



Recognising and responding to domestic abuse

camden.gov.uk/domestic-violence

One in three women and one in six men experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. We all have a role to play in preventing domestic abuse and to help provide residents and staff the support they need, to be safe and to build an independent life for themselves and their families.

Whilst this may not be your area of expertise we all can play a part. This quick guide aims to help you recognise the signs of domestic abuse and where to seek further help.

Do I need to be more vigilant about domestic abuse during COVID-19?

- Nationally there has been a rise in domestic abuse since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A number of domestic abuse organisations have reported a 25 per cent increase in calls and online requests since the first lockdown began on 23 March 2020.
- Due to the social distancing and self-isolation measures in place, domestic abuse victims may be trapped at home with the perpetrator for a long period of time.

- They will have less opportunity to meet with friends and family and they may feel it is unsafe to reach out for help, traditional routes to support such as schools, health services and workplaces may be less accessible.

It is therefore essential that we are all extra vigilant during this crisis in order to help those that might be most at risk.

How do I recognise domestic abuse?

There are a number of key signs of domestic abuse or unhealthy relationships but it's important to remember that these behaviours can vary.

Controlling behaviour



Being told what you are allowed to do, what to wear and who you can see. It could also include someone threatening to reveal information about the survivor without their permission, for example their sexuality or gender. It can often include a partner or family member withholding medication or deciding if they do or don't see a healthcare professional.

Emotional and psychological abuse



This can include being insulted by a partner or family member, put down, or embarrassed in front of people or made to feel scared or worthless. This could leave them questioning their own judgement or blaming themselves for the treatment.

Other abuse includes **Forced Marriage, Honour-Based Violence** and **Domestic Servitude**.

How do I ask questions around abuse when concerned?

Ensure it is a safe time to speak, and that there isn't anybody else present. Focus on the client's feelings.

Social abuse and isolation



This could involve being kept away from family or friends, or being told who they can speak to and when.

Financial abuse



A partner or family member stops them having access to their money, or they take their money and control what they spend it on. They may also prevent them from working or make them miss work regularly.

Physical violence



Physical violence is where someone is harmed or endangered by a partner or family member when they use physical force, violence or aggression.

Sexual abuse

This is a form of physical abuse, and is any situation where they might be forced or coerced to participate in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity.

- Do you ever feel frightened of your partner or other people at home?
- Does anyone make you feel scared or worthless, or leaves you questioning your own judgement?
- Is anyone physically hurting you or making you do something you don't want to do?
- Have you been in contact with friends or family? If not, is someone stopping you from accessing support?
- Does anyone monitor who you speak to and where you go?
- Are you able to attend appointments on your own?
- Is anyone preventing you from having access to any money, taking money from you or controlling what you spend money on?

Are there factors that put individuals at particular high risk from domestic abuse?

All forms of domestic abuse need to be taken seriously and responded to. There are factors which we know that put survivors at high risk.

- Separation or child contact dispute
- Pregnancy or recent birth
- Escalation and severity of violence
- Cultural issues, isolation
- Stalking, jealousy, harassment or controlling behaviour
- Sexual assault
- Suicide

Don't assume that someone else will ask about these. You may be the only service in contact with the client so use the opportunity. Showing concern and asking about abuse will encourage the client that it is safe to reach out to you when they are ready. If you are unsure and or need further advice always contact Camden Safety Net on 0207 974 2526.

What immediate steps can I take:

- Encourage them to call the police on 999 if they feel at risk.

- If it is safe to talk, encourage them to call the local domestic abuse service; Camden Safety Net on 0207 974 2526 or email camdensafetynet@camden.gov.uk
- Do they have a phone? Encourage them to keep it accessible, with credit and charged at all times. If it is not safe to speak on the phone, is it safe to email or text them to an account which only they access. If they are going shopping for food or exercising ask them to utilise this time to call services for help.
- In the property avoid the kitchen and bathroom when they feel unsafe or a situation is escalating.
- Would they consider leaving the property? Talk through how they would leave the property if they felt in danger. Would they consider a refuge or is there anyone they could stay with temporarily?
- Encourage clients to prepare an emergency bag with essential items such as ID, some cash, bank card, clothes and hide this somewhere safe in the property or with a friend should they need to leave in a hurry.

- Also encourage them to set up a code word with a trusted family member, friend or professional who they can text in an emergency to summon help. This could be an indicator to call the police. Encourage the client to talk to children in the property about how to call for help? Is there a room in the property they can go to that is safe. Please encourage them to let the school and social services know they may need help about the situation at home.
- Obtain consent to refer to a domestic abuse service (if consent is not obtained, but you have high concerns consider a referral to the local MARAC). Please email MARAC@camden.gov.uk
- Encourage them to contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline (08082000247) if it is safer to call later in the evening.
- If they are in immediate danger, ask if they would like you to ring 999 or if they are able for them to do themselves.

If in immediate danger and they are able to ring themselves, silent calls can be made to the police by calling 999, then 55 if they can't talk.

How do I acknowledge a disclosure

- If a disclosure of domestic abuse is made, these key messages that were created by Refuge are a great way to acknowledge it:
- You are not to blame for your partner's violence. He/she alone is responsible, violence is a choice he/she makes.
- There are solutions to the problem. Getting help is a brave and positive step.
- Take your time to consider your options. Take one day at a time, don't feel pressured into making any decisions.
- Everyone has a right to live free from violence.
- Reaching out for help (talking about it) is a massive step and you should be proud of yourself for doing this!

If it is not safe to talk

- Offer to text the local and/or national domestic abuse number to them and agree a safe way to do this (i.e. text the number backwards).
- If they have access to the internet, encourage them to Google the Women's Aid Live Chat and speak to someone online, (chat.womensaid.org.uk).

Key contact numbers:

Police

T: Emergency 999 (if it is not safe to talk, dial 999 and then 55 for silent calls), Non-emergency 101

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

T: 0808 200 0247, Freephone 24-Hour

Camden Safety Net

Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advisory Service
T: 0207 974 2526

Safeguarding adults in Camden

If you are worried about an adult in Camden
T: 020 7974 4000 and select option 1, Out of Hours, 0207 974 4444

Safeguarding children in Camden

If you are worried about a child in Camden
T: 020 7974 3317, Out of Hours, 0207 974 4444

National Centre of Domestic Violence

Civil Injunction support
T: 0800 970 2070
W: ncdv.org.uk

North London Rape Crisis (Solace)

Counselling, Groups, Helpline, Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service
T: 0808 801 0305
W: solacewomensaid.org

Respect Helpline

For those that are worried about their own behaviour
T: 0808 802 4040
W: respectphoneline.org.uk

Men's Advice Line

Helpline for male victims of abuse
T: 0808 801 0327
W: mensadvice.org.uk

LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Advice and support
T: 0800 999 5428
W: galop.org.uk

Camden Mental Health, Crisis Team

Urgent mental health support
T: 020 3317 6333
W: mentalhealthcamden.co.uk

Other useful contact numbers:

Camden Housing Options

Help with housing
T: 0207 974 4444

Camden Housing Repairs Repairs

T: 020 7974 4444 (option 3 followed by option 1 and select your local repairs district), Out of Hours: 0207 974 4444

Hourglass Helpline

Support around elder abuse
T: 0808 808 8141
W: wearehourglass.org

Suzu Lamplugh Trust

National Stalking Helpline and Stalking Advocacy services
T: 0808 802 0300
W: www.suzylamplugh.org

Signhealth

Support for deaf victims survivors of abuse
T: 020 3947 2601, Text 88802 with the message 121SIGN, Text or WhatsApp/Facetime 07970 350366
W: signhealth.org.uk

Karma Nirvana

UK Helpline for 'honour' based abuse and forced marriage
T: 0800 5999 247
W: karmanirvana.org.uk

Women @ the well

Supporting women whose lives are affected by prostitution
T: 020 7520 1710
W: watw.org.uk

Hopscotch

Specialist support for BAME women and children on a range of services, including domestic abuse
T: 020 7388 8198
W: hopscotchawc.org.uk

The Sharan Project

Support for South Asian Women
T: 0844 504 3231
W: sharan.org.uk

Victim Support

Victim & Witness Service
Online resource where victims can access a range of tools to help them cope and move forward after crime
T: 0808 168 9291
W: londonvws.org.uk/mysupportspace