

# Domestic Abuse & the Church

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# House rules & working agreement

- Fire alarm
- Toilets
- Coffee breaks & lunch
- Mobiles off/silent
- Keeping to time
- Supporting each other in the process of learning
- Looking after ourselves and others – survivors in the room
- **Respecting different viewpoints**
- Confidentiality
- Talking one at a time
- Questions are OK





## **Introductions and Expectations**

# Overview Of The Day

- Definition & prevalence of domestic abuse
- **Dynamics of domestic abuse** – (incl. cycle of abuse, abusive strategies, coercive & controlling behaviour, process of entrapment, effects of domestic abuse; barriers to leaving)
- Legal measures for dealing with domestic abuse
- **Understanding of faith concepts in relation to domestic abuse** (e.g. forgiveness, submission, suffering)
- Practical skills in working with survivors of domestic abuse
- **Local & national resources**



# Terminology & Assumptions

- **Domestic Abuse / Violence**
- Victims /**survivors**
- **Gender** & domestic abuse – he & she as victims & abusers

# Definition & prevalence of domestic abuse (DA)

# Definition of Domestic Abuse

Any incident or **pattern** of incidents of controlling, **coercive** or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged **16 or over** who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Harassment and stalking
- Digital and online abuse

# What is Coercive Control?

**Controlling behaviour is:** a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour is:** an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.



# Nature & Prevalence of DA

- DA affects **30% of women worldwide** and in the most prevalent type of violence against women (WHO, 2013)
- According to Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) **28.3% of women** (an estimated 4.6 million women) have experienced domestic abuse since the age of sixteen. (Office for National Statistics, ONS 2015).
- On average the police receive an emergency call relating to domestic abuse every **30 seconds** (HMIC, 2014, p. 5)
- **95 out of 100 domestic abuse survivors** in one study reported experiencing coercive control. (Kelly, L et al, 2014, p. 19)

# Nature & Prevalence cont.

DV is **underreported crime**. Police are thought to be aware of only **23% of the worst cases** of domestic violence, of which only **25% result** in an arrest. (Walby and Allen, 2004)

- In 2013/14 - **46% of female homicide** victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner, compared with **7% of male victims**. (ONS, 2013/14 Chapter 2).
- On average **two women** are killed by their partner or ex-partner every week in England and Wales. (ONS, 2015, Fig. 2.5)
- Victims of DA are most at risk of serious harm or homicide at the **point of separation**. (Richards, L, 2003, p. 17).

# The dynamics of domestic abuse & effects

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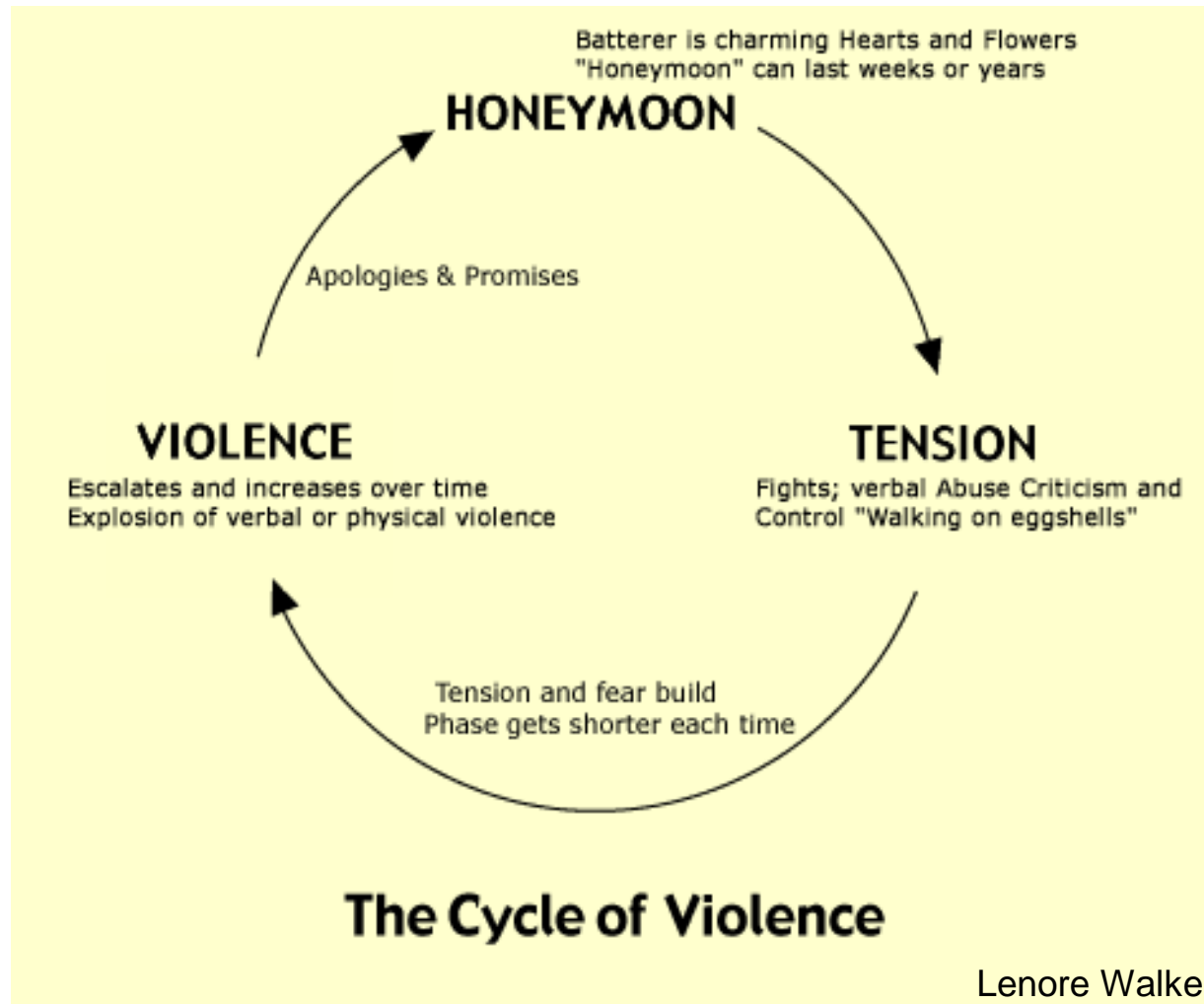
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# Overview of Domestic Abuse

- **Anyone** can be a victim of DA and perpetrators come from all nationalities, social backgrounds, ages and faiths
- DA is **reinforced** by culture & social institutions. (e.g., the family, social, legal, religious, educational, medical institutions, and the media)
- DA is **a learned behavior** – it is **a choice**, (not due to biology, not due to alcohol, mental illness, work stress etc.).
- It involves the **oppression, abuse & enslavement** of one partner by another - it is a violation of human rights

# The cycle of abuse



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# Duluth Power & Control Wheel



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# Spiritual Abuse?

For example: telling someone that God hates them; refusing to let them worship (e.g. not allowing a partner to go to church); using faith as a weapon to control and terrorize them for the abuser's personal pleasure or gain; using religious teaching to justify abuse (e.g. 'submit to your husband'), or to compel forgiveness

*'Responding to domestic abuse Guidelines for those with pastoral responsibilities'*, p. 5, Church of England, 2006

# Impact of domestic abuse on adult survivors

- Living in **fear** (can lead to anxiety & panic disorders, PTSD, generalised fear)
- **Entrapment**; restricted '**space for action**'
- '**Distorted perspective**'
- Difficulty with making decisions; **lack of confidence**
- **Depression & disconnection** (disassociation)
- Lack of **self-care** (food, appearance, health care)
- **Self-medicate**, prescription drugs, alcohol
- **Exhaustion**
- **Displaced anger**, (to others or self – can result in self-harm, eating disorders)
- **Loss of self**; damages to spirituality
- Self-isolation (incl. from faith communities'; being withdrawn)
- **Physical injuries** and health problems
- Living with **guilt & shame**
- **Undermined parental authority** (& other negative effects on parenting)

# DVD - *Leaving*

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# Why don't victims leave

- No financial means
- No alternative accommodation
- Health problems or disability
- Fear for life or safety based on threats & abuser's behaviour
- Wants to keep her family
- Religious beliefs
- Too exhausted by the abuse
- Belief that the abuser will change
- A lack of supportive relationships
- Children's love and attachment to the abuser
- One's own love for the abuser
- Belief in an obligation to the relationship
- Family disapproval or lack of emotional support
- Not wanting to be alone
- Fear of losing custody of the children

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# Group work

1. Identify what types of strategies of Helen experienced from her abuser?

2. Working with individual strategies identify possible ways in which a perpetrator might use factors **to do with the church faith** to further his abuse of the victim.



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Legal measure for supporting victims  
of domestic abuse  
&  
support services

# Protection through legislation

- Housing Act 1996; Homelessness Act 2002- Local Authorities have duties to people who **present themselves as homeless as result of violence or threat of violence**
- Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996 (FLA 1996) – **non-molestation & occupation orders**
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (PHA 1997) – which a **contains civil & criminal sanctions**
- The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 - makes **breach of a non-molestation** order a **criminal offence**; gives cohabiting **same-sex** couples the same access to non-molestation and occupation orders; introduces **domestic violence homicide reviews**

# Protection through legislation

- Serious Crime Act, 2015, sec. 76 – protection from **controlling & coercive behaviour**
- The Crime and Security Act 2010 - Domestic **Violence Protection Notices** (DVPN) and Domestic Violence Protection **Orders** (DVPO)
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (**‘Clare’s Law’**)
- **Forced Marriage Protection Order** - The Forced Marriage Act (Civil Protection) 2007 (breach of the order - can be charged with a criminal offence)
- **Criminalising female genital mutilation** (FGM) in UK - The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

# Main support services & what they can do:

The Police	Social Services	Domestic violence services
Receive emergency 999 calls	Receive referrals regarding concerns for children (incl. due to DV)	Local & national support & advice helplines
Arrest perpetrator  Safety measures in place – alarms; treat as urgent	Have an obligation to assist with emergency accommodation if families are threatened with homelessness due to DV	Provide DV refugees / safe houses
Interview all involved (separately)	Can remove children (e.g. into foster care) if there are serious concerns	Emotional support
Collect evidence (present it to CPS)	Can put children on child protection plans	Practical support (housing, finance, benefits, schools)
Issue DVPN/DVPOs; ‘Claire’ law info	Can put pressure on mothers to leave the family home if they live with a perpetrator of DV	Assist victim with safety planning
Take any children at risk under Police Protection	Have different measure of interventions for families with children at various levels of risk	Allocate DV workers
Remand perpetrator; or release with bail conditions	Can pay for e.g.: travel warrants; for rent; food & clothing (sec 17, CA)	Work with others on risk management (e.g. MARACs; accompany to court etc.)



# Local provision

## Find out your local:

- Women's Aid refuge
- DV outreach services?
- Do you have one-stop DV shop?
- MARAC (Multi-agency risk assessment conference)
- ISVA (independent sexual abuse advisor) & IDVA service independent domestic abuse advisor)
- Rape crisis services
- SARCs (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)
- Local Domestic violence co-ordinator
- Domestic violence programmes – e.g. Freedom programme?
- Other specialist services? (For example for victims of DV from minority communities). Domestic violence forum?

# National services

- 0808 2000 247, the free 24-hour [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) run in partnership between [Women's Aid](#) and [Refuge](#)
- [Men's Advice Line](#) free on 0808 801 0327
- [The Survivor's Handbook](#) from the charity Women's Aid is free and provides information for women on a wide range of issues such as housing, money, helping your children, and your legal rights.
- For forced marriage and "honour" crimes, contact [Karma Nirvana](#) (0800 5999 247) or [The Forced Marriage Unit](#) (020 7008 0151).
- [Broken Rainbow UK](#) provides support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence.
- Anyone who needs confidential help with their own abusive behaviour can contact [Respect](#) on their free helpline on 0808 802 4040.

# Supporting survivors of domestic abuse

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# What things you could have in place to help victims of domestic abuse?

- Training for church staff & members
- Domestic abuse policy

Domestic abuse could also be considered in other policies you have:

- Lone working policy
- Child Protection & Vulnerable adults policies
- Volunteers' policy
- Supervision policy
- Partnership agreements

# Safety Planning

- Safety planning is a **key practice** for helping women & children in reducing their risk from being harmed or even killed by perpetrators of DA
- Safety planning is best done with the **survivor & supportive others**
- The **survivor is at the centre** of this process – (she knows best what she needs; she knows exactly how the perpetrator is likely to act; she has already developed coping strategies; and mechanism for dealing with the situation)
- Safety planning aims address – **immediate & future risks**, dangers
- Safety plans **are individual** and they need to be **reviewed periodically** as the circumstances change



# Safety planning while living with the abuser

- Have a safety **code** (word or phrase) for contact
- Plan **when and where it is safe** to meet up the survivor
- If she can keep a second personal **mobile** at home – where is it safe to keep it?
- Consider putting a **safety app** on existing mobile
- Consider putting a '**red marker**' on the house with the Police (if appropriate)
- **Create a list of important and emergency telephone numbers** (for e.g., the local police station, DA refuge or agency; doctor; emergency hotline; or other trusted professional). Consider **where it is safe** to keep this information
- **Agree with neighbours** on how and when they might help
- Work on **establishing a network** of supporting others – plan who is available when to help with what

# Safety planning while living with the abuser

## If an incident of violence is about to take place:

- Can the survivor move **to a lower risk area** of the home?
- **Avoid** kitchen or garage, where there may be knives or other weapons; and rooms which can trap, such as the bathroom, or where she might be shut into a closet or other small space
- **Practice an escape route** to ensure the woman and her children/ other dependents can safely leave in an emergency

# What sort of things should be considered when safety planning for leaving the abuser

- Decide on a **safe time** - e.g. he is at work; away travelling
- Packing an **emergency bag** and hiding it somewhere safe (for example, at a neighbour's or friend's house), avoiding mutual friends or family where it could be found by the abuser. The emergency bag should include:
  - ✓ **essential documents** such as identification documents (passports, birth certificates, marriage certificate, insurance cards, etc.); housing-related documents (e.g. lease, rental agreement, land title); welfare/ social security cards. Utility bills (proofs)
  - ✓ **keys** for the home, car or office
  - ✓ **addresses/ phone numbers** of important contacts;
  - ✓ bankbooks, and **credit and debit cards**;
  - ✓ **medications** or prescriptions;
  - ✓ **clothing and basic supplies** for herself and her children; and
  - ✓ **photographs, diaries**, favourite toys or small items of sentimental value

# Safety planning with children

- **Teaching children how to call emergency numbers**, and what they would need to say (for example, their full **name, address and telephone number**).
- Identifying **trusted individuals** who can be contacted in an emergency.
- **Keeping a small amount of money** available at all times - including change for the phone and for bus/ transportation fares

Consider – how might you have worked on a safety plan with Helen?

# Good Practice

- Don't blame victims
- Listen to and believe the victim's story
- Make safety issues for survivors a priority - help her safety plans for herself and children
  - Ask direct questions if you suspect abuse
    - Give - 'You are not alone' message
- Help survivors recognise what's happening to them (e.g. discuss the power & control wheel together)
- Make available information & leaflets on DA, (incl. for e.g. information about local & national DA helplines in women's toilets).
  - Keep an updated list such resources

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# Good Practice

- Find a designated staff person or church leader to receive in depth training
  - Provide training to all church leaders on domestic violence
    - Establish links with local DA services
    - Discuss DA in marriage prep. sessions
- Send a clear message to perpetrators that what he is doing is not acceptable
  - Hold perpetrators accountable for their behavior
- Couple counseling is not appropriate, and can endanger the victim's safety

# Break





# Safety Planning questions to consider in relation to church

- Are the victim & the perpetrator church goers?
- Does the church and/or its members exercise (perhaps unwittingly) pressure on the victim to stay with the perpetrator?
- Is there a likelihood of church members are colluding with the perpetrator?
- Are the congregation supportive of the victim?
- Are they aware of safety issues – for e.g. any collective intervention into the family relation dynamics might increase the risk to the victim.
- Are members of the church aware of the importance of confidentiality?
- Any other issues?

# Domestic abuse & the church context: examining some central concepts in relation to DA

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# In your group:

Discuss one of the following concept in the context of your church & in relation to your ability to support a survivor of DA:

- Submission
- Forgiving
- Divorce

# Divorce and DA

- Perpetrators and pastors & other people from the church might **convince victims that leaving the relationship is a sin** because they are operating against God's will. Pastors, church leaders and members must emphasise that **the abuse is the problem**, the sin.
- Domestic abuse is a **violation** of the **marital covenant**.
- Fixing the marriage should **not** be the objective; **victim safety is the objective**.
- Encourage victims **to seek help** from a domestic abuse advocate and seek legal & other options for protection.

(adapted from: Attorney Robin Kimbrough, Esquire. October 13, 2009 Kingsport, Tennessee)

# Submission

- Submission is a mutual response – a response to love. **It is not about power and control.** It is an unconditional response to the other person.
- Submission is **not forced or coerced with threats or violence.** God does not beat anyone into submission.
- Submission does **not allow either partner to treat the other as a slave**—to have total control over the person’s finances, friends, mind, body, or soul.
- Submission works when both partners have submitted, in a Christian context, to Jesus Christ.

(adapted from: Attorney Robin Kimbrough, Esquire. October 13, 2009 Kingsport, Tennessee)

# Forgiveness and the Abuser

- Abusers often **seek forgiveness from a pastor and/or elder.**
- While the abuser may be or appear to be genuinely contrite, he is seldom able to end the abuse without **a long-term commitment to work on himself.**
- The abuser must be held accountable, not excused for his abusive behavior. (Excuses such as, ‘the devil made him do it’ are not acceptable)
- Pastors need to assure the abuser of God's forgiveness and **confront the person with his need for additional specialist help to stop the abuse.**

(adapted from: Attorney Robin Kimbrough, Esquire. October 13, 2009 Kingsport, Tennessee)

# Forgiveness and the Victim

- A pastor's 'need' for the victim to quickly resolve the abusive experience may lead him or her to push a victim to forgive the abuser.
- Forgiveness in this case is seen as a means to hurry the victim's healing process.
- Victims need to move to forgive **at their own pace**. Respect the victim's time. It may take years.
- Then the forgiveness becomes the final stage of letting go.

(adapted from: Attorney Robin Kimbrough, Esquire. October 13, 2009 Kingsport, Tennessee)

# Good practice, cont.

- Use scriptures which encourage victims' understanding of equal & abusive relationships
- Preach biblical texts that promote mutual relationships. DV relationships are about power and control
- Convey that God does not want anyone in an abusive relationship
- **Remember:** validation, focus on safety, confidentiality, respect for her autonomy, patience & compassion & accountability for the abuser

(adapted from: Attorney Robin Kimbrough, Esquire. October 13, 2009 Kingsport, Tennessee)



# Further information

BROKEN VOWS - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bR45maMwabQ>; includes loss of faith / spiritual crisis as an effect

Domestic Violence and the Church - YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbTdUcFgp7g>

Murdered by my boyfriend BBC 3 ~ YouTube or College MLE  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b047zl98/murdered-by-my-boyfriend>

end of session

thank you

feedback



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