

# Abuse in relationships

Would you see abuse?

Would you stop yourself?



**If you are worried that you or your friends may be in an abusive relationship, this leaflet can help you.**

**Relationship abuse can  
happen to anyone.**

**Remember – it is never your fault  
and you never have to deal with it  
on your own**



## **What is abuse and why is it important to me?**

**Every minute in the UK, the Police receive a call for help with relationship abuse.**

Relationship abuse is when someone hurts or upsets someone else that they are in a relationship with. Some people think it only happens in adult relationships, but it can happen at any age. Usually, women and girls are the victims and men and boys are the abusers but it can happen to boys as well. It can also happen in same sex relationships.

One study found that 25% of girls and 18% of boys had been physically abused and 75% of girls and 50% of boys had suffered emotional abuse. The study also found that sexual violence happened to one in three girls and one in six of boys.



## **Relationship abuse can include:**

### **Emotional abuse**

- Constant insults and name calling
- Isolation from your friends and family
- Controlling what you wear/where you go
- Checking up on you all the time (checking emails, texts, social networking sites etc)
- Making you feel responsible for the abuse

### **Physical abuse**

- Hitting, punching, pushing, biting, kicking, using weapons etc

### **Sexual abuse**

- Forcing you to have sex
- Unwanted kissing or touching
- Being made to watch pornography against your will
- Pressure not to use contraception

### **Financial abuse**

- Taking/controlling your money
- Forcing you to buy them things
- Forcing you to work or not to work

## Warning signs

You may feel or experience some of the things in the list below, or you might notice them in your friends:

- Depression and anxiety
- Isolation from family and friends
- Not doing so well at school or college
- Argumentative
- Fearful
- Concerns about making your/their boyfriend or girlfriend angry
- Physical signs such as bruises
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Frequent cancelling of plans
- Changes in appearance
- Sexual risk taking





## What should i do?

If you are worried about your relationship:

- Remember it is not your fault and there is support to help you.
- Talk to friends, family and trusted adults about what is happening to you.
- Think about safe places you know that you can go to.
- Keep your mobile charged at all times so you can ring the police or emergency services if you need to.
- Have a code word that will let your friends and family know if you need help.
- Make sure you don't go anywhere on your own.
- If you are being harassed by calls on your mobile, try to change your phone number.
- If you are getting emails or instant messages that are abusive, you should save them or print them for evidence to give to the police if you choose to report it. You can also change your email address.

## If someone tells you they are in an abusive relationship:

It can be very hard to talk about abuse and it can also be hard to support someone. Make sure you look after yourself as well as them.

### Here are some tips for ways to talk about this:

- If you want to approach them, do it in a sensitive way, such as 'I am worried about you because...'
- Don't judge them, believe them.
- Let them know they are not alone, that it is not their fault and that you know how hard it can be to speak about.
- Help them to recognise that what is happening is unacceptable and that they don't have to put up with it.
- Decide together what to do – this can involve making a safety plan.
- Think up a code word that your friend can use on the phone to let you know they need help and agree what you will do if you get a call.
- Make a list of all the great things about your friend to help improve their confidence.
- Be patient. Ending a relationship can be hard for anyone, but particularly for someone who is being abused.





## **Good relationships include:**

- feeling safe
- being good friends
- listening to each other
- having fun together
- trusting each other
- freedom to do your own thing
- time and space to see your own friends
- having your own interests
- knowing your opinions are respected
- making decisions together
- being able to disagree with each other
- being able to go at your own pace – including sexually
- being able to talk about it when you have an argument
- respecting the decision if either of you want to end the relationship



## Who can I talk to?

Find an adult you trust, it can be anyone; for example a teacher, a parent, a relative, a youth worker or a doctor.

See the next page for some telephone numbers and websites. Professionals know that violence and abuse in relationships is wrong and will know how to help and access support safely. If you are worried about a friend, even if they ask you not to tell anyone, it is ok to tell an adult if you are worried about their safety.



# Where can I get help?

**In an emergency, call police on 999 for immediate help**

**[www.speakoutwiltshire.com](http://www.speakoutwiltshire.com)**

provides information for adults and young people about abuse in relationships and details for both national and local services.

**Splitz Support Service – [www.splitz.org/wiltshire/young-peoples-services](http://www.splitz.org/wiltshire/young-peoples-services) – 01225 775276**

provide services for adults and young people living in Wiltshire.

**Relate Mid Wiltshire – [www.relatemidwiltshire.co.uk](http://www.relatemidwiltshire.co.uk) – 01225 350010**

Relate Mid Wiltshire offers a counselling service for young people aged 7-19 years who are experiencing emotional distress including those who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse. The aim is to improve self-esteem, resilience and their ability to cope.

**Victim support – [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk) – 01380 738888**  
will offer help to those aged 16 and over.

**ChildLine – 0800 1111 – [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

You can speak to a counsellor either on the phone or online. The number is free and will not come up on your phone bill.

The interactive website contains contact details and information if you're concerned about issues that matter to you.

**NSPCC – 0808 800 5000**

A confidential number for children and young people. This is free on land-lines and on most mobile phones.

**National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247**

This is a free 24 hour number. It is usually for over 18s but they may be able to help you if you are over 16.

### **Get Connected – 0808 808 4994**

This is a free number for young people that gives you the support and information you need to decide what you want to do next.

### **The Hideout – [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)**

A website which helps children and young people to understand domestic abuse, and how to take positive action if it is happening to you.

### **Respect Not Fear – [www.respectnotfear.co.uk](http://www.respectnotfear.co.uk)**

This website contains information about respect in relationships. It will help you think about disrespectful or unhealthy behaviour in relationships and gives you information to help you make decisions about this.

### **Respect 4 Us – [www.respect4us.org.uk](http://www.respect4us.org.uk)**

This website will teach you about respect, responsibility, and violence. It also gives you the opportunity to find out some important questions: “Where can young people who experience sexual violence go for advice and support?”

“How long do you think a boy will wait to have sex with a girl?”

“What turns a girl on? What turns a girl off?”

Find the answer to these questions and many more on this site.

### **Rape Crisis – [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)**

This website contains advice about rape and sexual violence and gives the details of the nearest Rape Crisis Centre if you need support.

### **[www.thisisabuse.co.uk](http://www.thisisabuse.co.uk)**

This is a dedicated website designed specifically for teenagers where you can get further information and advice on relationship issues.

The website provides information for teenagers in heterosexual and same sex relationships, as well as male victims.

**Relationship abuse can  
happen to anyone.**

**Remember – it is never your fault  
and you never have to deal with it  
on your own**

Document produced by the Home Office, first published  
25 November 2010. Local information added by Wiltshire  
Council November 2014.