

Myths and Realities

Time: approximately 60 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson:

All young people will be able to differentiate facts from some of the common myths surrounding domestic abuse;

Most young people will be able to explain that domestic abuse takes many forms and be able to identify some of the different forms of abuse that can take place within relationships; understand how to help and support someone who may be experiencing domestic abuse, including themselves;

Some young people will be able to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse in a young person's relationship.

Resources

- ✓ Suggested Ground Rules (provided in section 4);
- ✓ Information on Sources of Help (provided in section 4);
- ✓ Copies of 'Myths' and 'Facts' worksheets – Appendix 1;
- ✓ 'Types of abuse' worksheet – Appendix 2;
- ✓ Copies of 'Stories' – Appendix 3;
- ✓ Copies of 'Solutions' – appendix 4;

A Introductory Activity

Time: about 15 minutes

1. Set ground rules or use prepared ground rules provided in section 4. (Please note that these activities may lead to disclosure so it is advisable to read the guidance on dealing with disclosure in section 1 prior to the lesson).

2. Explain that, in today's lesson, we are going to explore some of the myths and facts about domestic violence and abuse. We are also going to look at some different types of abuse.

3. Read out the following statements about domestic abuse:

- Domestic abuse (also called domestic violence) happens when one person hurts or bullies another person who is or was their partner or who is in the same family.
- It can happen between people who are going out together, living together, have children together or are married to each other. It can happen either when people live together or separately.
- Domestic abuse can also happen after a relationship has finished.
- Usually (but not always) it is the man who is the abuser and the woman who gets hurt.
- Although domestic abuse happens mostly between adults, young people can be affected by the abuse that they see and hear, and they can be hurt or bullied as part of domestic abuse between adults.
- Young people may also experience abuse from their own boy/girlfriend.
- Domestic abuse is a repeated pattern of behaviour.

- It often includes several different types of abusive behaviour, including physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse.
 - People use domestic abuse to control other people they have a relationship with.
- 4.** Head up four pieces of flip chart as follows:
 - a. Why does domestic abuse occur?
 - b. What type of person commits domestic abuse?
 - c. What type of person is a victim of domestic abuse?
 - d. Why might people stay in abusive relationships?
 - 5.** Divide the class into 4 groups and hand each group one piece of flip chart and a marker pen at random.
 - 6.** Ask them to consider the question at the top of the sheet and give them about a minute to write down their ideas on the flip chart.
 - 7.** After a minute or so, ask groups to swap sheets and add any responses that have been missed by the previous group. Repeat until each group has had the opportunity to write on all 4 sheets.
 - 8.** Take feedback. Allow the children to put forward their views, but challenge where necessary. There are some things which are not just a matter of opinion but are totally unacceptable or, in some cases, against the law. DO NOT allow opinions to stand which need to be challenged.
 - 9.** Use the 'Common Myths' response sheet (Appendix 1) to clarify the facts and allow time for discussion.

B Main Activity

Time: about 30 minutes

- 1.** Split the class into six groups and hand out the 'Types of Abuse' sheet (Appendix 2) and the three stories (Appendix 3) so that there are two groups looking at each story.
- 2.** Spend a few minutes looking at the 'Types of Abuse' sheet together, explaining the different types of power and control and answering any questions.
- 3.** Ask the groups to read the story they have been given and try to decide which different kinds of abuse are happening in the story.
- 4.** Take feedback and compare with the other group that had the same story – do they agree?
- 5.** Ask groups to develop a role play based on their scenario, focussing on how the person involved could get out of the situation.
- 6.** Groups perform the role plays if time allows. Otherwise, ask for a summary response about how the person could get out of the situation from each group. Invite comments from other groups.
- 7.** Share the solutions sheet (Appendix 4).
- 8.** Stress the importance of support for people who are in an abusive relationship.

Plenary

Time: about 10 minutes

1. Ask the group for some ideas about where people can go for help, support and advice if they or someone they know are affected by domestic violence and abuse?
2. Stress that nobody ever deserves to be abused and anyone who is affected by the issues should talk to an appropriate adult about making themselves safer.
3. Remind young people about sources of help that are available and talk about specialist domestic abuse support services – information is available in section 4.
4. Tell young people about ‘**The Hideout**’ section of the Women’s Aid website, which is designed specifically for young people who may be affected by domestic violence. www.thehideout.org.uk/refuge/

Suggested Extension Activities

- ➔ Do a Google search on ‘Survivors stories – domestic abuse’ and discuss the findings, focussing particularly on strategies used to escape the violence and abuse;
- ➔ Research ‘forced marriage’ and discuss the findings;
- ➔ Use the internet to research the websites for **Women’s Aid**, www.womensaid.org.uk
NSPCC, www.nspcc.org.uk
ChildLine, www.childline.com
Barnardo’s, www.barnardos.org.uk
- ➔ Find out about the different sources of support available to victims of domestic abuse and make a presentation to other members of the class;
- ➔ Produce a poster about one of the different types of abuse and what people could do to get help. Display in school.

Learning outcomes	National Curriculum – PSHE and Citizenship	Links to SEAL	Every Child Matters
<p>All young people will be able to differentiate facts from some of the common myths surrounding domestic abuse</p> <p>Most young people will be able to explain that domestic abuse takes many forms and be able to identify some of the different forms of abuse taking place in relationships</p> <p>Understand how to help and support someone who may be experiencing domestic abuse</p> <p>Understand how they can help themselves in any relationship</p> <p>Some young people will be able to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse in a young person's relationship</p>	<p>Key Stage Three Young people should be taught/given opportunities:</p> <p>PSHE 3c) about the nature of friendship and how to make and keep friends e) the changing nature of, and pressure on, relationships with friends and family, and when and how to seek help i) to negotiate within relationships, recognising that actions have consequences, and when and how to make compromises j) to resist pressure to do wrong, to recognise when others need help and how to support them k) to communicate confidently with their peers and adults 4h) find information and advice</p> <p>Citizenship 1g) the importance of resolving conflict fairly 2c) contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates 3a) use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own</p>	<p>Empathy 36) I understand the impact of bullying, on all those involved</p> <p>37) I can support others who are experiencing personal problems</p> <p>38) I recognise and take account of my feelings of empathy and act on them by considering the needs and feelings of others</p> <p>Social skills 39) I can communicate effectively with others, listening to what others say as well as expressing my own thoughts and feelings</p> <p>43) I can work and learn well in groups, co-operating with others to achieve a joint outcome</p> <p>50) I can be assertive when appropriate</p>	<p>Be healthy (physical, mental, emotional health)</p> <p>Stay safe (from neglect, violence, abuse)</p> <p>Enjoy and Achieve (personal and social development)</p> <p>Make a positive contribution (develop positive relationships)</p>

Year 9 – Appendix 1

Common Myths – Domestic Abuse

“Domestic abuse only happens in certain types of problem families.”

Domestic abuse occurs in families of every class, race and culture. It occurs in families with children and without, in first marriages, second marriages, arranged marriages and between unmarried partners. It happens in both heterosexual and same sex relationships. It happens to council tenants, people who own their own homes, professional, working class and unemployed people. It is no higher in one particular type of relationship or family than another.

“Domestic abuse happens equally to men and women.”

While both men and women may experience incidents of inter-personal violence, the vast majority of the victims of domestic violence are women and children; women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of violence, including sexual violence. They are also more likely to have experienced sustained physical, psychological or emotional abuse, or violence which results in injury or death. However, controlling and abusive behavior can also occur in lesbian and gay relationships and by women against men. Domestic abuse is not acceptable and should not be tolerated whether the victim is male or female. Every person has the right to live a life free from violence. Support services for victims, by necessity and for safety reasons, are best provided separately for women and for men. There are separate men’s advice lines for these reasons.

“A woman would never stay with a man who was abusing her.”

Women stay in abusive relationships for lots of reasons ranging from love to terror. They may be afraid of further abuse if they try to leave or get help. They may be worried about money to support themselves and their children. They may be worried about losing their home or possessions and worry that their children may be taken away from them. They may be afraid of being alone, especially if they have to move away from friends and family. There may be feelings of guilt or shame which prevent her from leaving. They may have few friends or family and feel they have nowhere to go. They don’t want to move the children away from their school.

“It’s only drunks who are violent to their partners.”

Domestic abuse cannot be blamed on alcohol. Some men may have been drinking when they are abusive, but drink cannot provide them with an excuse. Some men who are abusive do not drink. There is no one particular type of man who abuses women.

“Domestic abuse between adults does not affect the children”

The majority of children witness the violence that is occurring, and in 90% of cases they are in the same or next room.¹ Children can ‘witness’ domestic violence in a many different ways. For example, they may get caught in the middle of an incident in an effort to make the violence stop. They may be in the room next door and hear the abuse or see their mother’s physical injuries following an incident of violence. In 40 – 70% of cases where women are being abused, the children are also being directly abused themselves.² All children witnessing domestic violence are being emotionally abused.³

¹ Hughes, 1992.

² Stark and Flitcraft, 1996; Bowker et al., 1998.

³ From 31 January 2005, Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 came into force, which extends the legal definition of harming children to include harm suffered by seeing or hearing ill treatment of others, especially in the home.

Year 9 – Appendix 2

Types of Domestic abuse

Type of abuse	Examples of behaviour
PHYSICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, pushing, punching, kicking; • biting, slapping, hair pulling; • throwing or smashing things; • punching the wall, smashing the windows; • burning, strangling, stabbing, murder.
SEXUAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making someone do sexual things that they don't want to do, rape; • calling the person a slag, slut; • not allowing the person to dress in the way they want to or only in the way the abuser wants them to.
EMOTIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly putting a person down, making the person feel bad about themselves – insulting them by calling them fat, ugly, stupid, a bad parent, undermining them; • checking up on where they are and what they are doing, timing a person when they go out, making them explain every movement; • lying to them, ignoring them, withholding affection; • threatening to leave, threatening to throw partner out, threatening to commit suicide if they leave.
ISOLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopping someone from seeing friends and family, not allowing the person to have visitors; • stopping them from having a job, not allowing the person to learn to drive; • going everywhere with them; • locking them in the house, not allowing phone calls; • not allowing the person to learn the native language and always speaking for them.
FINANCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a person's money, making a person ask for money; • making a person say how they spend every single penny; • not allowing them to work and earn money; • having all the bills (debts) in the person's name, having all bank accounts/benefits in the abusers name; • making all the decisions when deciding what to buy and when to buy; • giving the person a small amount of money to manage and then criticising them for not managing to buy essentials with it.
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the person afraid by using looks and gestures; • saying they will hurt or kill them or someone precious to them or the family pet; • threatening to smash things; • threatening to tell other people how bad/stupid they are.

Year 9 – Appendix 3

Stories

Ayisha's story

I am quite a scatterbrained person and my boyfriend always told me that he was the only one who would put up with it. He told me he loved me and that he was the only person I needed in my life.

He was really possessive and jealous. I couldn't go anywhere without him. He would kick up a fuss even when I was meeting up with my friends from school. I lost all my confidence and I lost most of my friends as well – they couldn't put up with his temper and they couldn't understand why I put up with him. I wanted to finish with him, but he said he would hurt me or kill himself if I ever left him.

He would get really angry and sometimes hit me if I got dressed up to go anywhere, saying I had too much make-up on or my skirt was too short. One day he snatched my phone off me and threw it at me because he overheard me telling a friend that I had walked home from school with a couple of lads from year 10. Just little things would set him off. I learnt to see the warning signs and how to say the right things to get around him and his temper. I never tried to wind him up or fight back. I shut myself off from everybody and tried to pretend that everything was OK.

Naomi's story

My boyfriend wanted to spend all of his free time with me. He said he loved me. I thought I loved him too and so I did spend most of my time with him.

All he wanted to do was stay at home and watch movies so we never went out. I hadn't seen my friends for weeks and they asked me to go out with them for a pizza and to the pictures one night. I told him he could come too. He didn't want to go and he didn't want me to go either, but I did. He followed me to the pizza place and he saw a couple of lads come over and start chatting up a couple of my mates. He went absolutely mad; he came storming over saying I was trying to pick this lad up and he called me a slag. He yelled at me to leave and began swearing at me. I was really embarrassed and, when I asked him not to swear at me, he stormed off outside saying I would be sorry later.

I followed him outside and saw him punching the wall and I just knew that if I went off with him I would get hit next. I was really shocked and frightened but I told him that I was staying with my friends. He began swearing at me again calling me "a lying bitch" and lots of other horrible names. That's when I knew that he never really loved me, so I finished with him right then and there and went back to my friends. I was scared and crying but I knew that he would have hurt me either that night or some other time in the future if I stayed with him.

Poonam's story

My parents have always been quite strict, but I always felt that they just wanted what was best for me. I've been going to an art group after school, which I really enjoy, and I recently met a boy there who I like. We've been spending quite a lot of time together. My parents found out about this and got quite angry at me, telling me that I could not see him anymore because his family are different to ours. I tried to argue with them and tell them how nice he is, but they threatened to stop me from going to my art group if I continued to see him, so I had to stop.

I was upset, but I thought that was the end of it. However, now my parents are telling me that they have chosen a man for me to marry. I told them that I think I am too young to get married yet and, anyway, I might not like him. My parents got very angry with me and said I didn't have any choice and that if I brought shame on the family there would be serious consequences. I tried to speak to my mum about it but she just told me I had to obey my father. Now I feel like they are watching every move I make. The other night, my dad slapped me hard across the face, just because I was late home from school. I locked myself in my room and cried all night.

The next day at school, my tutor noticed that my eyes were red and swollen from crying and asked if everything was ok. I broke down and told her what had been going on at home. She was very sympathetic and just let me ramble on for ages. Later that day, she gave me a telephone number of a support service that helps girls in my situation. I thanked her, but I was too scared to contact them for a long time.

Year 9 – Appendix 4

Solutions

Ayisha's story continued..

I told him that I was finishing it because I could not put up with his anger and jealousy any longer. He was really angry and said I must be seeing somebody else. I kept repeating that there was nobody else and it was his behaviour that had ruined our relationship. He said all sorts of things and tried to make me believe it was my fault that he got angry. But I still finished it. At first he would ring and text me at all times of the day and night but after a couple of months that stopped and I haven't heard from him since.

What helped me

My friends (that I thought I had lost because of him) were all really great. They were really supportive and helped me to see that it was not my fault, I wasn't the bad person. Eventually I told my mum. She helped me to see that I had been both physically and emotionally abused and that it was wrong.

What I would say to someone who is being abused

Tell someone in your family, a friend or a teacher/support worker who you trust. If you don't feel that you can, call the domestic violence national helpline on 0808 2000 247 (run in partnership by Womens' Aid and Refuge) and you will be able to speak to someone in confidence who will give you advice. You can also email them if you don't want to talk (helpline@womensaid.org.uk). Remember – it's not your fault – you haven't done anything to cause this. It's the person that is abusing you that is in the wrong.

Naomi's story continued..

We have been split up for about a year now. I am much happier and I am much more sure of what I want in a relationship. He still sends me texts saying he loves me and he has changed and that he wants me back. I just tell him that we are never getting back together again.

What helped me

My friends and my mum were great. They helped me through the rough times and now I know that I am strong and powerful.

What I would say to someone that is being abused

I know that I could have got hurt that night. I knew in my heart of hearts that things were not right long before that awful night. I have learned to listen to and trust my instincts. The most important thing that I would say to someone being abused is to trust yourself; if something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

Poonam's story continued..

One night I overheard my dad and my uncle discussing a trip abroad. I don't know why, but I instinctively knew that it would involve me and that if I went with them, that would be the end of me having any control over my own life. The next day I rang the support service and told them what was happening. They arranged for me to go and stay somewhere safe while we worked out what to do next.

What helped me

The support service helped me to see that what was happening to me was wrong and helped me to explore how I could get safe. Speaking to other girls who had been through similar experiences to me showed me that I was not alone.

What I would say to others

Arranged marriage is not the same as a forced marriage and no one should be forced to do something they don't want to. Trust your instincts and ask for help if you think something is wrong.