



**Sikh
Awareness
Society**

EDUCATE | SUPPORT | EMPOWER

DOMESTIC ABUSE & VIOLENCE

EMERGENCY HELPLINE

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Domestic violence, also called domestic abuse, is a pattern of behaviour that is carried out by an individual to control his or her partner. It can also occur between family members.

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence; it can also be emotional, sexual, financial and psychological.

Emotional abuse is where a person puts you down and calls you names. Abusers can blame you for the abuse or arguments, play down the abuse or denies it's happening all together. Emotionally abusive people may also try to keep you away from your friends and family, they may stop you from going to college or work. They may also constantly call and check on you to see where you are and make unreasonable demands of your attention. You may also be told how to dress or wear your hair, who you can see and where you can go, or you may be accused of flirting with others or having affairs.

Threats and intimidation are also used by abusive people to control your behaviour. Abusive partners or family members can threaten to hurt or kill you, themselves, or your children. They may invade your personal space by standing over you or intimidate you by squaring up to you as if they are about to hit you. They may also destroy things that belong to you or are valuable to you. Abusers often want access to your social media accounts and phone to read your messages, emails, letters to keep tabs on who you are in contact with. They will even harass, follow or stalk you.

Financial abuse is where a person controls your money and where you can spend it. They may withhold money so you don't have enough to buy food or other essentials that you and your children may need.

Sexual abuse is unwanted touching and unwanted sexual demands. You may be pressured or guilted into having sex or unsafe sex. You may even be physically hurt during sex. If your partner forces you to have sex when you don't want to, then this is rape.

Physical abuse is where a partner or family member hits, slaps, punches, kicks, bites, or pushes you. Throwing things at you, burning, choking you or holding you down are also physically abusive behaviours. Domestic abuse is a crime. If you have ever felt that you need to change your behaviour because you are afraid of what your partner or family member's reaction will be, you may very well be in an abusive relationship.

Who is affected by it?

As it is not often reported to the police or in national surveys, it is difficult to accurately quantify how prevalent domestic abuse actually is. Data that is available estimates that 1.3 million women and 695,000 men had experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2018 (CSEW). According to the office of national statistics, an estimated 4.3 women aged 16 – 59 have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16. It is also reported that on average 2 women per week and 30 men per year are killed by their partner or ex-partner in England and Wales (ONS, 2018).

A report published in 2017 highlights that 14.8% of adults aged 16 to 59 had experienced non sexual domestic violence from a partner and 6% had experienced it from a family member. In addition to this the report also shows that 6.4% of adults surveyed had experienced domestic stalking. Of this 6.4%, 5.6% had been stalked by a partner and 1.8% by a family member. The survey also reports on domestic sexual assault estimating that 3.1% of adults aged 16 to 59 had experienced it by a partner and 0.9% by a family member.

Reported cases of domestic abuse are only the tip of the iceberg. It is a very common crime but a largely hidden one due to victims not coming forward. On average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim contacts the police and it is the single most quoted reason for people becoming homeless. Reports also show that approximately 400 people who attended hospital for injuries related to domestic abuse, commit suicide each year. Of the 400, 200 victims go on to take their own lives on the day they attend hospital.

It is highly important therefore to recognise the signs so that we may be able to help someone leave a potentially dangerous situation before it is too late.

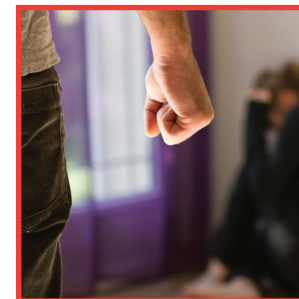
Recognising the signs

People experiencing abuse may display the following behaviours.

- Seem afraid of their partners or anxious to please them
- Agree with everything said and done by their partner
- Convinced they are losing their mind or going mad due to 'gaslighting'
- Check in with their partner often to update them on what they are doing, where they are and who they are with
- Receive constant harassing phone calls and messages from their partner
- Have low self-esteem when they used to be more confident
- Have become more withdrawn, depressed, anxious or suicidal
- Have trouble sleeping
- Substance abuse

Victims of abuse may also talk about how possessive, jealous or angry their partner is. They may also talk about how have been belittled, made to feel stupid and worthless. If there are children in the relationship, victims of abuse may be threatened that they will never see their children again if they leave. Abusive partners may also try to turn their children against the other parent. Other signs to look out for include:

- Bruises and injuries with excuses of 'accidents'
- Dressing to cover injuries such as wearing long sleeves in the summer or sunglasses indoors
- Not taking care of their appearance
- Frequently missing work or not going to social gatherings
- Not seeing family and friends or rarely going anywhere without their partner
- No longer uses social media
- Cannot go to and from work alone
- Limited access to the car, money, bank or credit cards



Based in the UK, with volunteers around the world, we aim to help as many people as we can, from all backgrounds and ethnicities.

Please contact us on a 24-hour phone line if you have a serious query you wish to discuss or alternatively get in touch via our form and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

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