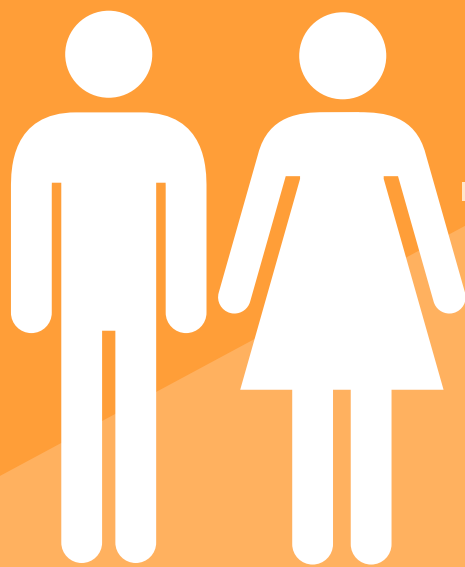


# Restored

Ending Violence Against Women

# ENDING DOMESTIC ABUSE

A Pack for  
Churches



[www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org)

# The '4 Rs' of responding to domestic abuse

## Recognise

- That abuse does happen in Christian relationships
- The signs of power and control in a relationship

## Respond

- 'I believe you' is a helpful first response
- Within your limitations and the safeguarding framework (especially if children are involved)

## Refer

- To the National DV Helpline - 0808 2000 247
- To local professionals - go with her if you can

## Record

- Dates/times and quotes of what has been said
- Your actions and any concerns you may have and keep the notes in a secure place

## DOMESTIC ABUSE IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Ring **101** or **999** in the UK if children are present or if you witness any incidents or hear of anything that concerns you, even if you are in doubt.

If you are based internationally, check out [www.hotpeachpages.net](http://www.hotpeachpages.net) for your local domestic violence service provider.

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*'I commend the work that Restored and its partners are doing, highlighting gender-based violence in our society, and seeking to tackle it through positive, practical measures.'*

*— Justin Welby,  
Archbishop of Canterbury*




**Restored** is an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women.

The origins of **Restored** go back to 2008, when our co-directors, Mandy Marshall and Peter Grant, heard stories from a survivor which demonstrated that we live in a world in which women suffer greatly and men commit acts of violence with apparent impunity. Mandy and Peter were challenged by two questions:

**IN RESPONDING TO ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW):**

**WHERE IS THE CHURCH?**



**WHERE ARE THE MEN?**

These questions highlighted two big gaps – first, the absence of a coordinated Christian response based on a model of restored relationships, and, second, a lack of men, and particularly men within the church, taking responsibility and playing their part in preventing violence against women. This is why we established **Restored**.

We believe that Christian churches have huge potential to help prevent violence, but we also need to change our own attitudes and practices. Our specific focus for this pack is on the prevention of male violence against women in intimate-partner relationships, also referred to as domestic violence (DV) and domestic abuse (DA).

**Restored** is a global alliance of organisations and churches and has members in over 25 countries. We are continuing to seek ways to support members in their work and to work together, at national and international levels, in ending violence against women.

### **Transforming relationships**

This pack gives us an opportunity to reflect on how we might live in a way that transforms our relationships. We believe that faith in Christ is about serving the God of love who made **all people** with value and dignity. It is about following Jesus Christ, who honoured and respected women, and resisted violence. We are called to live in a way that reflects this belief. Our relationships are meant to reflect God's love. We understand that God's desire for those affected by domestic violence – both victims and abusers – is healing and wholeness.

*'Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.'*

— Ephesians 5:1

### **Will you join with us?**

In the past, courageous Christians have taken a stand against slavery, racism and international debt. We can be agents of change within our context, raising awareness and challenging the status quo. We believe that it is now time for the church to speak out and challenge this appalling global epidemic of injustice and oppression against women.

**If you would like to support Restored financially, please go to [www.give.net/Restored](http://www.give.net/Restored)**

**Thank you.**

## RESTORED'S AIM

By increasing churches' understanding of violence against women and domestic abuse, we can begin to inspire much-needed change. The aim of this pack is to enable the church to address domestic abuse both within its own community and in wider society.

**This is not an all-inclusive resource.** The information contained within it **will not** equip individual church leaders or church members to be able to **respond fully** to the needs of those who are suffering or have suffered from aspects of domestic violence, or to work with those who are perpetrating violence. However, it aims to:

- 1. Increase awareness in church communities of the existence and effects of domestic violence.**
- 2. Encourage churches to take necessary measures towards being recognised as places where domestic abuse is taken seriously, victims are believed and respected and perpetrators are safely challenged.**
- 3. Provide ideas for theological reflection on issues of domestic abuse.**
- 4. Promote the importance of referring victims of domestic abuse to specialist organisations and encourage churches to support the work of these organisations.**
- 5. Raise awareness of the need for specialist help for perpetrators of domestic abuse.**



**Terminology:** This resource uses the words 'victims' and 'abusers/perpetrators' for females and males respectively, as this is the most common presentation of domestic abuse.<sup>1</sup> Also, as a charity our focus and remit is working to end male violence against women. However, we are passionate about ending all abuse and believe that the needs of children and male victims should be treated with equal concern.

The terms 'domestic violence', 'domestic abuse' and 'intimate-partner violence' are used interchangeably in this document, as these are commonly used in the sector.

1. Research indicates that the majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, but domestic abuse can be inflicted by women on men and also in same-sex relationships.

EXPERTISE IN THE FIELD OF SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE CAN BE FOUND IN MANY WOMEN'S, CHILDREN'S AND MEN'S AID AGENCIES. CHURCHES OFTEN **DO NOT** HAVE THAT EXPERTISE. WITHOUT **PROPER** TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE IN THIS FIELD, WE CAN DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD. THEREFORE, THIS PACK INCLUDES INFORMATION ON HOW TO SUPPORT VICTIMS AND EMPOWER THEM TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL CARE FROM THE RELEVANT AGENCIES. WE HAVE INCLUDED USEFUL CONTACTS AT THE END OF THIS RESOURCE, BUT THE LIST IS BY NO MEANS EXHAUSTIVE. READERS ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOW THIS INFORMATION IS USED ON A PERSONAL BASIS.

## PART 1: EXPLORING DOMESTIC ABUSE

This section looks at:

- 1.1 What is domestic abuse?
- 1.2 Who experiences domestic abuse?
- 1.3 Who perpetrates domestic abuse?
- 1.4 Recognising signs of domestic abuse
- 1.5 What is the law on domestic abuse?
- 1.6 Myths about domestic abuse
- 1.7 Why does this happen? Exploring power and control

### 1.1 WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Exploring the issue of domestic abuse seems an easy task at first, as the media bombard us with images and examples of abuse in relationships. Regularly we see portrayals of women who have been beaten up and intimidated, resulting in black eyes and broken bones. We rarely see the portrayal of manipulation, coercive control and emotional abuse on TV. How true are these stories? For many families, the story is a mere shadow of their reality. Some of us may have witnessed abuse in our own lives, in our families, in our neighbourhood, in our churches, or in our communities. But, as we look deeper, we ask, 'What do we really understand about domestic abuse?'

#### Violence Against Women

What we are talking about is an issue called 'violence against women' (VAW). This is a term used to describe a range of abuses that primarily affect women.<sup>2</sup> The UN defines this as:

**Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.**<sup>3</sup>

Internationally, we see that violence against women is a feature of all societies around the world. Globally, 1 in 3 women will suffer abuse in their lifetime (UN, 2013). In EU<sup>4</sup> countries it is estimated that:

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC



- 1 in 3 women (32%) have experienced psychologically abusive behaviour on the part of an intimate partner, either their current partner or a previous partner, making this form of abuse the most common type.
- 1 in 20 women (5%) have been raped since the age of 15, either by a partner or by someone else.

Partner violence accounts for a high proportion of homicides of women internationally: Between 40% and 70% of female murder victims (depending on the country) were killed by their partner/former partner, whereas the comparable figure for men is 4% – 8%.<sup>5</sup>

#### UK

Whilst these statistics seem horrific, many people believe that violence against women happens elsewhere, not in

2. Domestic abuse/violence, rape and sexual violence, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, trafficking and sexual exploitation, forced marriage, and crimes in the name of honour. The majority of these abuses are committed by men against women they know or are in a close relationship with.

3. <http://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/gender/vaw/about.html> (accessed online 3/3/15).

4. This survey by FRA (2014) is one of the largest surveys to date, interviewing 42,000 women across the 28 member states of the European Union.

5. Krug, Etienne G., Dahlberg, Linda L., Mercy, James A., Zwi, Anthony B., and Lozano, Rafael (ed.) (2002), *World report on violence and health* (Geneva: World Health Organization).



# Part 1: Exploring Domestic Abuse



the UK and certainly not in our churches. However, it is estimated that in the UK:

- **1,000 women are sexually assaulted every day.**<sup>6</sup>
- **On average 85,000 women are raped in England and Wales every year.**<sup>7</sup>
- **Two women a week are murdered by their partner or former partner on average, or one woman every three days.**<sup>8</sup>

## In churches too

It is hard to come to terms with the reality that domestic abuse can happen in our churches at the hands of our fellow Christians. Yet abuse is perpetrated by Christians, and women in our congregations can suffer in silence owing to the shame and stigma surrounding abuse.

The Methodist Church in the UK conducted a survey in 2002<sup>9</sup> and found that:

- **17% of respondents had experienced domestic abuse.**
- **The main perpetrators of the violence were husbands and partners.**

Christianity Magazine, in conjunction with **Restored**, conducted a survey in September 2013 and discovered:

- **40% had suffered some form of intimidation in their relationship.**
- **16% had suffered some form of physical violence.**

The Evangelical Alliance UK in its 'How's the Family?' report 2010<sup>10</sup> found that:

- **10% of women answering the survey had experienced physical abuse in their relationship and 7% of men admitted perpetrating physical abuse.**

## Domestic violence

The UK Government defines domestic violence as:

'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.'<sup>11</sup>

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- **Psychological**
- **Physical**
- **Sexual**
- **Financial**
- **Emotional**

6. Office for National Statistics (2013), *An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales*, Home Office joint report Ministry of Justice.

7. Office for National Statistics (2012), *An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales*. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/an-overview-of-sexual-offending-in-england---wales/december-2012/index.htm> (accessed online 13/2/15).

8. Coleman and Osborne, (2010); Povey, (ed.) (2004, 2005); Home Office, (1999); Dept of Health, (2005). Office for National Statistics, (2015)

9. 'How's the Family?' Evangelical Alliance report 2012. <http://www.eauk.org/church/resources/snapshot/how-s-the-family.cfm>

10. 'How's the Family?' Evangelical Alliance report 2012. <http://www.eauk.org/church/resources/snapshot/how-s-the-family.cfm>

11. Home Office (2013). [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142701/guide-on-definition-of-dv.pdf) (accessed online 5/3/15).



**‘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 the victim.’<sup>12</sup>

Domestic abuse is a repeated pattern of behaviour and is used to control other people. It happens in all kinds of relationships: heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. It can happen between people who are dating, living together, have children together or are married to each other. It can happen when people live either together or separately. It can happen after the relationship or marriage has ended. It can happen to people who regularly attend church and are Christians.

Some examples may include:

- **Constantly checking where someone is.**
- **Telling them they are ugly, too fat/thin, stupid, useless, etc.**
- **Treating them as a servant/slave.**
- **Constantly putting a person down or criticising them (e.g. telling them they are a bad mother or bad wife).**
- **Preventing them from seeing friends or family.**
- **Not letting them get a job or making them work long hours.**

- **Shouting, smashing things, throwing things, sulking.**
- **Hitting, pushing, slapping, kicking, and punching.**
- **Threatening to hurt someone they care about such as the children or their pets.**
- **Rape or making someone do sexual things they don’t want to do.**
- **Using psychological abuse to make a woman believe the abuse is her fault.**
- **Stalking and harassment (including online and texting/constantly calling).**
- **Using Scripture to justify their behaviour e.g., ‘I’m the head of the house and you have to submit to me.’**
- **Not giving them any money, or taking all their money from them or checking exactly what they spend money on.**

Everyone has the right to feel safe, but controlling behaviour establishes and thrives on fear. Coercive control tends to follow an ongoing pattern rather than consisting of one-off incidents. One woman reflected on one aspect of being controlled:

*‘He’s quite controlling[...]he wanted to control what the children were doing and not let them be themselves [...] he wanted the house to be absolutely clean and pristine and no toys left out [...] he wanted it to be sort of like a show house all the time.’<sup>13</sup>*

**Reflection:** Can you think of cases of each of the examples given above? Have you seen or experienced such behaviour? How does it make you feel?

12. Home Office (2015). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse> (accessed online 11/1/16).

13. Regan, L. Kelly, L. Morris, A. Dibb, R. (2007). ‘If only we’d known’: An exploratory study of seven intimate partner homicides in Engleshire’ CWASU, page 14.



# Part 1: Exploring Domestic Abuse

## 1.2 WHO EXPERIENCES DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Anybody can be affected by domestic abuse, regardless of age, social background, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity.

Domestic abuse affects people in our congregations, in families, at work, and in our neighbourhoods. In fact, the issue affects millions of families in the UK. In 2013–14, the police recorded 887,000 incidents of domestic abuse in England and Wales.<sup>14</sup> The financial cost of domestic violence to UK society is estimated at around £16 billion per year.<sup>15</sup> However, this is thought by some to be a conservative estimate.

### Women

Statistics show that women are most affected by abuse by their male intimate partner and are more likely to experience coercive control, as:

- **Every year, 1.4 million women (8.5% of the population) suffer some form of domestic abuse.**<sup>16</sup>
- **Every day, approximately 30 women attempt suicide as a result of experiencing domestic abuse and every week three women take their own life.**<sup>17</sup>

### Men

Men also experience incidents of domestic abuse, by either men or women:

- **Every year, 700,000 men (4.5% of the population) suffer some form of domestic abuse.**<sup>18</sup>

### Children

Children and young people can be significantly damaged by the abuse that they see in their families. Estimates suggest that at least **750,000 children a year**<sup>19</sup> witness domestic violence. Domestic abuse can have a serious long-term impact on children and young people. According to NHS London,<sup>20</sup> in households where domestic violence occurs it is estimated that:

- **50% of children are being directly abused by the same person who is abusing their mother.**
- **90% of children are in the same or the next room during an incident of domestic abuse.**
- **75% of children on the 'at risk' register live in households where domestic violence occurs.**

It is estimated that in the UK,  
**1,000 WOMEN**  
are sexually assaulted every day

Children can be hurt or manipulated as part of domestic abuse, or be victims of abuse themselves. Even if they aren't caught up in the violence, many young lives are affected by the abuse in their homes, maybe by neglect or by being told to 'keep it a secret'. Sometimes children are forced by the adult abuser to join in with the abuse. Forcing a child to witness domestic abuse is now recognised as a form of child abuse.

Seeing a parent experience abuse from a partner can be a fearful experience:

*'My mum left her ex-boyfriend, because he hit her. It took a long time to leave him, though. She did it but he kept coming back. He said he wouldn't hit her again but he did.'*

— *Child in Year 8*<sup>21</sup>

14. Office for National Statistics (2015), *Crime Survey England and Wales 2013–14*. London: Office for National Statistics.

15. Walby, S. (2009), *The Cost of Domestic Violence: Update 2009*, Lancaster University, [www.lancaster.ac.uk/.../Cost\\_of\\_domestic\\_violence\\_update.doc](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/.../Cost_of_domestic_violence_update.doc) (accessed online 24/4/14).

16. Office for National Statistics (2014), *Crime Survey England and Wales 2013 – 14*. London: Office for National Statistics.

17. Walby, S. and Allen, J. (2004), *Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey*. London: Home Office.

18. Office for National Statistics (2014), *Crime Survey England and Wales 2013 – 14*. London: Office for National Statistics.

19. Department of Health (2002), *Women's Mental Health: Into the Mainstream*. [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Closedconsultations/DH\\_4075478.p.16](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Closedconsultations/DH_4075478.p.16) (accessed online on 7/7/15).

20. London NHS (2015), *Impact upon Children*, <http://www.domesticviolencelondon.nhs.uk/1-what-is-domestic-violence-/8-impact-upon-children.html> (accessed online 17/7/15).

21. Girlguiding (2012), *Care versus Control: Healthy Relationships*, page 5. [http://girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/pdf/2025\\_Care\\_Versus\\_Control.pdf](http://girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/pdf/2025_Care_Versus_Control.pdf) (accessed online on 13/2/15).



## Teenagers

Young people and teenagers may also experience abuse in their relationships. It is estimated that:<sup>22</sup>

- 4 in 10 teenaged girls have experienced sexual coercion.
- 1 in 5 girls have experienced physical abuse and intimidation from their boyfriends.
- 25% of young women (aged over 13) experience physical violence and 72% experience emotional abuse in their own relationships.<sup>23</sup>
- 78% of teenaged girls experiencing domestic violence during the first three months after giving birth had not experienced domestic violence before delivery.<sup>24</sup>
- ‘Sexting’ and ‘revenge pornography’ are ways in which a person can be humiliated by their partner.
- Young people can also be perpetrators of domestic violence.<sup>25</sup>

Emotional abuse in these relationships can be seen as jealousy, and a lack of trust can be disguised or misinterpreted as genuine care and concern. Being isolated or prevented from seeing friends can further add to this. As one young person reflected:

*‘I lost my best friend because she’s with someone a lot older and he’s very controlling. Very possessive. I used to see her every day after school and I haven’t seen her for three weeks.’*

— Year 11 student<sup>26</sup>

## Family and friends

Friends and family are also affected by domestic violence, as they can witness or know what a loved one is experiencing from a partner. This can be traumatic as they see the people they care about being harmed and manipulated and often feel powerless to help. But family and friends can also be a significant source of support. In one survey,<sup>27</sup> 35% of women who have overcome being abused referred to family and friends as their main source of support. In some cases, however, isolation tactics by the perpetrator can ensure that family and friends feel cut off from someone experiencing abuse and also experience helplessness and manipulation themselves. In order to maintain a relationship with their loved one, they may be forced to ignore or keep silent about the abuse.

*‘...He wouldn’t leave her alone. He was frightened to death she might find someone else. So he couldn’t bear the fact that she wasn’t in his grasp, if you like, and he did hate her coming to my house.’<sup>28</sup>*

22. <http://www.bris.ac.uk/news/2015/february/stir-study.html> (accessed online 13/2/15).

23. NSPCC (2009), *Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships*.

24. Harrykisson, S. D., Rickert, V. I., & Wiemann, C. M. (2002), ‘Prevalence and patterns of intimate partner violence among adolescent mothers during the postpartum period.’ *Archives of Paediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 156, 325–330.

25. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/219180.pdf>

26. Girlguiding (2012), *Care versus Control: Healthy Relationships*, page 9. [http://girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/pdf/2025\\_Care\\_Versus\\_Control.pdf](http://girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/pdf/2025_Care_Versus_Control.pdf) (accessed online 3/5/15).

27. FRA (2014), [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf)

28. Regan, L. Kelly, L. Morris, A. Dibb, R. (2007), ‘If only we’d known’: An exploratory study of seven intimate partner homicides in Engleshire. CWASU, page 28.

## 1.3 WHO PERPETRATES DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Whilst both men and women may experience incidents of intimate-partner violence, women are considerably more likely to experience **repeated and severe forms** of violence,<sup>29</sup> threats and harassment, such as being beaten up, choked, threatened or assaulted with a weapon, as well as injury, hospitalisation and death. Verbal abuse is thought to be used in most incidents by both men and women; however, men are also slightly more likely to be verbally abusive.<sup>30</sup> Men are much more likely to feel less threatened by their partner's violence, and much more likely to accompany their own use of violence with coercive and controlling behaviour.<sup>31</sup> Overall, men's violence tends to create a context of fear and, related to that, control. This is not similarly the case when women are the perpetrators.

Police reports confirm this strong bias of male perpetrators against their female intimate partners. In 2013–14, 85 women were murdered by their partner or ex-partner in England and Wales. This accounted for just under half (46%) of all murders of women aged 16 or over. In comparison, 7% of men who were murdered were killed by their female partner or ex-partner and some of these killings were thought to be as a result of self-defence.<sup>32</sup>



## 1.4 RECOGNISING SIGNS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

This information on who is most affected is essential for recognising some of the signs. This is made possible only through raising our awareness of the silence, stigma and shame that surround this issue. However, it is very difficult to create a definitive list of signs that domestic abuse might be happening, because:

- **Perpetrators are very good at lying to hide their behaviour.**

- **Victims of abuse will be very skilled at having to hide whatever abuse is happening owing to fear, shame and the desire to protect themselves and their children.**

- **Some victims of abuse don't realise that it is abuse, as some believe that it's abuse only if it's physical or sexual.**

- **Domestic abuse can occur on many levels and at opposite extremes. For example, a woman may never be allowed to work or leave the house, or, instead, may be forced to work long hours. A woman may never be allowed to leave the children alone, or she may never be allowed to touch the children or go near them.**

However, warning signs will include behaviours in which power and control over a partner are the motivation. The list below is not exhaustive or conclusive but can give some insight into how power and control can play out in a relationship:

1. **A woman may never be seen alone; her partner always accompanies her.**
2. **She may become more and more isolated, possibly moving a long way from family. She may not have any friends, or may gradually stop seeing them – she may withdraw from church.**
3. **Her partner may talk over her or for her and she may be reluctant to speak. Her partner may appear controlling or may regularly make disparaging comments about her.**
4. **She may have unexplained injuries. However, most perpetrators are skilled in ensuring that the injuries they inflict on their partners are in places that can easily be covered up. When approached about any injuries she may make excuses about how they happened.**

29. World Health Organization (2014), *Intimate partner and sexual violence against women, Fact sheet N°239* <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> (accessed online 6/5/15).

30. Hester, M. (2009), *Who Does What to Whom? Gender and Domestic Violence Perpetrators*, Bristol: University of Bristol in association with the Northern Rock Foundation.

31. Johnson, M. (2005), *Apples and Oranges in Child Custody Disputes: Intimate Terrorism vs. Situational Couple Violence*, [www.personal.psu.edu/mpj/2005%20JCC1.doc](http://www.personal.psu.edu/mpj/2005%20JCC1.doc) (accessed online 17/7/15).

32. Office for National Statistics (2014), *Crime Survey England and Wales 2013 – 14*. London: Office for National Statistics.

5. If her partner is behaving in an inappropriate manner in public, she may justify and excuse his behaviour.
6. She may have no access to money or lose her job, have regular unexplained absences from work or often be late for work.
7. Her partner may tell people she is abusing him and that he is a victim of domestic abuse.
8. Her partner may be unsociable with her friends, family and colleagues, or he may be extremely charismatic and friendly to everyone.
9. If she has children she may find it very difficult to control them and they may call her names and ignore her. Her children may be extremely clingy to her and not want to leave her.
10. She may not want people to visit her at home or may not be comfortable giving out her address or contact details.

If you have concerns about someone you know, it is best not to ignore or minimise what you may have observed. You could talk to your local domestic abuse service provider if you are in doubt. (See the Appendix for more information on useful contact information.)

## 1.5 WHAT IS THE LAW ON DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Understanding the law and the support it provides for victims can be daunting and difficult. There are two different types of law in the UK that apply when talking about domestic violence: criminal law and civil law.

### Criminal law

The criminal law is the first port of call when dealing with domestic abuse. Many acts that are commonly perpetrated by an abuser, such as physical violence, sexual abuse and threats of violence towards a victim, are criminal acts. If sufficient evidence can be gathered the police may be able to build a case and the Crown Prosecution Service may be able to proceed to prosecute an abuser for criminal actions, even if the woman withdraws her consent or doesn't want to press charges. There is a high standard of proof in most criminal cases, however, and although the police and the CPS work hard to investigate reported incidents they are subject to limited resources and cannot pursue every case.



If there is an element of domestic violence in a criminal case, a criminal court can impose on an offender an order known as a 'restraining order', which makes it an automatic offence for them to contact or visit their victim again, for a period of up to five years.

It is important to note that there is no specific law in the UK called 'domestic violence law' under criminal law. Criminal proceedings can be brought against an abuser for any conduct that breaks the criminal law, or which breaches a protective order made by the courts.

### Civil law

Many types of abuse are not crimes in themselves, for example when an abuser tries to control a victim by obsessively contacting them, communicating with them in a way that causes emotional or psychological damage, or refusing to leave their property. Where those issues are present, or where there is stronger evidence of abuse that has not led to criminal prosecution, the family court can grant a 'non-molestation' order.

A non-molestation order can be phrased so as to forbid an abuser from contacting, abusing or visiting a victim or a child of the family, or from approaching the family home. Once that order is served on the abuser, then it is an automatic criminal offence for them to breach it. This effectively means that actions such as repeatedly calling the victim, which would not ordinarily be considered criminal, can become sufficient for the police to take action and bring a criminal prosecution. Acts that were

# Part 1: Exploring Domestic Abuse

already criminal, such as violence towards the victim, can also be punished more severely if the abuser is found guilty because they were subject to the order.

If an abuser lives with their victim, the civil courts have the power to order the abuser out of the family home. In some locations, this power is used only rarely and where it has been established that there is real risk of harm being done to the applicant if they are not separated from the respondent. The civil courts have to balance the housing options available to both parties, and be satisfied that the level of risk to the victim justifies the risk of making the abuser homeless.

## National Centre for Domestic Violence (0800 970 2070)

Victims of domestic violence can call this organisation for free, confidential advice. The organisation can make referrals to numerous organisations across the country, which offer support and guidance to victims. They can also refer victims to a panel of solicitors who specialise in dealing with emergency cases, to obtain civil non-molestation orders or occupation orders at short notice. They can also advise on whether or not a victim, whatever their gender, is eligible to have their legal costs paid by the state for obtaining the protection of the courts. (See <http://www.ncdv.org.uk>)

## Clare's Law or the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme<sup>33</sup>

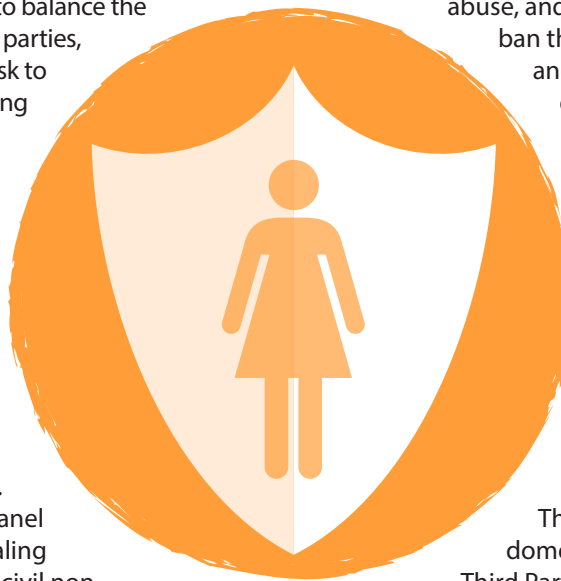
Under this scheme launched in March 2014, parties have the right to ask the police whether a new or existing partner has a violent past. If police checks show that a person may be at risk of domestic violence from their partner, the police will consider disclosing the information. Clare's Law has two functions:

- **'Right to ask' – this enables someone to ask the police about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts. A precedent for such a scheme exists with the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme.**
- **'Right to know' – police can proactively disclose information in prescribed circumstances.**

It is also necessary and important to note that the police do not know most perpetrators of abuse.

## Protection Notices and Orders

If you have suffered from or been threatened with domestic abuse, the police can issue a Domestic Violence Protection Notice and then apply to the magistrates' court for a Domestic Violence Protection Order. A Domestic Violence Protection Order can protect you from further abuse, and, if you live with the perpetrator, ban them from returning to the home and contacting you. If the perpetrator does not keep to the order, they can be arrested and brought before the court. A Domestic Violence Protection Order lasts for up to 28 days and gives you time to explore your options and obtain further support.<sup>34</sup> You can get further information about your rights and the support you can receive from the Citizens Advice Bureau.<sup>35</sup>



## Third-Party Reporting Centre

There are many barriers to reporting domestic violence.

Third Party Reporting Centres (TPRC) aim to overcome these barriers. TPRCs are community locations where you can make a report of domestic violence without having to visit a police station. Staff at TPRCs are trained to deal sensitively with victims and the report will be forwarded to the police and/or council on your behalf, if requested.

## Stalking and harassment

These are two new offences that came into force on 25th November 2012, with the insertion of two new sections into the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Whilst there is no strict legal definition of 'stalking', following a person, watching or spying on them or forcing contact with the victim through any means, including social media, are examples of stalking and harassment covered by the offence. The effect of such behaviour is often to curtail a

33. Clare's Law: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/clares-law-to-become-a-national-scheme> (accessed online 25/5/15).

34. For instance, see [www.ncdv.org.uk](http://www.ncdv.org.uk). See the end of the pack for more information.

35. Advice guide: [http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/relationships\\_e/relationships\\_gender\\_violence\\_e/domestic\\_violence\\_and\\_abuse.htm#options\\_available\\_to\\_people\\_affected\\_by\\_domestic\\_violence](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/relationships_e/relationships_gender_violence_e/domestic_violence_and_abuse.htm#options_available_to_people_affected_by_domestic_violence) (accessed online 3/7/15).





victim's freedom, leaving them feeling that they constantly have to be careful. In many cases, the conduct might appear innocent (if it were to be taken in isolation), but when carried out repeatedly so as to amount to a course of conduct, it may cause significant alarm, harassment or distress to the victim.<sup>36</sup>

Harassment of an individual can also occur when a person is harassing others connected with the individual, knowing that this behaviour will affect their victim as well as the other people. This is known by the Crown Prosecution Service as 'stalking by proxy'. Family members, friends and employees of the victim may be subjected to this. More information in the UK can be found on the Stalking Helpline [www.stalkinghelpline.org](http://www.stalkinghelpline.org).

**Section 12 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004**, as well as extending the availability of restraining orders to all offences, provides the court with the power to make a restraining order even when a person has been acquitted, where the court considers it necessary to do so to protect a person from ongoing stalking or harassment from the defendant.

### 'Revenge porn'

This is the umbrella term for the sharing of private sexual material, either photos or videos, involving another person without their consent and for the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress. The images are sometimes accompanied by personal information about the subject, including their full name, address and links to their social media profiles. It is now illegal to disclose a 'private sexual photograph or film' without consent. The victim may have consented to the creation of the image but will not have agreed to its being made public. The problem is much wider than that of one victim and one perpetrator. There are people who spread images of people they don't know, purely to embarrass them. There are also lots of websites dedicated to earning money from the sharing of revenge pornography, and this perpetuates demand. This was criminalised in April 2015 and, from that time, someone found guilty can go to prison for up to two years, or be fined, or both.

If a person is concerned about an abuser threatening to release materials of this nature, then a non-molestation order obtained from the civil courts can include a condition forbidding an abuser from releasing that material, and making it an arrestable offence to do so.

### People with no recourse to public funds

It is important to understand the added impact of domestic violence on people who have no recourse to public funding. Many people come to the UK, often legally, in the hope of improving their life. They may come on temporary work permits, student visas or spousal visas.

One of the conditions for permitting immigration into the UK can be that the person arriving is not permitted to use public funds, and this can be stamped on their passport on arrival as part of their visa.



This condition can deny access to certain state benefits, including housing benefit and income support, even if the person marries a UK citizen.

If the person is ever the subject of violence then the lack of those benefits can deny that person the ability to live independently if they are forced out of their home and need to seek refuge. This condition reportedly affects a large number of women who come to the UK to marry, but are in effect denied much of the support offered to UK nationals if they experience violence at home.

<sup>36</sup> The Crown Prosecution Service: Stalking and Harassment, [http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s\\_to\\_u/stalking\\_and\\_harassment/#a02b](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/stalking_and_harassment/#a02b) (accessed online 3/6/15).



## 1.6 MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC ABUSE

We all have attitudes, beliefs or ideas about domestic abuse. Many are incorrect and can be based on myths about what domestic abuse is and who is most affected by it. The aim of the list below is to challenge our common misconceptions.

**Why doesn't the abused woman just leave?** When a woman is in a situation of abuse, there is an assumption that she has the choice and the means to leave. This is often not the case. An abusive man will have established a pattern of coercive control, which ensures that she thinks she cannot cope alone; he will undermine and put her down until she believes she can't do without him. Sometimes it can appear financially impossible to leave the situation, especially with children. Statistically, the time a woman is most at risk of being murdered is when she is trying to leave an abusive person; therefore, leaving is a very dangerous thing to do. The question we could replace this with is 'Why doesn't he stop?'

***'It took me two years before I left; it can be a long journey.'***<sup>37</sup>

**It doesn't happen in our church.** Domestic abuse also happens within the church community. Church leaders and prominent members of local churches have been found to be abusers. The reality for someone married to or in a relationship with an abuser in these circumstances can be horrific. On top of the abuse they are suffering, they can also feel a responsibility to the church their partner is leading, and feel compelled to stay quiet and continue to suffer.

**It happened because he was drunk/angry/made redundant.** Domestic abuse is commonly thought to be caused by alcohol or drug misuse; unemployment; mental or physical health problems; stress; or having lived through abuse as a child. Whilst any or all of these may be a trigger, they are not the underlying cause of domestic violence. Also, domestic violence is not about being angry or 'losing control'. In fact, it is about being in control. Women are often bruised on parts of their body that are not normally visible or are abused in private, so the fact that a man can be selective about where and when he harms his partner tells us that he is making a conscious choice.



Abuse happens because a person chooses to behave in a way that will enable them to have control and power over another person. Other reasons that are given for the perpetrator's behaviour are excuses that are used to justify the abuse.

**She must have done something to provoke him.** Often a man will tell his partner that she 'made' him do it, and many victims have been asked, 'What did you do to let things get this bad?' Abuse is a choice. A woman is never responsible if a man chooses to become abusive. This myth dangerously places the blame for the abuse on the victim rather than on the person responsible for the abuse.

***'I was asked, "What did you do to provoke him?" I was told I was to repent from being in this situation.'***<sup>38</sup>

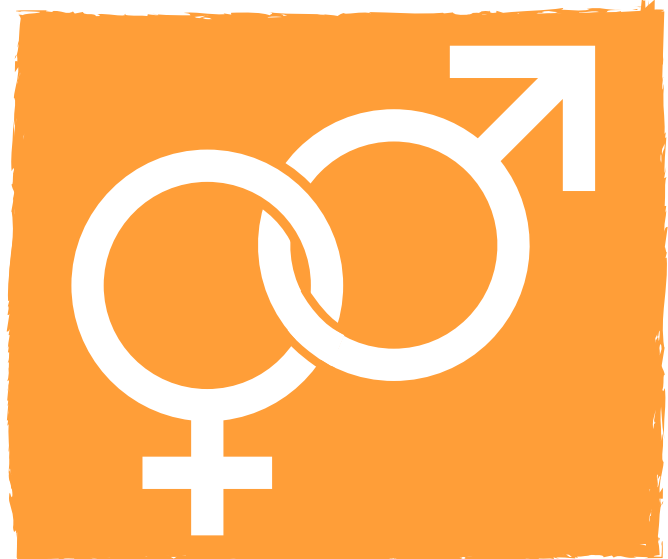
37. Christian survivor's comments to us at March 2014 event.

38. Christian survivor's comments to us at March 2014 event.

***It can't really be that bad; she must be exaggerating.*** It is important to believe a victim of abuse when they disclose to you, for you may be the first person they have informed. Expressing disbelief or indicating that they might have exaggerated may prevent the victim from seeking the help and support they need, and may risk their safety. Most women living in threatening and controlling situations are reluctant to admit what is happening to them for many reasons, including the shame of being abused. Women can blame themselves for being 'too weak', despite having survived the abuse thus far.

***'I felt weak and humiliated. Why have I put up with this? Most women are meant to leave the first time[...]'<sup>39</sup>***

***He has become a Christian and is repentant, so it won't happen again.*** Although it is possible for perpetrators to change and be transformed through facing reality, being repentant, making restitution, being held to account, doing the hard work personally to change (and with God's power), often a perpetrator will appear repentant or appear to become a Christian in order for his abuse to continue. If he seems to come to faith in Christ and/or appears repentant or remorseful, this cannot be taken at face value. To ascertain whether repentance or conversion is genuine it should be measured over a long period of time, and must involve consulting regularly with the victim, as she is most able to see if change truly has taken place.<sup>40</sup>



***Marriage is 'for better or worse'.*** Marriage vows that endorse the idea that you are committed to staying with each other 'for better or worse' are often used to further pressurise an abused women into staying with her spouse. Some women think that if they took a vow to love him, they need to stay with him even when things go from bad to worse – and even when their life is in danger. To dismiss or ignore a woman's suffering because she is married to an abuser and say that she must 'suffer' through it not only lacks compassion but underestimates the serious nature of abuse. It is dangerous to dismiss abuse as a 'normal marital problem'.

***Domestic abuse is a personal/family matter and we shouldn't interfere.*** Many people think that what happens in the home is private, and not their problem. Domestic violence – abusing, battering, assaulting or raping another person – is a criminal offence and therefore a public matter, which has far-reaching social implications for everyone. It affects the victim, their children and those around them.

**Reflection:** Can you think of other misconceptions about abuse that exist in your church or in society in general?

39. Fran, Hidden Hurt, [http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/fran\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_story.html](http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/fran_domestic_abuse_story.html)

40. There needs to be external evidence of an internal reality. At Restored we talk about the '5 Rs' of change for men who are abusive: recognise, repent, make restitution, reconcile, and restore; there is no short cut, and the last 2 Rs – reconcile and restore – don't always happen.

41. Christian survivor, March 2014 event.

*'Everyone thought he was a good Christian as he regularly went to church and was involved[...]The church we went to didn't want to interfere. They thought we had "normal marital problems". They didn't accept the fact that there is no excuse for violence against your partner.'*<sup>41</sup>

## 1.7 WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN? EXPLORING POWER AND CONTROL

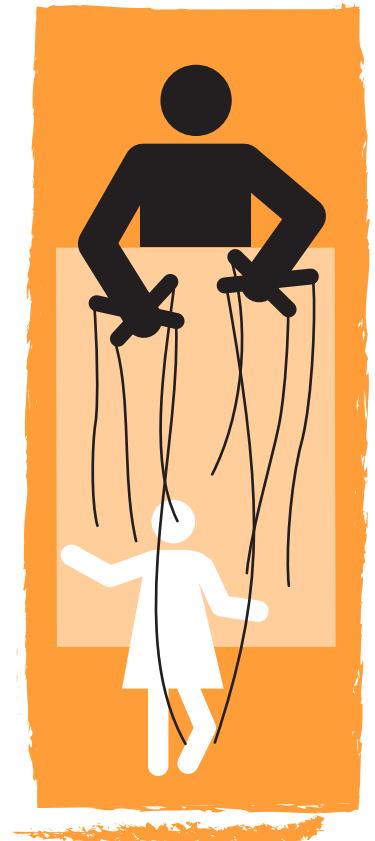
A perpetrator of domestic abuse chooses to behave in abusive ways in order to develop and maintain power over and control of their partner or spouse. The Freedom Programme ([www.freedomprogramme.co.uk](http://www.freedomprogramme.co.uk)) has illustrated the behaviours in this way:

A healthy relationship is when two people treat each other with trust and respect, which are hallmarks of a Christian marriage. In a healthy relationship, people:

- Support and encourage each other.
- Listen to each other.
- When they have a disagreement or conflict, talk about it and work it through together.
- Spend quality time together.
- Take responsibility for their own actions.
- Respect women and men equally.
- Engage emotionally and support one another.

## CONCLUSION

When talking about domestic abuse, it is important to talk about power. Domestic abuse results from unequal power relations between men and women. The abuse of power and control of another person stem from a choice, which is underpinned by the belief that one is superior to the other. This attitude needs to be addressed in order to see an end to violence against women.



## THE DOMINATOR IS HIS NAME CONTROLLING WOMEN IS HIS GAME



### KING OF THE CASTLE

- Treats you as a servant/slave
- Says women are for sex, cooking and housework
- Expects sex on demand
- Controls all the money

### THE LIAR

- Denies any abuse
- Says it was 'only' a slap
- Blames drink, drugs, stress, overwork, you, unemployment etc.

### THE HEADWORKER

- Puts you down
- Tells you you're too fat, too thin, ugly, stupid, useless etc.



### THE SEXUAL CONTROLLER

- Rapes you
- Won't accept no for an answer
- Keeps you pregnant OR
- Rejects your advances



### THE JAILER

- Stops you from working and seeing friends
- Tells you what to wear
- Keeps you in the house
- Seduces your friends/family



### THE BADFATHER

- Says you are a bad mother
- Turns the children against you
- Uses access to harass you
- Threatens to take the children away
- Persuades you to have 'his' baby, and then refuses to help you care for it



### THE BULLY

- Glares
- Shouts
- Smashes things
- Sulks

### THE PERSUADER

- Threatens to hurt or kill you or the children
- Cries
- Says he loves you
- Threatens to kill himself
- Threatens to report you to Social Services, DSS etc.

# NOT A SAINT THAT WE ARE SEEING JUST A DECENT HUMAN BEING



## THE LOVER

- Shows you physical affection without assuming it will lead to sex
- Accepts your right to say no to sex
- Shares responsibility for contraception etc.

## THE FRIEND

- Talks to you
- Listens to you
- Is a companion
- Has a sense of humour
- Is cheerful



## THE PARTNER

- Does his share of the housework
- Shares financial responsibility
- Treats you as an equal



## THE NEGOTIATOR

- Takes responsibility for his own well-being and happiness
- Behaves like a reasonable human being

## THE TRUTH TELLER

- Accepts responsibility
- Admits to being wrong



## THE GOODFATHER

- Is a responsible parent
- Is an equal parent
- Supports your dealings with the children



## THE CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

- Says you look good
- Values your opinions
- Supports your ambitions
- Says you are competent
- Values you

## THE LIBERATOR

- Welcomes your friends and family
- Encourages you to have outside interests
- Encourages you to develop your skills at work or at college

**PART 2: HOW CAN THE CHURCH RESPOND?**

This part of the pack looks at:

- 2.1 Inspiring change – what part can the church play?
- 2.2 Three levels of response for churches
- 2.3 The ‘4 Rs’ of responding to domestic abuse
- 2.4 Disclosure of abuse flow chart
- 2.5 Do’s and Don’ts in responding to victims and perpetrators



**2.1 INSPIRING CHANGE**

**What part can the church play?**

Christianity is the world’s largest faith community, as one-third of the world’s population is Christian.<sup>42</sup> The church is called to be a place that serves the community and reflects Christ’s love. We cannot underestimate the influence and responsibility we have in being salt and light and in transforming communities. Churches are often a natural place for many people to turn to in times of crisis. We can be either part of the problem or part of the solution.

Sadly, as we have heard from survivors,<sup>43</sup> women with Christian beliefs are too often prevented from speaking out about domestic abuse in their church communities. They can be reluctant about (and sometimes dissuaded from) approaching secular organisations that often do not understand Christian teaching on relationships, but, at the same time, they don’t they feel they can approach their own church. This could be because of the silence, shame and stigma surrounding their situation, or because their abusive partner may be part of the leadership or congregation.

**What Christian survivors want you to know**

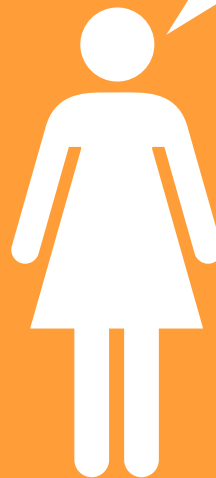
Restored asked survivors of violence what they would want people who go to church to know. The graphic to the right gives some examples of what was said.

In the light of these comments, how can we respond? Exploring the three levels and the ‘4 Rs’ of responding to domestic abuse is a good place to start.

**WHAT CHRISTIAN SURVIVORS WANT YOU TO KNOW<sup>44</sup>**



*‘Accept that domestic abuse happens, whether you’re a Christian or not. Victims need to be able to speak up and to be listened to and not judged.’*



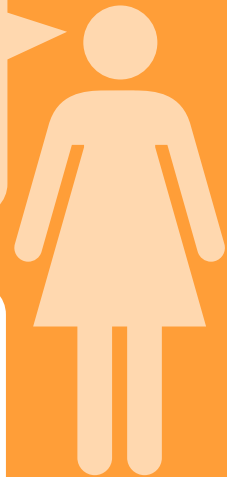
*‘We need positive examples of how the silence has been broken by preaching.’*



## Part 2: How Can the Church Respond?

***'Sometimes you don't know what is normal and what isn't – it's good to have a place to talk.'***

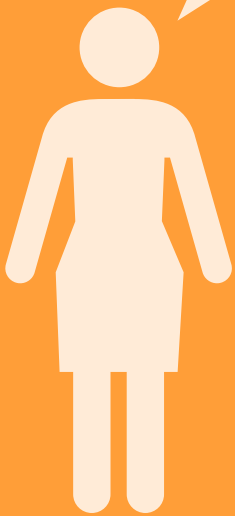
***'I wish people – my family and those at church – had listened to me. The church needs to have a greater understanding so that they can support you. They need to listen and understand. Not make excuses. Violence is not a normal marital problem.'***



***'I'd want to be believed. I'd want to have appropriate support from my pastor.'***



***'I wish I had had someone who would have walked with me, been a mentor or signposted me to places for help. You need a key person at church who listens to you and cares about what you are going through. I had no support at all and eventually had to leave the church.'***



***'Our church didn't want to get involved. In fact, I was further victimised as I was asked to leave the worship team while he continued in his role as treasurer!'***

42. The World Factbook: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_religious\\_populations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religious_populations) (accessed online 3/3/15).

43. Our work with Christian survivors informs the work that we do.

44. With grateful thanks to the women whom we met at the Christian Survivors event, March 2014.



## 2.2 THREE LEVELS OF RESPONSE FOR CHURCHES

Being able to respond to such a complex problem takes time, understanding and a calling to make a difference. Not all churches will be able to provide support for those affected, but we believe that every church at the very least needs to be aware of this issue that affects 1 in 4 women. We think there are three levels of response for churches to consider (see our Church Self-Assessment Tool at the end of this pack.)



### LEVEL 1: BE AWARE

This is the first step, and by using this resource you have taken it!

- a. **Believe it!** For many people in church, domestic abuse is a taboo subject: 'It doesn't happen here, and we don't like to talk about it.' However, often people in church will either know victims or be victims themselves. It is, therefore, vital that this subject is regularly on the agenda of the church.
- b. **Use preaching and teaching to make it plain that domestic abuse is wrong and against God's plan for our lives. Model a way of life that is Christlike.**
- c. **Pray for those affected (victims and perpetrators) and for the work of Restored and others who work in this area.**
- d. **Adopt the domestic abuse 'Charter for Churches' and display it: by agreeing to display the Charter, local churches can make a public statement and begin to communicate that domestic abuse is unacceptable and incompatible with a Christian way of life. Please see the Appendix.**
- e. **Display posters, leaflets and cards that offer information about help that is available locally. Place domestic abuse contact-number cards and posters in toilet cubicles. Remember that it is important for people to be able to access material discreetly.**

- f. **Make books on domestic abuse available from the bookstall or church library. Restored's website has some examples.**

**'You don't know what is available, you have no knowledge of what might be there for you, and so when you don't know what's there, it's hard to ask for things. If they made an approach saying, "We can put you in touch with these people who can help" or things like that ... ways of giving practical help ...'**<sup>45</sup>

### LEVEL 2: ENGAGE

This second step involves the church becoming a safe place, with more considered actions taken by the congregation and leadership.

- a. **Go deeper: personally reflect on your own attitudes to and beliefs about domestic abuse. Consider whether any need challenging. Use the guide to theological reflection included in Part 3 of this resource. Study, read blogs and books and use online resources (see Restored's website) to expand your understanding.**
- b. **Educate your church using local expertise: invite Restored or your local domestic abuse service to do presentations and/or training.**
- c. **Designate a special day each year when your church will focus on developing awareness of domestic abuse issues. 25th November is recognised as an international day of action to end violence against women. Publicity materials can be obtained from UN Women.**<sup>46</sup>
- d. **Review policies: do you have any safeguarding policies? Check whether they mention domestic abuse and add the national helpline number and other resources.**
- e. **Include discussion of domestic abuse in marriage and relationships courses or resources.**
  - Marriage preparation** – does it deal with the issues of conflict, power, control and abuse?
  - Youth group** – are you exploring healthy and unhealthy relationships?
  - Primary-age children** – are you considering what a good friend looks like? Check out Restored's primary-age resource on our website.

<sup>45</sup> Regan, L., Kelly, L., Morris, A., Dibb, R. (2007), 'If only we'd known': An exploratory study of seven intimate partner homicides in Englestone, CWASU, page 31.

## Part 2: How Can the Church Respond?

- f. Create a space for discussion (or a course) specifically for men on what it means to be a man and a disciple of Christ. Invite them to sign up to our First Man Standing campaign:



- Restored's** campaign First Man Standing is a call to men to: 'Respect all women, challenge other men and join in the cause with women to end violence against women.'

First Man Standing is an opportunity for men everywhere to be the first in their family, club, church or workplace to stand up and speak out about ending violence against women. Some forms of masculinity promote power and give men encouragement to control the lives of those around them, especially women. We are proposing three steps for men to follow in order to make a difference:

1. **Respect all women everywhere and demonstrate love and support for women and children in your family.**
2. **Challenge other men by speaking out to your friends and colleagues about ending violence and negative attitudes towards women.**
3. **Sign up to the White Ribbon pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women.**

### LEVEL 3: SUPPORT

The church seeks to provide holistic support for survivors and/or perpetrators in partnership with local service providers.

This final step is a big one, which involves churches **intentionally prioritising** supporting victims and/or perpetrators, dealing with disclosures in a holistic way and offering appropriate support in a professional way – as providers delivering a high-quality service in a loving, inclusive and non-judgemental manner. To do this, churches need to be clear about their role and remit (while remaining aware of their limitations), and to work within a good-practice framework. It is also good to work in partnership with local service providers and to set up effective local referral routes. **Specialist training needs to be sourced regularly and the staff need to be supported with good clinical supervision.**

**CAUTION:** If these measures are not implemented, more harm than good can come out of the situation. Survivors, as a result of the damage experienced at the hands of their church leadership, wisely cautioned some churches **not to get involved unless they were able to act in a way that provided safety for women and their children.**

*'To be honest, at the moment I would highly recommend the church not being involved at all in helping women who are victims of abuse, until they entirely re-educate themselves.'*<sup>47</sup>

46. UN Women: <http://www.unwomen.org/en>

47. Christian survivor, March 2014 event, via email.



**Working partnerships with local domestic abuse service providers.**

For various reasons, there is often a historical distrust of churches on the part of secular agencies, and vice versa. Churches need consciously to overcome this and to work in collaboration with professionals and secular agencies. Many local providers face shortages in statutory funding and a lack of resources. Churches can be a source of blessing to these agencies and the women and children who are supported by them. If this step is taken, churches need to:

- Be aware that domestic abuse is a specialist area of counselling and thus refer victims to relevant organisations, supporting them in going to these services.
- Ensure that a domestic abuse policy for your church, which covers safeguarding of women and children, is approved and available.

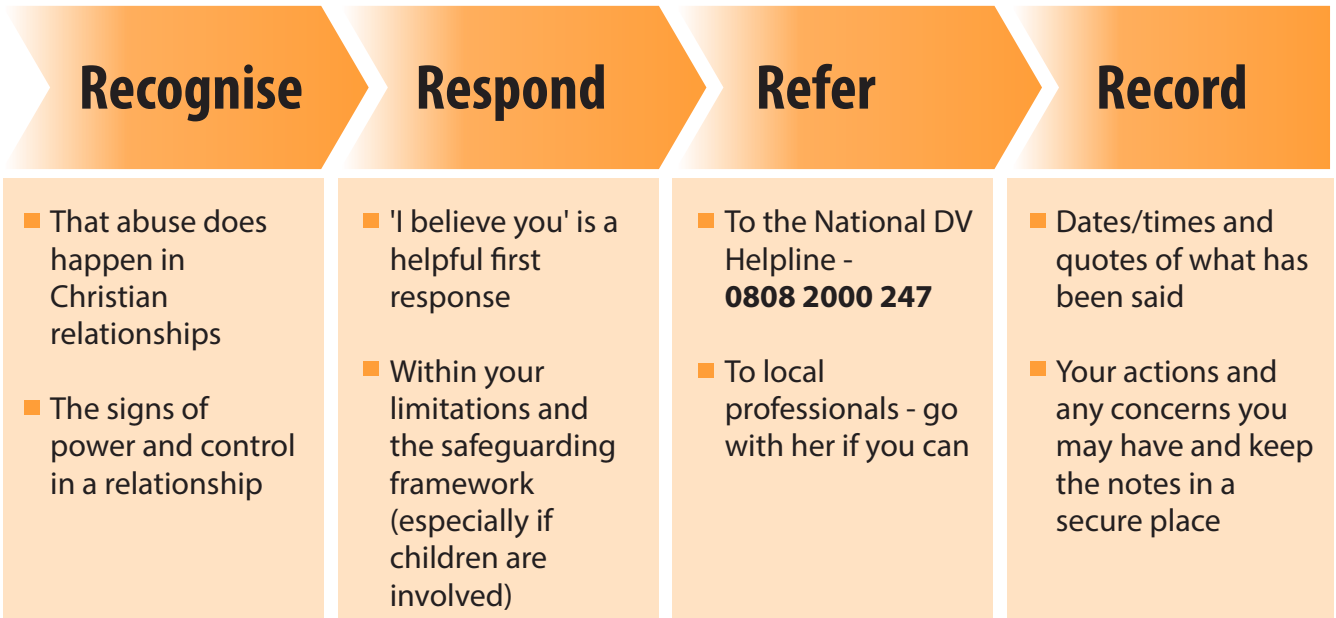
■ Engage with local services; consider financially supporting Women’s Aid, Refuge or another agency. Or develop a scheme to provide emergency packs of toiletries or small bags of toys for children who are in a local refuge.

■ Consider becoming part of a Domestic Abuse/ Violence Forum.

■ Build a relationship with local service providers that is based on trust and understanding.

‘It’s about ensuring that the women understand what their choices are, so we’re not telling them what to do; it’s about telling them what their choices are so that they decide. I think that’s important because they’ve been controlled, so it’s not for us to then take that [control].’<sup>48</sup>

## 2.3 The ‘4 Rs’ of responding to domestic abuse

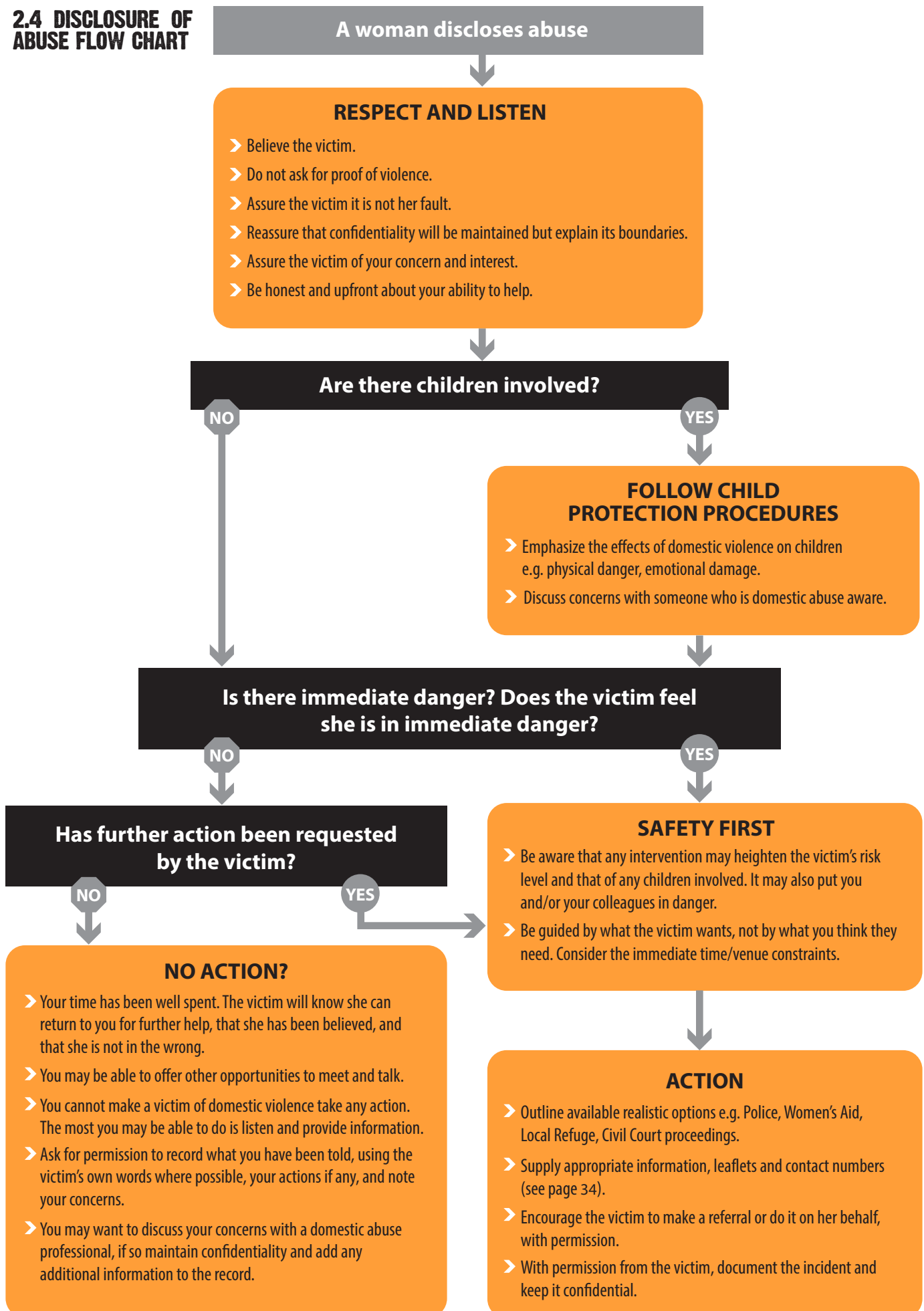


**Domestic abuse is everyone’s business**  
 Ring 101 or 999 in the UK if children are present or if you witness any incidents or hear of anything that concerns you, even if you are in doubt.

If you are based internationally, check out [www.hotpeachpages.net](http://www.hotpeachpages.net) for your local domestic violence service provider.

48. Coy, M. and Kelly, L. (2011) Islands in the stream: An evaluation of four London independent domestic violence advocacy schemes, p36.

## 2.4 DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE FLOW CHART





## 2.5 DO'S AND DON'TS IN RESPONDING TO VICTIMS

### DO'S IN RESPONDING TO VICTIMS

1. Find a safe place to talk.
2. Have someone else present – if this is acceptable to the woman.
3. Allow time for the person to talk.
4. Listen to what she has to say – and take it seriously.
5. Believe her; her description of the abuse is probably only the 'tip of the iceberg'.
6. Give priority to her immediate safety (and that of any children involved).
7. Empower her to make her own decisions.
8. Support and respect her choices. Even if she chooses initially to return to the abuser, it is her choice. She has the most information about how to survive. If there are children involved, however, their safety must come first and this choice is often overruled.
9. Give her information about relevant support agencies and, if appropriate, offer to contact an agency on her behalf and do so in her presence, or offer a safe and private place from which she can contact the relevant agency.
10. Use the expertise of those who are properly trained.
11. Reassure her that it is not her fault, she doesn't deserve this treatment, and it is not God's will for her.
12. Let her know that what the abuser has done is wrong and completely unacceptable.
13. Be patient with her.
14. Protect her confidentiality. Keep any information in a secure place and consider coding the information.

### DON'TS IN RESPONDING TO VICTIMS

1. Don't judge her or what she tells you.
2. Refrain from making unrealistic promises.
3. Don't suggest that she should 'try again'; evidence shows that victims experience a number of violent incidents before seeking help.
4. Never minimise the severity of her experience or the danger she is in.
5. Don't react with disbelief, disgust or anger at what she tells you or react passively.
6. Don't ask her why she did not act in a certain way.
7. Never blame her for his violence.
8. Never act on the person's behalf without her consent and/or knowledge (unless children are involved).
9. Don't expect her to make decisions quickly.
10. Never make decisions for her or tell her what to do.
11. Don't recommend couple counselling/ family mediation/marriage courses/healthy relationships courses. These will not help in domestic abuse situations.
12. Don't encourage her to forgive him and take him back.
13. Don't send her home with a prayer/directive to submit to her husband/bring him to church/be a better Christian wife.
14. Refrain from contacting the person at home, unless she has agreed to this.
15. Don't approach her partner for his side of the story, as this will endanger her.
16. Don't give information about her or her whereabouts to the abuser or to others who might pass information on to the abuser.
17. Don't discuss the situation with church leaders who might inadvertently/unintentionally pass information to the abuser.
18. Don't encourage her dependence on you or become emotionally involved with her; this can be problematic and make you seem to be the answer to her problems.



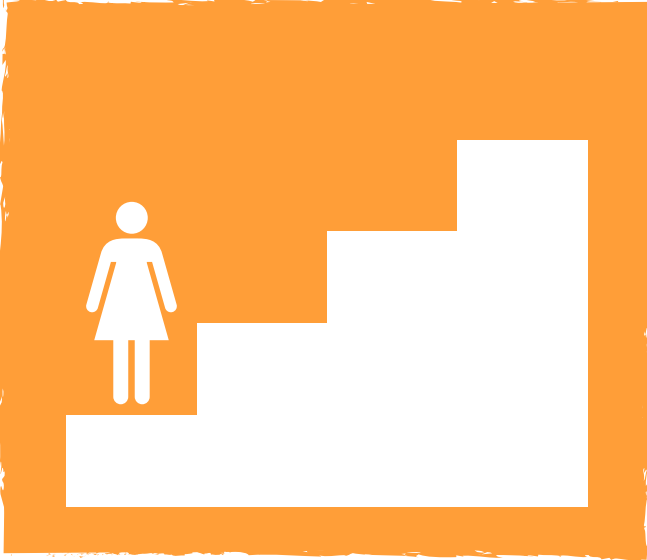
## 2.6 DO'S AND DON'TS IN RESPONDING TO PERPETRATORS

### DO'S IN RESPONDING TO PERPETRATORS

1. Regard the victim's safety (and that of any children) as the highest priority.
2. Meet him in a public place or in the church with several other people around, if meeting him is appropriate.
3. When not in his presence, pray for him. Ask God to help him stop his violence, choose to change his behaviour and find a new way of living.
4. Understand that he alone is responsible for his behaviour and that being abusive is a CHOICE.
5. Ensure that any actions you take are victim-centred and do not lose sight of the abuse he has perpetrated. Be particularly alert if he is claiming that he is also a victim, as this has been used as a tactic of control.
6. If he is still in the relationship, only speak to him about the abuse if he has been arrested, or his behaviour has been challenged by outside authorities.
7. If he is no longer in the relationship, only speak to him if his partner is in a safe environment and the abuser is not able to harass her (either personally or electronically by text, etc.), and his partner has given you permission to speak to him about his abuse.
8. Maintain awareness of the danger he may pose to you, to other people and especially to the victim, her children and her wider family.
9. Research treatment programmes and services such as RESPECT to help him change his behaviour.
10. Find ways to collaborate with the police, probation and other services to hold him accountable.
11. Address any religious rationalisations he may offer or questions he may have.
12. Name the abuse as his problem, not hers. Tell him that only he can stop it, and that you are willing to help, or to find someone who can.
13. Take seriously any murder threats he may make and inform the police, and, if they involve the victim, her children or her family, also inform her.
14. Share any concerns you have with a properly trained professional.
15. Remember that domestic abuse is always the responsibility of the perpetrator.

### DON'TS IN RESPONDING TO PERPETRATORS

1. Don't go to him to confirm the victim's story.
2. Refrain from meeting him alone and in private.
3. Never approach him or let him know that you know about his violence. If he is to be approached, this should be by a trained professional and should be:
  - a) with the victim's permission
  - b) with her awareness that they plan to talk to him
  - c) in the certainty that his partner is safely separated from him.
4. Don't allow him to use religious excuses for his behaviour.
5. Don't recommend couple counselling for him and his partner if you are aware that there is violence in the relationship.
6. Never give him any information about his partner or her whereabouts, if she has left him.
7. Don't be taken in by his minimising the abuse, denying he was abusive or lying about the abuse.
8. Never accept his blaming the victim or anything or anyone else.
9. Don't be taken in by his 'conversion' experience. If it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as he proceeds with accountability. If it is not genuine, it is only another way of manipulating you and the system and maintaining control of the process to avoid accountability.
10. Don't advocate for the abuser to avoid the legal consequences of his violence.
11. Refrain from providing a character witness for any legal proceedings.
12. Don't forgive an abuser quickly and easily.
13. Don't confuse his guilt, sadness or remorse with true repentance.
14. Never just send him home with a prayer.



## Other steps you can take:

- Ensure that the church has safeguarding procedures in place.
- Ensure that awareness of domestic abuse and its impact on children is raised among children's workers, that you have an effective child protection policy, and that church leaders and members are trained in safeguarding with regard to this issue.

## IN CONCLUSION

We can all be part of inspiring a change of culture when it comes to domestic violence, and the church has a significant role to play in this. It is important that churches respond to the issue; becoming aware is the first step, but responding in a safe and healthy manner is the way forward.

**Be aware of your limitations:** we all have many limitations, and not to take account of this or to fail to work within those limitations is likely to do more harm than good. The aim is to provide a 'safe' place for those affected and to refer them to the appropriate professionals.

Whatever level you are aiming at as a church, it is good to be aware that recovery can be a long process. This needs a commitment for the long haul in order to provide longer-term support.

*'My faith was very important to me even if the church did let me down. I knew Jesus wanted me to have happiness. He didn't want me to have resentment. All the names my husband called me weren't true. God saw me very differently, and that was my true identity.'*<sup>49</sup>

49. Christian survivor's comments to us at a March 2014 event.

## PART 3: REFLECTIONS ON THEOLOGY

This part of the pack looks at:

### 3.1 Introduction

### 3.2 Power and relationships

### 3.3 Reflection on eight key verses



### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence/abuse (DV/A) are often difficult issues to discuss, as they challenge our beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour. Yet, to bring an end to violence against women, it is vital that Christians take the time and summon the courage to challenge ourselves and those around us. We need to:

- Listen for the voice and wisdom of God
- Be open to being challenged
- Be open to changing our attitudes, opinions and behaviours
- Operate from a basis of love not fear
- Note that it takes courage to change
- Understand that it takes courage to challenge your friends, family and colleagues.

As we have reflected throughout this pack, we want the church to be a place of support and refuge. However, for many people, a lack of awareness is a key barrier, particularly when it comes to reading and interpreting Scripture in the light of this issue. Foundations for understanding the Bible's teaching on these matters are as follows:

- It is important to recognise the divine authority of the Bible: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness' (2 Timothy 3:16).
- The word of God in the Bible must be understood in relation to His incarnate Word, Jesus: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1:1).



- All this must be understood within the context of love: 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:13).
- For any and all actions we take, an account will be required of us: 'Each of us will give an account of himself before God' (Romans 14:12).

In view of this, we start with the fundamental issue of our **IDENTITY**.

### Who are you?

Made in the image of God, you are: Wonderfully created, beautifully made, loved, adored, restored, forgiven, amazing, worth dying for, unique, an heir, part of a family, highly valuable, legitimate, God's artwork, in direct communication with God Himself. You have direct access to the King of Kings, and you are powerful. You are loved just the way you are.<sup>50</sup>

When we don't see ourselves the way God sees us, we can experience problems with our identity, and, in some cases, an identity crisis. This lack can create a desire in many of us to grasp for meaning and significance outside our identity in Christ. We find ourselves being influenced by the world's system of power rather than God's.

50. Psalm 139:14; Romans 8:35–39; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 3:20; 1 John 5:18; John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 6:17; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; Ephesians 1:5; Colossians 1:14; Colossians 2:10. Taken from Freedom in Christ Ministries, [www.ficm.org.uk](http://www.ficm.org.uk)

## 3.2 POWER AND RELATIONSHIPS

Striving to find significance does not happen in isolation. When we feel a lack of power or significance, we often try to gain it through striving for things such as power over others, wealth, assets, fame, etc. A misuse of power within our intimate relationships creates a context where abuse can thrive. Therefore, when an identity crisis occurs (when we don't see who we are in God), our crisis affects and has an impact on those around us.

Let us take a few minutes to reflect on some of the following verses. Can they help us see how important it is to identify our misuse of power in our relationships?

- **God is love (1 John 4:8) and Christians are commanded to love one another (John 15:12).**
- **Every person is made in the image of God and has value (Genesis 1:27).**
- **God upholds the cause of the oppressed (Psalm 146:7).**
- **The essence of Christianity is sacrificial love and service, not power and domination (Matthew 20:16).**
- **The Bible instructs men to love their wives and lay down their lives for them (Ephesians 5:25).**
- **Our oneness in Christ is emphasised – there is no difference between male and female in the kingdom of God (Galatians 3:28).**
- **Christians are commanded to do good to all people (Galatians 6:10).**
- **Loving relationships in the family and in society are at the core of Christianity (John 13:34–35).**

### The example of Jesus

- **Jesus warned his followers not to seek or abuse power (Matthew 20:25–28).**
- **One of Jesus' purposes was to liberate the oppressed (Luke 4:18).**
- **Jesus brought healing and restoration (Matthew 12:15).**

- **Jesus respected and empowered women (e.g. Luke 13:10–13).**

Following Jesus involves serving others with love, not manipulating and controlling them. He commanded us to **'love one another'** (John 13:34). Family relationships are meant to reflect God's love. God grieves when a home turns into a place of fear, suffering and pain. His desire for those involved with domestic violence – both victims and abusers – is healing and wholeness. God is love and the power of love is far greater than the love of power. Having increased our understanding of how we can wrongly draw significance from the misuse of power, let us now try to examine a few concepts and verses from the Bible and see how they relate to the issue of power and our roles as men and women of God.



## 3.3 REFLECTION ON EIGHT KEY VERSES

There are not many verses in the Bible that relate to, still less condemn, violence against women. The story or the context is very important when looking at specific verses. We need to examine and reflect on biblical passages that are often misquoted and misused, in some contexts to justify abuse.

Take time to reflect on and discuss these eight key verses and the points they reveal.<sup>51</sup>

### Verse 1: Submission

**Ephesians 5:22** – 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord'

**Questions:** What do you think this verse says? Does it mean the wife has to obey her husband in everything?

51. Other scripture verses to explore: how does Jesus treat women in these passages: Luke 8:40–53; John 4:1–42; John 8:1–11?

Does it give men the right to punish or abuse their wives if they feel they aren't being submissive? Does God abuse us if we do not submit to Him?

Take a look at the verse in context. Read the previous verse, 5:21. What does this tell us?

*To submit does not mean to obey; it means to willingly choose to place oneself under another. It is always done in the context of love. Can you demand submission? Did Jesus demand, or offer people choices?*

**Thoughts:** Submission is a choice: it cannot be forced; it must be chosen. Not submitting can never justify abuse.

## Verse 2: Power and superiority

**Ephesians 5:23** – 'For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.'

**Questions:** Does this mean that the man is the head, and therefore he has all the power and the right to assert it? What does the example of Christ as the head of the church tell us about the kind of headship a husband has to model? Does 'headship' mean superiority or does it mean humility and the laying down of power in sacrificial love?

**Thoughts:** The headship Christ modelled was never forced – it was a choice. It also meant His being willing to lay down His life for His bride, the church. The Ephesians verse goes on to say: 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church' (Ephesians 5:25). How are husbands demonstrating this in their own homes?

## Verse 3: Creation of woman

**Genesis 2:18** – The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'

**Questions:** Does this mean that women are inferior to men, as they are seen to have been made 'second', and therefore that women's role is subservient? Consider the word 'helper' (ezer), here referring to women; this word often refers to God in Old Testament usage (e.g. 1 Samuel 7:12; Psalm 121:1–2). Is a doctor, who helps a patient, subservient to the patient?

**Thoughts:** Consider the suggestion of female inferiority in the light of all that has been said – does this concept still hold value?

## Verse 4: Weakness and sinfulness

**Genesis 3:6** – 'When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.'

**Questions:** Eve took the fruit, and gave some to her husband; how can this reinforce the idea that some have that women are weaker and more likely to be sinful?

Consider **Romans 5:12–21**: 'Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.'

**Thoughts:** Man and woman were both participants in the Fall; therefore, Adam was no less to blame than Eve.

## Verse 5: Ruling over

**Genesis 3:16** – To the woman he said, '...Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.'

**Questions:** Is this a description of how it is between men and women, or is it that a consequence of sin is that a man will rule over his wife?

**Thoughts:** Is there any evidence from the creation story to indicate that men and women were not equal before the Fall? How does Jesus' redemptive sacrifice change things?



## Verse 6: Understanding forgiveness

**Matthew 6:12** – ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.’

**Questions:** Can we see that sin has consequences and that forgiving does not remove those consequences? Should forgiving someone mean disregarding what they have done and maintaining the same relationship with them, regardless of whether they change? Should women continue to stay in a dangerous situation and face abuse in order to forgive their partners?

**Thoughts:** Forgiveness is a process and must not nullify the consequences of abuse or mean that the situation must continue as it always has.<sup>52</sup> Whether a person forgives or not, there are consequences to actions. Not holding a perpetrator of abuse to account can disable repentance, and therefore prevent a change in attitude and behaviour.



## Verse 7: Abuse as suffering

**1 Peter 1:6** – ‘In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.’

**Questions:** Do you think that a woman should accept abuse as being ‘her cross’ and that her suffering will only increase her faith? Do you think God wants abused women to be safe and protected, and not to put their lives in danger?

**Thoughts:** By staying in an abusive situation, a woman is risking being murdered. Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman expresses His compassion for the marginalised and wronged. Furthermore, this is an example of how Scripture can be misused or abused in order to keep a woman in an abusive situation. This passage wasn’t written with domestic abuse in mind, let alone to condone it.

## Verse 8: Marriage and divorce

**Matthew 5:32** – ‘But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery...’

**Questions:** Is marriage a contract or a covenant? What do you understand by this? Divorce is the breakdown of that covenant.

If a man abuses a woman and she then leaves him to protect herself, is she responsible for breaking the covenant? Isn’t he responsible for breaking the covenant by abusing her?

**Thoughts:** If his wife chooses to divorce him, she is making public his breaking of the covenant, not going against what the Bible teaches.

**‘Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.’ (Romans 12:2)**

God is love and gives us the freedom to have a loving relationship with Him. We can choose to demonstrate our love for Him and to reflect His love for us by having loving, healthy relationships. Just as God never humiliates or belittles us, a man who loves his partner must treat her with respect.

How does Jesus treat women in these passages?

**Luke 8:40–53**

**John 4:1–42**

**John 8:1–11**

You will see that Jesus always treats women with dignity and respect.

## IN CONCLUSION

We believe that:

- All violence against women is wrong and must stop
- Scripture cannot be used to justify violence
- The church has an answer and can be part of the solution
- Men and women can work together to end violence
- The time to act is now... join with us!

52. Stelling, D. (2007), *Spiritual Help for Abuse Victims*, [http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/spiritual\\_help\\_for\\_abuse\\_victims.html](http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/spiritual_help_for_abuse_victims.html) (accessed online 6/8/15).



## OUR VISION

Christians, rise and take action. No longer will we remain silent. No longer will we turn a blind eye. No longer will we justify violence against women with our thoughts or scriptures. No longer will we think it's none of our business. We, as a global church and as Christians, need to make a stand and say this is our business; this is our church. All violence against women is wrong and must stop.

**Will you join us on this journey?**



***'Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.'***

— Hebrews 12:1



## APPENDIX

### 1: Useful numbers

### 2: The Domestic Abuse Charter

### 3: Church Self-Assessment Tool



## 1: USEFUL NUMBERS

For our most up-to-date useful numbers, please see our website: <http://www.restoredrelationships.org/help/>

Freefone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline in the UK:

**0808 2000 247**

*(run in partnership between Refuge and Women's Aid)*

**Emergency services: 999**

**Women's Aid:**

[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

**Refuge:**

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

**Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 80 10 800**

**Scottish Women's Aid: 0131 475 2372**

[www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk](http://www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk)

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid: 02890 331 818**

[www.niwaf.org](http://www.niwaf.org)

**Edinburgh – Shakti Women's Aid:**

[www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk](http://www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk)

**West London – Southall Black Sisters:**

<http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/>

**Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge: Referral Line:**

01604 230311

[www.nvcfr.org.uk](http://www.nvcfr.org.uk)

**The Haven Project (Wolverhampton): 01902 572140**

[www.havenrefuge.org.uk](http://www.havenrefuge.org.uk)



### Rape helplines

**Rape Crisis: 0808 802 9999**

[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

Life Centre (Sussex):

<http://www.lifecentre.uk.com/>

### General support

**Samaritans: 0845 7909 090**

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

**Shelter: For housing advice: 0808 800 4444**

[www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

**Victim Support: 0808 1689 111**

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

**Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111**

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

### Legal support

**Community Legal Service Direct: 0845 345 4 345**

[www.clsdirect.org.uk](http://www.clsdirect.org.uk)

**Rights of Women: 020 7251 6577**

[www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

**National Centre for Domestic Violence:**

0800 970 2070

[www.ncdv.org.uk](http://www.ncdv.org.uk)

### Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

**National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline**

T: 0800 999 5428

E: [help@galop.org.uk](mailto:help@galop.org.uk)

[www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse/](http://www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse/)

## Support for children and young people

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

**NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000  
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Get Connected (16–25-year-olds):** 0808 808 4994  
[www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)

## Support for men

**Men's Advice Line (for men experiencing domestic violence):** 0808 801 0327  
[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)

**Respect (for perpetrators of domestic violence):**  
[www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

## Support for women and children from minority ethnic communities

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Forced Marriage Unit:** 020 7008 0151  
<https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>

**Refugee council:** 020 7346 6777  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

**Immigration Advice Service:** 020 7357 6917  
[www.iasuk.org](http://www.iasuk.org)

**Asylum Aid:** 020 7247 8741

**Southall Black Sisters:** 020 8571 9595

**Muslim Community Helpline:** 020 8904 8193  
020 8908 6715  
<http://muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk>

**Jewish Women's Aid Helpline:** 0800 59 12 03  
[www.jwa.org.uk](http://www.jwa.org.uk)

**Somali Women's Centre:** 020 8752 1787

**Newham Asian Women's Project:** 020 8552 5524  
[www.nawp.org](http://www.nawp.org)

**Kiran: Asian Women's Aid:** 020 8558 1986  
[www.rdlogo.com/cwp/kawa](http://www.rdlogo.com/cwp/kawa)

**Chinese Information and Advice Centre:** 020 7692 3697  
[www.ciac.co.uk](http://www.ciac.co.uk)

**Latin American Women's Aid:** 020 7275 0321  
[www.lawadv.org.uk](http://www.lawadv.org.uk)

## Other support

**Network for Surviving Stalking:**  
[www.nss.org.uk](http://www.nss.org.uk)

**National Stalking Helpline:** 0808 802 0300  
[www.stalkinghelpline.org](http://www.stalkinghelpline.org)

**One Parent Families:**  
[www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk](http://www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk)

**Women and Girls' Network:**  
[www.wgn.org.uk](http://www.wgn.org.uk)

**National Association for People Abused in Childhood:**  
[www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk)

**Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Violence (for bereaved friends and family):**  
[www.aafda.org.uk](http://www.aafda.org.uk)

**Mothers Apart from Their Children:**  
[www.matchmothers.org](http://www.matchmothers.org)

## International support

**Trauma Recovery Centre – to help children to recover from trauma:**  
[www.trc-uk.org](http://www.trc-uk.org)

**The Boaz Trust – serving destitute asylum seekers:**  
[www.boaztrust.org.uk](http://www.boaztrust.org.uk)

**Snowdrop Project – a fresh start for survivors of human trafficking:**  
[www.snowdropproject.co.uk](http://www.snowdropproject.co.uk)



# THE DOMESTIC ABUSE CHARTER

## This church:

1. Understands domestic abuse to be the abuse of a person physically, sexually, psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, socially or financially within an intimate or family-type relationship, which forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'.
2. Holds that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and irreconcilable with the Christian faith and a Christian way of living.
3. Accepts that domestic abuse is a serious problem, which occurs in church families as well as in wider society.
4. Undertakes to listen to, support and care for those affected by domestic abuse.
5. Will always place the safety of women and children affected by domestic abuse as the highest priority.
6. Will work with domestic abuse support agencies, will learn from them and support them in appropriate ways, and will publicise their work.
7. Believes in a God of love, justice, mercy and forgiveness.
8. Will teach what it means to be male and female, equally made in God's image.
9. Will play its part in teaching that domestic abuse is a sin.
10. Will seek to appoint advisors to encourage the use of good practice guidelines and to keep the church informed about the implementation and development of these guidelines.



National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247



# CHURCH SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

**Domestic abuse is a specialist area that requires referral to professionals.** However, as churches we can work at becoming places of safety and support for those facing domestic abuse. Take the challenge and work through this SELF-ASSESSMENT to develop momentum so that your responses become increasingly safe and effective.

<b>LEVEL 1: AWARE</b> <b>Minimum: Demonstrate their understanding regarding domestic abuse within the church context. Evidence could include:</b>	<b>Priority?</b> (1=high, 10=low)	<b>Details</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date by when</b>
Up-to-date literature on domestic abuse is displayed in the church building.				
A poster of 'Church Charter' and national DV helpline numbers are displayed in foyer and toilets.				
A Restored Church Pack is made available for staff and volunteers, the website and resources are signposted, and social media are signed up to in order to receive updates.				
<b>LEVEL 2: ENGAGE</b> <b>Demonstrate their commitment to tackling domestic abuse within the church context/ wider community. Evidence could include:</b>	<b>Priority?</b> (1=high, 10=low)	<b>Details</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date by when</b>
Violence against women (VAW)/Domestic abuse (DA) is challenged in sermons, talks, home groups and prayer groups (...for instance – especially on the nearest Sunday to 25th November (International End VAW Day) or 8th March (International Women's Day). (Minimum 1).				
Clear signposting to local professional services within the church building and in manuals (safety and appropriate support). Key pastoral leaders aware of appropriate support.				
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued on next page</i></p>				



# Church Self-Assessment Tool

<b>LEVEL 2: ENGAGE</b> <i>Continued from previous page</i>	<b>Priority?</b> (1=high, 10=low)	<b>Details</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date by when</b>
Appoint a 'point person' who is responsible for keeping resources up to date, and researching local referral routes/professional services.				
A link person who enables the resourcing of a local refuge from the church (clothes, equipment, crisis packs) is established in order to resource the sector.				
DA is covered in safeguarding policies; procedures are implemented and reviewed annually. Regular training opportunities are offered.				
<b>LEVEL 3: SUPPORT</b> <b>Demonstrate a commitment to supporting victims/survivors and/or perpetrators.</b> <b>Evidence could include:</b>	<b>Priority?</b> (1=high, 10=low)	<b>Details</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date by when</b>
Dealing safely with disclosures (Recognise, Respond, Record, Refer); being aware of personal and church limitations.				
Pastoral team/Leaders are trained to offer meaningful and safe support to women and children and/or perpetrators OR a 'Survivors' group' is established and resourced.				
DV training day is offered regularly (issues of gender and power are explored).				
Children's work, young people's work, marriage preparation courses, relationship courses and divorce recovery courses all have appropriate information on domestic abuse, and clear support/signposting is offered.				



[www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org)

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This resource is the end product of the work and dedication of many people, and the unfailing love and grace of God.

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