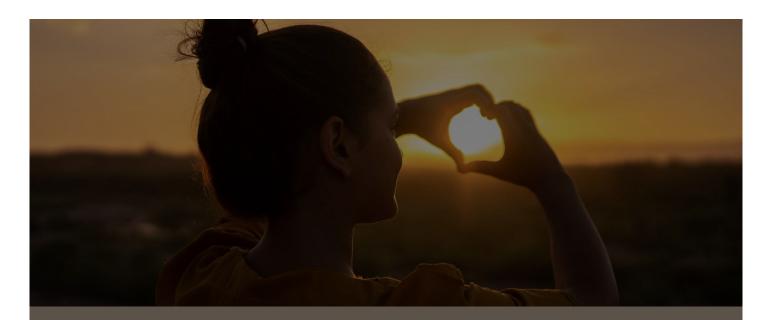
# What Do I Do if I Want to Share My Concerns



- Make sure you are in a private and safe environment. It's important to be honest about your concerns and explain that you want to support them
- Tell them what you have noticed and that you are here to listen to them
- Reassure them that this is a safe place to talk. Understand they may feel shame, and be fearful of the response from their abuser for speaking out
- If they do not want to talk about it, let them know this is fine, and maybe remind them of support services available to them and that they have a right to report the abuse to the police
- If they are a student, explain they have options of speaking to the university safeguarding team or the Life Lounge
- If they are a student, ask if they will let you submit a referral to the Life Lounge with their consent
- If they do not wish to access support, be understanding and make it clear you are here if and when they want to talk

# **CONTINUE - Key Take Aways**

# **Key Take Aways**



No one should feel trapped in an abusive situation. Support is available, and there is always a way out. Whether for yourself or someone else, recognising signs and knowing where you can get support can save your life and create a path towards safety and recovery from abuse.

You may find it helpful to complete the following LEAP Online tutorials, under the 'Student Safety' section which offer additional information and guidance on topics related to those discussed in this tutorial.

- Healthy Relationships
- Safeguarding
- Sexual Consent

## **CONTINUE - References**

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