



Arguments within families are normal.

Family members sometimes disagree and it is OK to be angry but this anger needs to be expressed in a way in which no-one is hurt or feels afraid or intimidated.

But when arguments involve violence or threats, intimidation or always putting people down then there may be an abusive situation in your home.

Abuse can happen to anyone, of any age. It happens to clever, strong and vulnerable people. It is very difficult to cope with for everyone.

There is no one reason why abusive situations happen, and they can be very difficult to deal with.

When someone is hurt by a person they are living with, have children with or going out with, we call it Domestic Abuse.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their gender or sexuality.

Domestic Abuse may be happening within your family or it may be happening to you. Relationship abuse is not something that happens once, it's a cycle and usually gets worse if nothing is done to stop it.

Though to some people it may seem obvious that if someone hurts you the thing to do is to leave them, this is not an easy decision to make.

Just as you still love the person being violent so might the person being abused and want to stay with them but just want the abuse to stop. Other reasons for staying can include being financially dependant or perhaps just feeling too ill, tired, or depressed to face the stress of ending a relationship.

In homes where there is abuse going on, 90% of children and young people are aware that it's happening.

This may make you may feel sad, confused, angry, lonely, frightened and worried about members of your family. You may not be able to concentrate at school and have to spend time looking after younger brothers and sisters.

Home is where you should feel supported and protected. No one should be hurting another and no one should be hurting you. If this is the case and you no longer feel safe at home, if you're afraid of one parent getting hurt or you're even scared of getting hurt yourself then things are probably not quite right and perhaps it's time to talk to someone you trust.

Just remember

IT's not your fault



The important thing is that you're not alone - it happens to a lot of other young people as well. You're not to blame for what's going on. You're an important person, you have the right to be safe and if things are not okay then there's help and support available for you .

Domestic abuse doesn't always have to be physical; it can also include emotional abuse, sexual abuse and financial abuse.

Physical abuse includes hurting someone by hitting, kicking, punching, burning, stabbing and so on. In the worse cases It can end up with someone being killed.

Emotional abuse includes making someone feel worthless, such as humiliation, constant criticism, withholding love and affection., calling them names, not letting them see their friends, controlling what they wear and threatening to hurt their children, friends or pets.

Sexual abuse includes forcing someone to have sex or making them do sexual things they don't want to, taking photos of someone in a sexual situation when they don't agree or when they don't know, sending those photos to others or putting them on a web site and making them look at pornography.

Financial abuse includes taking the other persons money, not letting them work, controlling what and how they spend their money and not allowing them to have money of their own.

So, what can you do?

You have a right to be safe from harm and if there's violence in your home, it's important that you stay safe when there's a fight. Sometimes you might feel like you have to stop the fighting and try to protect the parent who's being hurt but this can be very dangerous and puts you at risk of getting hurt yourself.

Instead of trying to stop the fight there are some other things you can do:

Tell Someone. It's helpful if you can tell a friend or adult like a youth worker or a teacher you can trust about the abuse at home. This way, if there's an emergency you can phone them and they'll know about what's going on in your home. Some young people make up a code word so that in an emergency they just have to say the code word and the other person will know that you need help. Make sure that this person knows your address and phone number and that you've agreed what they should do when you call.

Talking Helps. If one of your parents is being abused, you might want to talk to them about it. Maybe you haven't because you don't want to worry them even more. Your parent might think that you don't know about the domestic abuse or they may not have talked to you about the abuse because they don't want to worry you. Talking to each other can make you both feel better and look for help and support together - check out the contacts opposite.

Find a Safe Place. You might have a room in your house where you feel safe when there's a fight, like your bedroom. If you have brothers and sisters you might all want to stay together in one room. It's good to stay away from the fight so that none of you get hurt. If your safe place is in a room where there's a phone you can call the police on 999 for help if you need too, or if you have a mobile you can use that, even if you have no credit by dialling 112.

Or you might feel you need to leave the house and have a friend, neighbour or another relative that you can go to if things are not safe at home. Some young people also leave a change of clothing there so they can stay a while until it is safe to go home.

Just Remember, you are not alone

Where to go for help

If you or anyone else are in danger call the police on 999 or 112 if you are using a mobile - this works even when you have no credit or the keypad is locked

Young people's useful contacts and sources of help

Childline - 0800 111

The free helpline for children and young people
www.childline.org.uk

First steps to first words.

Young people's empowerment group.

Thursdays 12.30 - 3.00pm

Union street Centre for young people, Oxford

www.spired.com

Oxfordshire's website for young people

www.thehideout.org.uk

website created by Women's Aid giving support to children and young people affected by domestic abuse

Crossing Bridges - 0118 9597333

www.crossingbridges.co.uk

advice and support for young people affected by domestic problems

online message board for young people.

www.freefromfear.org

Children's website produced by Birmingham Women's Aid

www.there4me.com

Support for young people

www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk

Information and support for young people



Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include other languages, large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer disk or email

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Other useful contacts and sources of help

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000247

Women's Aid national website working to end domestic violence against women and children

www.womensaid.org.uk

Reducing The Risk

www.reducingtherisk.org.uk

Oxfordshire's dedicated website for those affected by domestic abuse or violence

Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline

01865 778400

8am - 6pm, Mon to Fri, 10 am - 4pm Sat

Berkshire Women's Aid helpline 0118 9504003

www.berkshirewomensaid.org.uk

Men's Advice line 0808 801 0327

www.mensadvice.org.uk

Respect. For abusers wanting help
0845 122 8609 www.respect.vk.net

Loves me?



Loves me not?