

**KNOW THE
TYPES**

*Know
the
signs*

**Signs of
abusive
behaviour**



Domestic Abuse?



**ONLINE
SAFETY**

*Approaching
your friend*

CONFIDENTIALITY

Helping a Friend

- Helplines and services available
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KNOW THE TYPES

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is a pattern of abusive behaviour toward a partner, ex partner or family member. The person being abusive uses power and control over the person experiencing the abuse.

Anyone of any age, gender, ethnicity, belief or sexual orientation can experience abuse or be abusive.

Here are some examples of domestic abuse in a relationship:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial control
- Coercive control
- Digital abuse
- Psychological
- Harassment and stalking












Signs of abusive behaviour

- Harming or frightening the person
- Limiting or controlling someone's access to money
- Controlling their behaviour
- Assaulting them (pushing, shoving, hitting etc.)
- Exploiting them
- Verbal abuse or humiliation
- Manipulating them

Know the signs



Spot it in your friend:

-  Evidence of physical violence (cuts, bruises, broken bones etc.).
-  Isolation (cutting themselves off from friends and family).
-  Fear of others intervening.
-  Low self esteem.
-  Noticeable changes in behaviour (more quiet, more closed off).
-  Damage to their belongings.
-  Limited access to money.
-  Always being with the person you think may be being abusive towards your friend, and them never having time alone.
-  Always being on the phone to the alleged abuser, or them constantly calling or texting.



CONFIDENTIALITY

If you're worried about the confidentiality and/or about telling someone, there are some steps you can take to make sure that your conversation is confidential, such as:

- Clearing browser history after visiting.
- Using 'incognito' or 'private' mode on your browser so your browsing history is not saved.
- Avoid saving passwords if you're using a shared device.
- Access support from a library, school, or a friend's phone/computer if you don't feel safe searching at home.

Please note even if you think there is no one to turn to, visit the websites we've listed and talk to someone online or in person.

ONLINE SAFETY



If your friend is in an abusive relationship, the abuse might happen online too. Here's how you can help:

- Look out for signs like controlling messages, constant check-ins, or pressure to share passwords.
- Remind them to keep accounts private, turn off location sharing, and not to share passwords even with someone they trust.
- Encourage them to screenshot abusive messages and save evidence safely (don't delete it).
- Help them block or report anyone making them feel unsafe online.
- Offer to check privacy settings together — sometimes just a small change can make them feel safer.

Abuse doesn't stop at the screen. Let your friend know it's okay to ask for help and that you're there for them.

Approaching your friend

1 Choose a safe time and place. Don't confront them in front of others. Wait until you're somewhere quiet and private - like during break, walking home, or sitting in a calm space at school. Make sure you both feel comfortable and you won't be overheard.

2 Use gentle and open words, start with kind non-judgemental questions like:

"I've noticed you've seemed upset lately. Are you okay?"

"I care about you - if anything's going on, you can talk to me."

Avoid saying things like "What's wrong with you?" or "Why are you acting weird?"

These can make someone shut down.

3 Let them talk at their own pace, don't force it. If they're not ready to talk, respect that.

Say something like: **"That's okay, just know I'm here if you need to talk, no pressure."**

Listen calmly, try not to interrupt or react shocked. Staying calm makes them feel safer.

- 4 Be reassuring. Your friend might feel ashamed, scared, or confused. Reassure them with simple, kind truths:

“You haven’t done anything wrong.”

“This isn’t your fault.”

“You don’t deserve to be treated badly, no one does.”

Let them know that abuse can happen in any family and they are not alone.

- 5 Don’t promise to keep it a secret, this is really important. You can say:

“I care about you too much to keep this to myself if it means you’re unsafe. I might need to talk to an adult who can help you, but I’ll be with you every step of the way.”

Never tell other children or classmates, only a trusted adult.

- 6 Offer to go with them. You can offer to walk with them to a teacher, school counsellor, or safe adult. Say: **“I can come with you if you want, you don’t have to do it alone.”**

Sometimes, just knowing someone’s beside them gives them the courage to speak up.

- 7 Follow up later. Even after you've told an adult, keep checking in:

"How are you feeling today?"

"I'm still here if you want to talk."

Letting them know you still care can make a big difference in their healing.

- 8 Help your friend feel safe. Remind them they're brave for coping with so much. Let them talk without judgement, even if you don't understand everything. Offer to go with them if they decide to speak to a teacher or adult.

Protecting your mental health



Do not confront the person using the abusive behaviours, leave this to a safeguarding professional such as a teacher, social worker or police officer.

- Speak to a trusted adult about any worries you have and consider seeking mental health support.
- If you see an incident taking place or have an urgent concern, call 999 immediately.



Supporting a friend

You can also try the Relationship Check-Up tool on the Childline website. It helps young people reflect on whether their relationships feel safe and healthy. If you think a friend is experiencing domestic abuse or any abuse at all, offer support in a non-judgemental way.

- Choose a safe time and place to talk, listen without pressure, and avoid accusations.
- Encourage them to seek help, and offer to go with them to report the abuse. Remember, if they are under 18 or someone who may need extra support, it's important to report it to a trusted adult. Let them decide what to do, but provide information on helplines and options for support. Even if they say no, if you are concerned about their wellbeing it is important to let a trusted adult know.

Approaching an adult

- Offer to go with your friend to report to an adult.
- If your friend does not want to report it, report it on their behalf.
- You could report it in person to a teacher, social worker, police officer, youth worker or healthcare professional.
- You could also send an email, text or letter if that is easier and safe to do so, with no chance or others seeing this, so that it's confidential.
- You could report it to a helpline.
- If a person who is using abusive behaviours threatens to hurt the person experiencing the domestic abuse, family member/s or themselves, contact support services such as social services, the police or support organisation.



Help lines and services available

For more information and resources, visit www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk (Kent & Medway Domestic Abuse Partnership). This site has dedicated pages for children and young people, with advice, tools and support options.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline
0808 2000 247

National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline
0800 999 5428

DAVE Helpline - for Male Victims
01233 650160

Childline
0800 1111

NSPCC
0808 800 5000

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*Put together by the young people
in the 'Feeling Safe in Kent' group*

