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MUTUAL
SUPPORT
MAGAZINE

ISSUE:6



MY STORY
BY ELAINE HOOK

HOW
TECHNOLOGY
MAKES
STALKING
EASY

A FEW THINGS
YOU COULD DO
TO SUPPORT
SOMEONE
EXPERIENCING
DOMESTIC OR
EMOTIONAL
ABUSE

WHAT IS LOVE?

LOVE

DOESN'T HURT

INTRODUCING
OUR
LOVE
DOESN'T HURT
FASHIONABLE TOTE BAG



ONLY AVAILABLE AT
WWW.DVUK.ORG



BROWSE OUR
LOVE
DOESN'T HURT
T-SHIRT COLLECTION



ONLY AVAILABLE AT
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MUTUAL SUPPORT MAGAZINE

IS THE ONLINE
MAGAZINE FOR
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE UK CIC -
A NOT-FOR-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION SET
UP TO PROVIDE
INFORMATION
AND SUPPORT
TO VICTIMS OF
DOMESTIC AND
EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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 facebook.com/domesticviolenceuk

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What is

Love

- Love doesn't criticise, use cruel or harsh words or stop you from being your true self. It doesn't 'knock you down a peg or two', it doesn't want you to fail.
- Love doesn't hurt, or denigrate, or leave you alone.
- Love doesn't ignore you when you're in the same room or leave you crying in the small hours wondering how you managed to upset him/her again.
- Love doesn't try to confuse you, tell you that you said something you didn't, or didn't do something you did. It has no desire to deceive you.
- Love doesn't scream at you or shout at you. It doesn't insult you or call you names.
- Love doesn't cross your boundaries and make you feel that you need to defend yourself.
- Love isn't jealous. It isn't controlling.
- Love isn't sulky or moody or angry or frightening.
- Love doesn't lie, or twist the truth. It doesn't make promises it has no intention of keeping. It doesn't treat you badly then deny it.
- Love doesn't expect you to be available on demand.
- Love doesn't tell you you're too stupid to manage without their 'help'.
- Love doesn't make you feel guilty for doing something you enjoy, even if they can't see the merit.
- Love doesn't hit you or pinch you too hard only to laugh at your pain and say 'I was only playing'.
- Love doesn't own or possess you.
- Love doesn't tell you you're worthless because you've been a stay at home Mum instead of working and earning and 'paying your way'.
- Love doesn't make you feel as though your opinion counts for nothing.

LOVE SHOULDN'T HURT.

Real love heals, supports and feels good.

Love is kind and gentle.

Love is accepting and sweet.

Love holds you when you need it and when you don't. Picks you up when you fall and giggles with you when you're daft, but never judges.

Love knows you're not perfect, but loves you and accepts you for who you are.

Love is tender and treats you gently when you're fragile.

Love helps you to be your best, it lets you follow your dreams.

Love let's you go out with the girls and says 'have a good time!'

...and means it...

Love tells you to get out there and try something new, even though you've never done it before.

Love is strong, supportive and helps you to feel like you can do anything.

Love tells the truth even when it's uncomfortable or difficult.

Love makes a cup of tea and looks after the kids when you're ill.

Love holds your hand when you cry, even if it's just at that sad advert on the telly.

Love adores the way you look, you're hot.

Love thinks you're funny and laughs at your jokes instead of tries to better them.

Love sees your talents and encourages you to use them.

When love looks at you, you can only see the love in their eyes, there's no agenda or ulterior motive.

JUST LOVE.



*LOVE is equal.
LOVE is safe.*

If you don't feel safe, it isn't love.

Abuse happens in all kinds of relationships, though abusers are often men and victims are often women, we know very well that this is not always the case.

Abuse is often hard to recognise. Here at MSV we hope to help victims realise they are in abusive relationships and empower them to take safe action.

By sharing our stories we hope that others can find the strength to help themselves and get support from relevant agencies.

Jo Challis

Many Small Voices Profile: Many Small Voices is a network committed to speaking out against domestic abuse and offering support. Real stories by real people. Many small voices can make one big voice.

Website:

<http://manysmallvoices.wordpress.com/>

HOW TECHNOLOGY MAKES STALKING EASY

MOST VICTIMS DON'T IMMEDIATELY THINK "I HAVE A STALKER". IT STARTS OFF MUCH MORE SUBTLY.

The victim may just think this person is acting a bit oddly, then they find them annoying or a nuisance; someone who doesn't take hints or respond to a direct request for them to leave the victim alone.

Later, when the victim realises that this person is not going to stop bothering them, and that they have become obsessed, they become frightened.

The most serious stalking cases can lead to serious assault, rape or murder.

It leaves all victims devastated.

STALKING IS A SERIOUS CRIME. IT'S THE NAME WE GIVE TO SOMEONE FORCING YOU TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM AGAINST YOUR WILL. IT LEAVES VICTIMS FEELING HELPLESS, PARANOID, MISTRUSTFUL, ANXIOUS, FRUSTRATED, ANGRY, FRIGHTENED AND EVEN SUICIDAL. IT AFFECTS THEIR WORK, RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTH.

There are five types of stalker

- 1. Intimacy seekers** want to create an intimate, loving relationship. They are delusional and believe the victim is a soul mate and that they were 'meant' to be together. They may have never met; for example, the victim could be someone famous.
- 2. Incompetent suitors** are men with poor social or courting skills. They are fixated on someone. They sometimes have a sense of entitlement and believe they should be in a sexual relationship with the person they desire. The victims are usually not available, because they are either dating or married.
- 3. Rejected stalkers** pursue their victims in order to reverse, correct, or avenge a rejection (e.g. divorce, separation, termination).
- 4. Resentful stalkers** pursue a vendetta because of a sense of grievance against the victims – motivated mainly by the desire to frighten and distress the victim.
- 5. Predatory stalkers** spy on the victim in order to prepare and plan an attack – often sexual – on the victim. They are often sadistic and can include serial rapists and paedophiles.

MOST STALKERS HAVE PERSONALITY DISORDERS AND ARE DELUSIONAL. HAVE YOU TRIED TO REASON WITH AN OBSESSIVE, DELUSIONAL PERSON? IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. THAT IS WHY RESOLVING STAKING IS SO DIFFICULT. PEOPLE GET STALKED FOR YEARS - NOT JUST ONE OR TWO BUT FOR AS MANY AS TEN YEARS...

Stalkers will not only pursue the primary victim, but also those around the victim, in order to gather intelligence about the victim and disrupt those relationships. They will also use those relationships to intimidate or humiliate the victim. It usually works because friends and family don't understand or can't cope with the situation, leaving the victim isolated and more traumatised.

TECHNOLOGY IS INCREASING STALKING

Stalking is increasing due to technology. The biggest percentage of stalking perpetrators are ex-partners. They account for approximately 60% of cases.

Breaking up is hard to do, but it is even more difficult in the post internet, social network and mobile phone world.

A study published in September 2012 in "Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking" found that "stalking" an ex on Facebook – or frequently checking his or her profile and friends list – is linked with "greater current distress over the breakup, more negative feelings, more sexual desire, more longing for the ex-partner, and lower personal growth."

Indeed, experts say Facebook can prolong post-breakup pain, while delaying emotional recovery.

There will be those broken-hearted people who go from checking up on their ex to becoming obsessed, especially if they didn't want the relationship to end. They start off trying to win the person back and when

that doesn't work they become angry and vengeful.

We are also seeing an increase in stranger or acquaintance type staking or abuse.

Our digital presences mean that people you meet casually, or who read your Twitter, or are friends of friends, can link to your online information.

Social networks offer a history about you – an insight into who you really are, your friends, likes, dislikes, sense of humour - and don't forget all those pictures. You can get a feel for the person without having ever met them.

That is all some individuals need to decide they want a relationship with you.



**IN THE PRE-INTERNET/
MOBILE DAYS, IT WAS
HARDER TO STALK
SOMEONE.**



**THE AMOUNT OF
SURVEILLANCE
TECHNOLOGY
AVAILABLE ONLINE IS
ASTONISHING. IT IS
CHEAP, EASY TO FIND
AND EASY TO USE.**

STALKING IS EASY WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY

In the pre-internet/mobile days, it was harder to stalk someone.

Mostly stalking meant sending letters, standing outside for hours at a time, or showing up at the person's work, pub or grocery store. The stalker had to live close. It took dedication and time. The stalker didn't get a lot of information. Yes, they knew where you were going, but not how you were feeling, who you were talking to on the phone, what you were saying.

The internet has changed all of that.

Our digital lives give stalkers the opportunity to gather large amounts of information and insight into us. If they can access an email account, they can read our correspondence, find contacts, or send out emails that can embarrass or alienate people.

Spyware is a popular tool – for £35 they can install spyware on a computer and see everything you do online, access passwords and turn on your webcam to watch and listen to you.

The amount of surveillance technology available online is astonishing. It is cheap, easy to find and easy to use.

The stalker can access it from their computer – no longer do they need to stand outside in the rain. Nope, to a stalker, a bottle of wine and the internet is their night's entertainment.

JENNIFER PERRY'S PROFILE

Jennifer Perry is an internet safety expert and consumer advocate. She wrote the first UK Internet Safety Guide for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Stalking in 2008. In 2012, she wrote new National Guidelines to Digital Stalking: Technology Risks for Victims on behalf of the Network for Surviving Stalking and Women's Aid.

Website: <http://www.digital-stalking.com/>

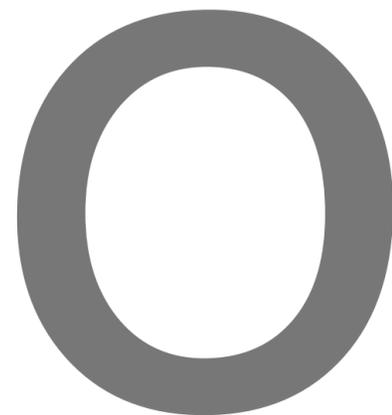
WORKING WITHOUT FEAR

24.04.14

NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS DAY
NATIONAL STALKING HELPLINE

PRESS RELEASE

WORKING WITHOUT FEAR CAMPAIGN TO BE LAUNCHED ON NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS DAY 2014



On 24th April, National Stalking Awareness Day 2014, a Working Without Fear campaign will be launched to inform employers and employees about how to deal with the issue of stalking in the workplace.

Rachel Griffin, Director of Suzy Lamplugh Trust, which manages the

National Stalking Helpline and National Stalking Awareness Day, says:

“The issue of stalking in the workplace is far more common than many people think. Research shows that in the UK, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men are stalked at some point in their lives (British Crime Survey 2011). Stalkers can be colleagues or clients - and of those stalkers who are not, 50% will still present themselves at the victim's workplace. This creates risk not only for the victim but also their colleagues or manager who may have to interact with the stalker if they do turn up to the premises.”

Stalking is repeated unwanted contact from one person to another which demonstrates either a fixation or obsession and cause the victim to feel alarm, distress or fear of violence. Stalkers who are not related to the workplace often make contact with the victim there because of ease of access or simply in order to cause them further distress.

The Working without Fear campaign aims to inform and advise employers as to what they can do to protect and support their employees if they are being stalked.

The campaign will be launched at a Working without Fear Conference in London on 24th April.

WORKING WITHOUT FEAR
24.04.14
NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS DAY

Working Without Fear
Conference | 24th April 2014 | London



SPEAKERS INCLUDE

- ELFYN LLWYD MP
Plaid Cymru
- SIOBHAN BLAKE
Deputy District Crown Prosecutor for Wales
- RACHEL GRIFFIN
Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- ACC GARRY SHEWAN
Greater Manchester Police
- LAURA RICHARDS
Paladin
- FIONA BOWMAN
Facilities Management Consultant
- TRACEY MORGAN
Stalking Campaigner
- HARRY FLETCHER
NAPO
- NEIL BLAKELOCK
Respect

This year's National Stalking Awareness Day campaign is focusing on stalking in the workplace.

Our conference is aimed at Employers, Police, Support Workers, HR Managers, Facilities Managers, Trade Unions and Security Officers. The conference will cover:

- ✓ Support and protection for those stalked at work
- ✓ Understanding the stalking experience
- ✓ Policing and the law
- ✓ Assessing risk
- ✓ The role of the Unions

TO BOOK YOUR FREE SPACE
Email: info@suzylamplugh.org | Telephone: 020 7091 0014
Website: www.suzylamplugh.org



For more information about stalking in the workplace and to access a Guide to Employers, visit the National Stalking Helpline at:

<http://www.stalkinghelpline.org/about-the-helpline/nsad14/>

Employers can also learn more about the issue by attending the forthcoming Working Without Fear Conference on 24th April,

Email: info@suzylamplugh.org for further information.

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Charity Profile

BERKSHIRE EAST AND SOUTH BUCKS WOMEN'S AID (BESBWA)



Berkshire East and South Bucks

WOMEN'S Aid

Until Families are safe

Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid (BESBWA) aims to relieve the distress of individuals and families who have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, from domestic abuse.

Since 1976 BESBWA has provided emergency temporary accommodation with emotional and practical support for women and their children fleeing domestic abuse. As a Queens Award winning charity, BESBWA currently runs three refuges locally that can accommodate up to 14 families from all over the United Kingdom. In 2012

BESBWA launched one of the first male refuges in the South East of England, and prides itself on its ground breaking work with male victims and recognising their unique needs.

Alongside a Refuge Service, BESBWA runs an award winning Advocacy and Outreach Service, set up in 2008, that supports victims of domestic abuse within the local community, covering Slough, South Bucks and Windsor and Maidenhead. Shortly after its inception, the team began supporting male victims from within their local area and across the UK. The

Advocacy and Outreach Team working to CAADA Leading Lights standard focuses on ensuring victims of domestic abuse, and any of their dependent children, are able to access the support that they need and that they are safe while living in the community. Through this service we can refer any children of a client to our Children's Services Team.

The creation of a ground breaking Children's Services Team in 2009 and winning an award only a year after its inception was a huge achievement for BESBWA and makes their domestic

abuse service truly outstanding. Crucially, BESBWA recognise the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and the cycle of abuse that can occur when a child or young person witnesses it. Around three quarters of women that come to our refuges have experienced domestic abuse as a child and/or stayed in a refuge with their own mother. As a result their reach is not only for families now but for the strength of future families.

This team reaches out to children and young people through a variety of creative ways including group work, workshops,



schools projects and one to one support. They recognise and care for the emotional, psychological and educational needs of the children and young people, and have a personalised approach to therapeutic support. The focus of this service is both early intervention and post domestic abuse support. In the last year we supported 3741 children and young people. Due to the success of the services, BESBWA have written guidance for National Women's Aid on how to support children and young people in the community affected by domestic abuse, found in the Safe and Sound Manual, and are their 'champion consultants' regarding Children's Services.

BESBWA also runs a Freedom Programme which supports survivors through a group process to recognise domestic abuse. They are constantly thinking of ways to make this service most closely meet the needs of survivors, and have developed the 'Freedom Plus' programme that focuses less on the abuse and more on realising ambitions and dreams in life and working towards reaching them (life beyond the abuse). As these programmes are currently for women only however BESBWA are planning to deliver a similar programme for male victims of domestic abuse in 2014/15 called Strength, developed by Dr Nicola Graham-Kevan, a leading reader in the psychology of aggression.

Raising awareness about domestic abuse within the local community is also an essential aspect to BESBWAs work; they reach out into the local community through training services and awareness raising workshops, focusing on statutory, health and educational professionals. This work is crucial as many survivors continue to display concerns about the stigmas that surround disclosing domestic abuse, and how they will be viewed by service professionals and their community. Last year 385 professionals were trained, including the Thames Valley Police, social care teams, local midwives, and local health professionals.

BESBWA are whole-heartedly committed to the families, individuals and children who come into their care, rebuilding the lives of survivors of domestic abuse and raising awareness within their local community about domestic abuse.

In the summer of 2014 BESBWA are rebranding to become The Dash Charity which will see a new website and identity for the charity. To keep in touch with what we do please follow us on Twitter @BESBWomensAid and for more information about our work please visit get in touch at info@ebwomensaid.org.uk

ALONGSIDE A REFUGE SERVICE, BESBWA RUNS AN AWARD WINNING ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH SERVICE, SET UP IN 2008, THAT SUPPORTS VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, COVERING SLOUGH, SOUTH BUCKS AND WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD.

WOMEN'S Aid
The National Helpline

SEE IT CLEARLY...

Recognise relationship abuse. If it feels wrong it probably is.

If you'd like to talk to someone about your relationship or are concerned about a friend, please call our telephone helpline on **0800 085 2654** your call will be treated in confidence.

You can also get in contact by...
Tel 01753 549865, Email info@ebwomensaid.org.uk
www.ebwomensaid.org.uk

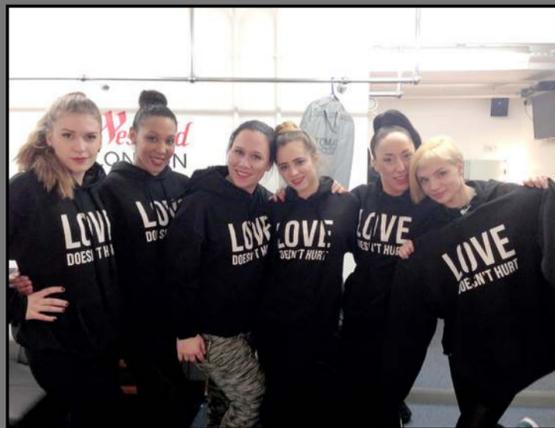
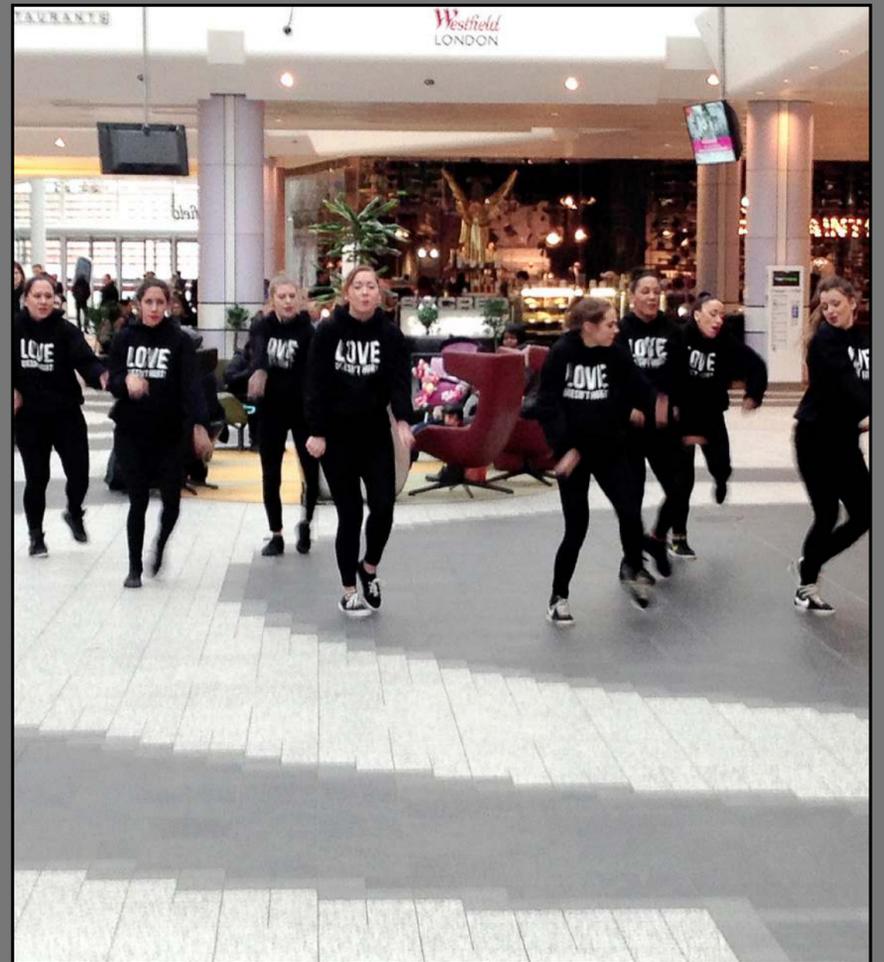
If it is safe to do so please join our Facebook page, you can find us at [Facebook](#) BesbWA. To follow us on Twitter please search [Twitter](#) @BESBWomensAid for our latest news and highlights.

Pictures From Our **Love Doesn't Hurt** Campaign



At Westfield
London





LOVE DOESN'T HURT

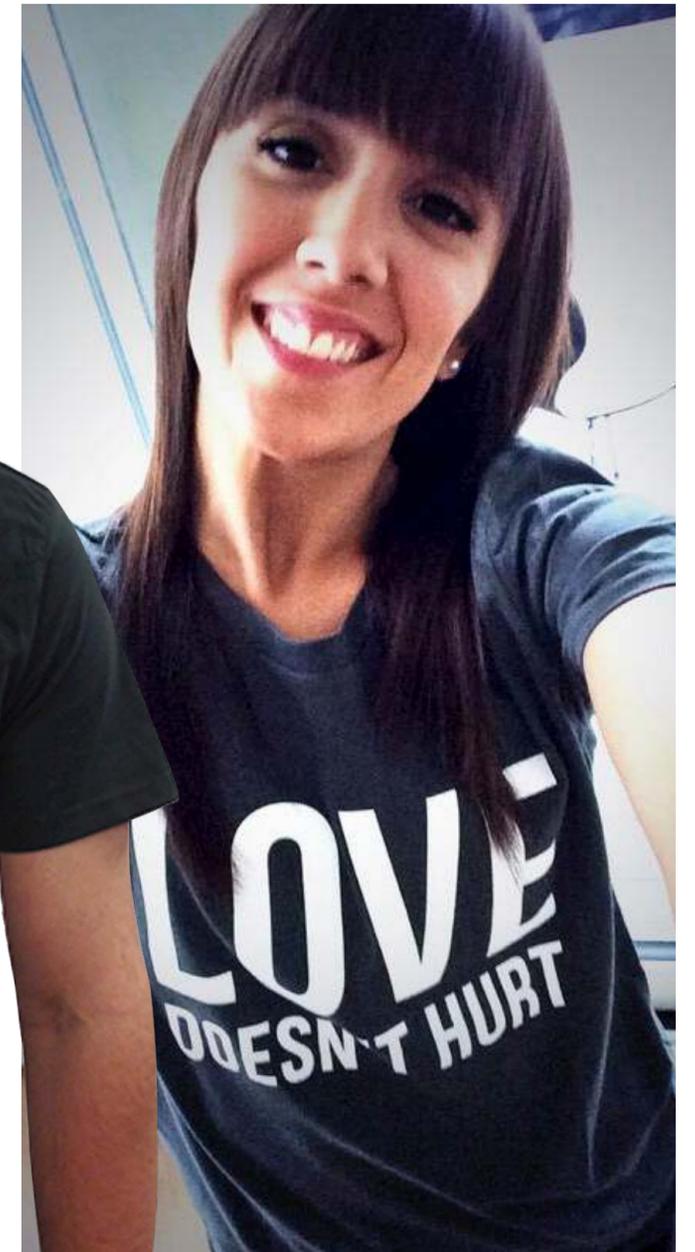
Love doesn't hurt when it is built on a foundation of trust, and respect. It is easy to lose sight of these ideals and find yourself falling into the patterns of an unhealthy relationship.

This article will look at some examples of behaviour you shouldn't see in a loving relationship because LOVE DOESN'T HURT

A QUICK TEMPER

One of the first warning signs of an individual who is likely to become an abuser is in the way they respond to stress or frustration. If a person loses their temper over seemingly insignificant things, it is likely that the larger stresses of marriage and family will bring out the worst in their behaviour.

Walking on eggshells to avoid setting off your partner's temper can't be regarded as true love.



AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

People capable of abusing their loved ones often respond with aggressive behaviour early in the relationship. If you find yourself with someone who tends to use their physical size to intimidate you, looming over you while lecturing or yelling, or is just generally hostile, you may be in an abusive relationship. Remember that love doesn't hurt, physically or emotionally.

DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR

Another red flag warning of abuse to come is the level of respect someone gives to those around them. If your partner talks down to you, disregards your feelings and opinions or repeatedly tells you that you are worthless, then it's likely that you are in an abusive relationship. If you're not sure whether your partner is being disrespectful to you, particularly if they claim they are just joking around, try watching how they behave when interacting with others. If a person is blatantly disrespectful towards people in jobs they feel are beneath them, such as servers in restaurants or cashiers in stores, you should consider it a strong warning about their character.

LOVE DOESN'T HURT

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Many abusers also use a passive-aggressive voice to continue to break down your opinions of yourself. By indirectly insulting you through the use of jokes or sarcasm, abusers give themselves a way to claim that they were only kidding – they never meant to hurt you.

This type of aggressive behaviour can be quite insidious, gradually chipping away at your self-esteem without you realising what is happening. It may begin with your partner being disrespectful, but over time this behaviour will worsen, and soon you may find out you are constantly on guard to protect your feelings.

CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

Once an abuser can see that they have got under your skin, they will begin to add controlling behaviour to the emotional abuse. This may begin by dictating what meals you will eat, insisting on going to restaurants or fixing items they know you dislike to show power. Soon, they will try to control how you dress or do your hair, what soaps or perfumes you use; the relationship is becoming increasingly abusive.

ISOLATING BEHAVIOUR

Before you know it, controlling behaviour will become part of everyday life, and it won't surprise you when your partner begins to dictate who you can and can't spend time with. Any friends or family members who express concern over their behaviour will be seen as a threat, prompting further attempts to destroy your support system.



FINANCIAL ABUSE

Abusers keen on isolating their victims from their support system often actively attack their financial independence as well. You may find your abuser constantly calling your workplace or showing up unannounced, or causing you to take sick days when they injure you. You may soon find that their controlling behaviour have left you without a job, depositing your money into their accounts with no access to bank records or funds.

EXCESSIVE JEALOUSY

Abusive partners are often excessively jealous of every aspect of their partner's lives. They will insist on having nicer things, taking any gifted items for themselves. They may buy themselves the latest, most expensive electronic gadgets while insisting that you have no need of a car or mobile phone. They will carefully scrutinize every aspect of your life to ensure that you have nothing left that they could take.

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Just as with jealousy over possessions, an abusive partner will be jealous of any healthy relationships you have as well. You may find them going through your phone to see who you have been taking to. If they don't like what they see, you will find yourself accused of lying about your behaviour, or of cheating on them with friends of the opposite sex. Abusers are often insecure, and this will show in their behaviour at every turn.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

All of the forms of abuse we have discussed go hand-in-hand with physical abuse. Slapping, pinning you down, pulling your hair, hitting, kicking, biting, or beating you with objects should never be allowed to continue. Abusers will often try to keep bruises and injuries to areas you can cover up with clothing and may actively prevent you from seeking medical treatment. A partner who truly loves you will never emotionally or physically hurt you.

THREATENING TO KEEP YOU SILENT

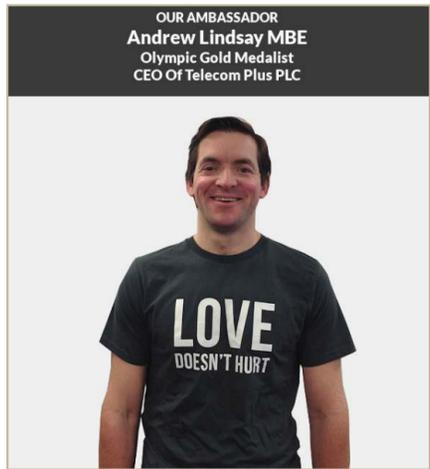
Of course, one of the major hallmarks of abusive behaviour is threatening to keep you from seeking help. An abuser will try to convince you that you will be seen as a bad parent and that your children will be taken away if you go to authorities, or that they will find and kill you if you try to hide. Their previously violent and unpredictable behaviour often means that victims will stay with their abuser because of these threats.

CONCLUSION

If you are in an abusive relationship and require an urgent response or need in-depth support, please contact the **National Domestic Violence Helpline** on: 0808 2000 247, the **Men's Advice Helpline** on 0808 801 0327 or The **National LGBT Helpline (Broken Rainbow)** on 0300 999 5428.

You can also find support organizations using our **ONLINE DIRECTORY** <http://domesticviolenceuk.org/find-support-near-you>

Remember, love doesn't hurt in a healthy relationship, and everyone deserves to live with respect.



MY STORY

By Elaine Hook

This is a story, my words and my feelings which I have needed to write to free myself. This will become part of my healing. It's about me and only me. I know now that I am beautiful, kind, warm, friendly, generous and passionate. I feel most people like me. I am usually happy and I know I am intelligent, creative, clever and inspirational. But back then I was none of those things...to both him and myself. None of you will believe what happened to me and that I allowed it to happen. The misery and desperation I went through every day deep inside on a physical, emotional and sexual level was completely devastating. It much easier to write this now having fled and where healing has begun. But healing has been a very slow process unlike the abuse.

Over a 20 year period I had come to believe that I was unintelligent and worthless; that I would never be anything or anybody. All I ever wanted was to be loved deeply by the most important person in my life – my husband but sadly this was not to be. I wanted so desperately to be loved unconditionally by him. I simply wanted happiness; not a lot to ask for one would think. I realise now that with this man this was impossible.

I had lived the first half of my life with an emotionally abusive father and went onto marry a mentally abusive man. Both men were extremely clever, intelligent and held senior professional positions in the work place; both were



workaholics. Both were arrogant and had huge egos, were always right and were very controlling. Both of them made me feel that I was difficult to live and deal with and that they were the victims by having to put up with me. They both made me feel I was not good enough for them and never would be. I always felt second class and never accepted for the good in me. it wasn't until much later in life that I realised subconsciously I had mirrored my father in my husband.

Most people are aware of physical abusers, hitting and beating their victims, because outwardly bruises and black eyes are visible. But we have to remember there are other abusers, the silent and unseen types, slowly chipping away at their victims self-esteem and confidence, playing with the psyche and wearing them down mentally and emotionally. Abusers wear many hats and come from many different backgrounds, they all have different tactics, all extremely damaging to their victim and abusers do not necessarily look like abusers – whatever an abuser is supposed to look like.

My abuser was well spoken and dressed, highly intelligent and moving in high circles of power. We attended flamboyant dinner parties with people of stature and I was expected to behave, dress and communicate appropriately...I was the fluff on his arm. If I ever stepped out of line I was succumbed to mental, verbal and sexual abuse behind the front door of our beautiful five bedroomed home.

I was living with an abuser who controlled me so intensely and by doing so destroyed my personality and confidence and I became isolated, lonely and desperate. I couldn't stomach the stress of social gatherings and the pretence and lying and the "performance" I had to give to ensure people thought everything was OK and that I like being treated the way I was being treated. I became entirely his solitary prey. Even my mother wouldn't visit anymore. I was intensely scared of him, he was constantly threatening me and I believed he would hurt me if I challenged him. It was easier to toe the line and conform. I was the ever faithful

wife. I lost all my friends and had no one to confide in. I was ashamed and scared to tell anyone, even my family. I came from a respectable upright family where abuse was never spoken about or contemplated and where marriage was an institution and "you just got on with it" and your marriage vows were for life. No one in my family was divorced let alone abused; why was this happening to me I asked in the darkness every night; I prayed every night for a better day tomorrow.

He got a huge kick out of frightening me; maybe just driving too fast in a dangerous situation until I couldn't breathe, would hyperventilate and throw up and he would laugh. He knew what he was doing and was unconcerned, he loved the feeling he got from this past time. I could do nothing right from cooking to cleaning, to ironing his shirts to my makeup. As a size 14 I was always too fat and overweight. My driving was crap and I didn't know what I was talking about.

My abuser was cunning and clever, to the world he was "Mr Charming" and no

one ever believed that he could possibly be abusing me. In front of people he was always the nicest man in the world, caring and respectful. In the early days he was clever enough to contain his temper and physical violence so there is nothing for anyone to see, therefore no one believed and nothing can be proved. But as time went on he was unable to control his temper and eventually became physically violent which got progressively worse. Then there was his threatening behaviour and disrespect, subtly making me believe white is black, until he confused me so much that I believed I was going out of their mind. I believed I was mentally unstable and succumbed to his abuse further. I was nothing and only good enough to be his puppet.

He continually informed me I was and would be nothing without him. When I threatened to leave he sarcastically reminded me that no one would have me, there was nowhere to go and on top of that I had no money of my own. Consequently I believed that my

THEN THERE WAS HIS THREATENING BEHAVIOUR AND DISRESPECT, SUBTLY MAKING ME BELIEVE WHITE IS BLACK, UNTIL HE CONFUSED ME SO MUCH THAT I BELIEVED I WAS GOING OUT OF THEIR MIND. I BELIEVED I WAS MENTALLY UNSTABLE AND SUCCUMBED TO HIS ABUSE FURTHER. I WAS NOTHING AND ONLY GOOD ENOUGH TO BE HIS PUPPET.



abuser owned me and that my world would not turn without him. He took away my free will; he spoke for me, made decisions for me and allowed me no choices or opinions. He forced me to make professional, personal and reproductive choices I didn't want and wouldn't normally make. In amongst all this turmoil he forced me to have a child or he would divorce me on the grounds of non-consummation of our marriage. He threatened to humiliate me as a non-fertile woman again degrading me and ensuring I felt worthless.

He raped me on numerous occasions forcing me to have sex because he needed it and held me down even through my tears. He ensured the act was completed on his terms, in his time frame and satisfying his own desires. He was demanding, kinky and rough and did not stop when asked. He showed no compassion for me even when I suffered gynaecological problems and had no empathy or sympathy and was still extremely demanding and rough sexually. When he was particularly vile he with-held affection and used affection and sex to blackmail me. He definitely got a kick out of degrading me and enjoyed his power of force; power and force in the bedroom definitely turned him on.

This sick man criticised every move and action I made; he was never satisfied with anything we did or owned. Nothing was ever right and he was never thankful or grateful. He controlled, isolated, threatened, terrorised, insulted and belittled me. He told me I was crazy, a head case, got a screw loose, stupid, dishonest, a liar, psychotic, mentally unstable, should be locked up, put away and that I had a personality disorder. These types of abusers confuse their victims so badly that the victim eventually believes the propaganda being thrown at them. You feel dirty, humiliated and disgusted with yourself. The abuser tells

you over and over that you are crazy and paranoid. Mine often said I had a personality disorder and behind my back and unbeknown to me he wrote to my GP stating this. He damaged my whole being with his mouth, mind and fists.

Thirteen years later I now realise all the above are classic forms of abuse and are more painful, dangerous and lethal than the kind that leave bruises. Bruises heal and go away but words and mental torment stay with you a lifetime. All forms of abuse leave deep wounds and scars and I believe you never totally get over an abusive relationship. You can try to forgive and understand but you never forget. There will always be a tiny nugget of damage remaining deep inside the brain for the rest of your life. No amount of therapy or forgiveness can ever heal this minuscule nugget. What happens is, over time, it doesn't surface as often or as traumatically, the hurt becomes less raw.

There are many kinds of abuse, some of them obvious, some of them not; all of them dangerous and degrading. Some are more insidious than others; the most insidious are subtle; their victims not only believe them but also blame themselves for the abuse they are suffering. When the psychopath is really clever he uses all of his tactics and convinces his victim that it is her fault, or that the victim imagined it or that they get everything out of proportion.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A TINY NUGGET OF DAMAGE REMAINING DEEP INSIDE THE BRAIN FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. NO AMOUNT OF THERAPY OR FORGIVENESS CAN EVER HEAL THIS MINUSCULE NUGGET. WHAT HAPPENS IS, OVER TIME, IT DOESN'T SURFACE AS OFTEN OR AS TRAUMATICALLY, THE HURT BECOMES LESS RAW.

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF ABUSE, SOME OF THEM OBVIOUS, SOME OF THEM NOT; ALL OF THEM DANGEROUS AND DEGRADING. SOME ARE MORE INSIDIOUS THAN OTHERS; THE MOST INSIDIOUS ARE SUBTLE; THEIR VICTIMS NOT ONLY BELIEVE THEM BUT ALSO BLAME THEMSELVES FOR THE ABUSE THEY ARE SUFFERING.

These subtle forms of abuse are the hardest to stop because it is obviously harder to see. My abuser used all these tactics with no conscience and no remorse.

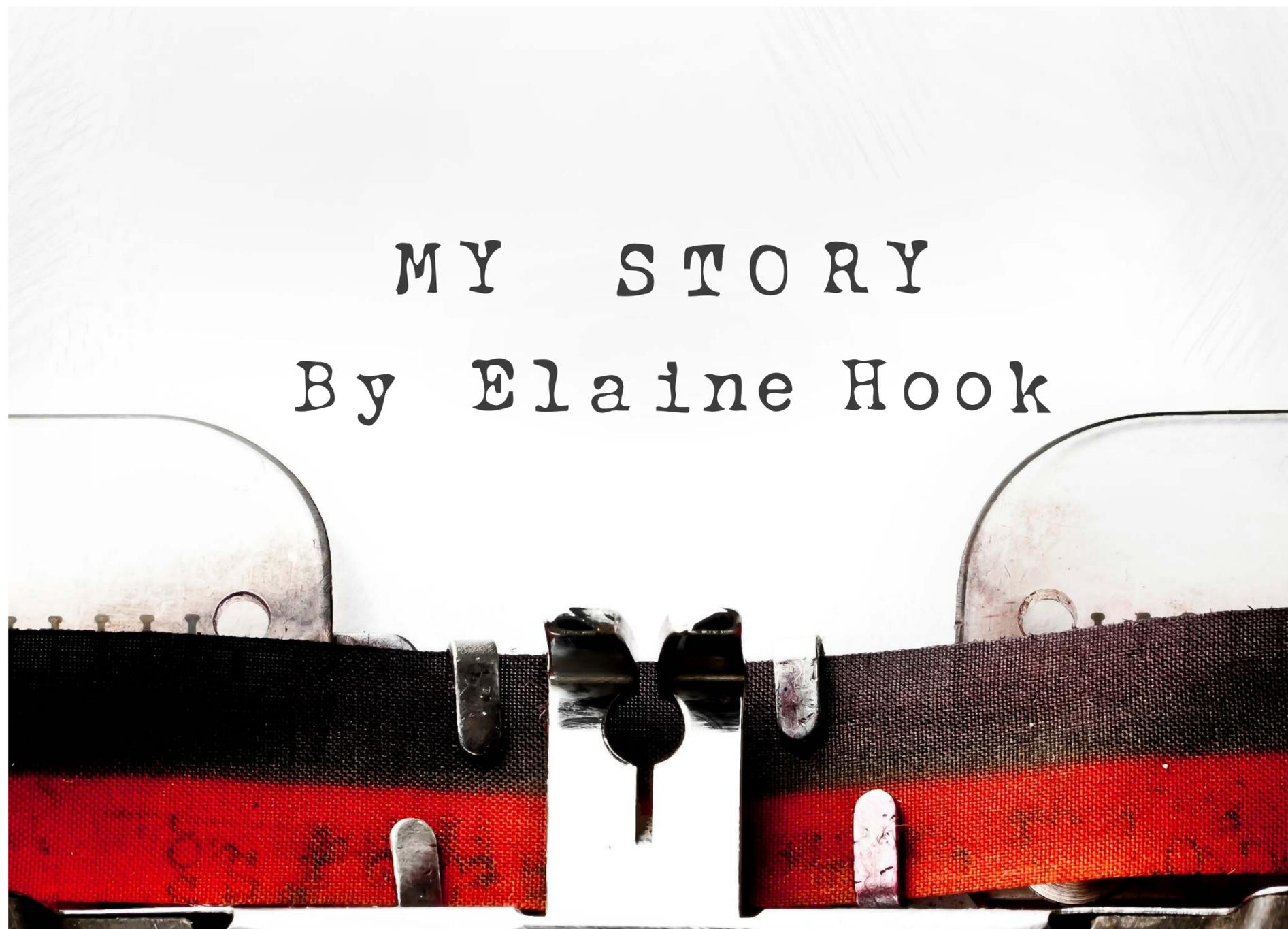
I was driven to severe depression and alcohol abuse; I was on anti-depressants for years. Abuse at any time, of any kind is potentially fatal to the victim. I became an alcoholic and suffered an eating disorder and the worst part of my situation was I believed it must all be my fault and I must be a very bad person. I stayed; trying to make it right but consequently fed my abuser which authorised him to continue. I never complained, consequently he didn't realise how unhappy I was. I protected myself by denying it was happening. It was too painful to admit what was happening to me, too embarrassing to tell anyone and I didn't know if anyone would believe me anyway. I didn't want to believe that the person who should be my soul mate and confidante would treat me this way. I had suicidal thoughts on numerous occasions and I stopped crying because I couldn't, I was all cried out. I became numb and felt nothing; nothing could hurt me. I had a cold façade and became a symptomatic alcoholic. I drank to hide the pain and to be able to deal with him. It dulled my senses and I didn't care what he said or did to me. I spent the last few years of my marriage living in a fog, drifting from day to day, merely functioning. I

looked twice my age and I was like a time bomb waiting to explode; a prisoner in my own skin. I stayed out of the house as much as possible to keep away from him which only made for a bad time when I eventually got home.

It was only when I was pushed almost to the edge that I faced what was happening to me. Nevertheless, I had no money, a child, and nowhere to go so it wasn't easy to see a satisfactory way out. I knew I had to run away but where was I to go and how was I going to finance it. Being abused for me was like a drug and giving it up was extremely traumatic. For years I had known nothing else and I was leaving all my possessions and my home. I felt so guilty breaking up the family unit and hiding his daughter away but I had no choice. After I left he called me every name under the sun, threatened to kill me and kidnap my daughter. I didn't see my personal possessions again for thirteen years.

No one is exempt from abuse; it can happen to anyone. The best jobs, schools and backgrounds, low or high incomes will not assume no abuser behind someone's front door. I am smart, intelligent, attractive and well educated but domestic abuse did not pass me by. When I finally plucked up the courage to leave I finally had a good career and a little money of my own. I would never have believed I would become a victim to a psychopath; abuse doesn't discriminate by colour, race, religion, spirit or socio-economic background. It can touch anyone any time and often when you least expect it.

NO ONE IS EXEMPT FROM ABUSE; IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE. THE BEST JOBS, SCHOOLS AND BACKGROUNDS, LOW OR HIGH INCOMES WILL NOT ASSUME NO ABUSER BEHIND SOMEONE'S FRONT DOOR.



ELAINE'S BIO:

Elaine is a Writer & Blogger of her travels across four continents as a teacher working with early years and primary children in many challenging countries. She is also an Education Consultant and has specialisms in safeguarding, special educational needs, early years and gifted and talented education. Elaine is a proud survivor of 20 years of domestic abuse and an advocate for the safety, peace and hope of women and children. Elaine works hard writing curriculum and training materials as a volunteer for several children's charities. You can read Elaine's blog at averyenglishmrsteacup.blogspot.com follow her on Twitter @ed2inspire and contact her on elainehook@hotmail.com

I never believed it would happen to me; this wonderful free spirited me. Never stereotype or assume.

Over the 25 years of our marriage I realise he thought he could buy my loyalty, love and affection by giving me a grand home with a high income. He would constantly tell me how lucky I was, that he did everything to make me happy and that I should be extremely grateful to him for everything we had. He would tell me that he went to work to earn enough money to ensure I had everything I desired and wanted. But "things" can never make you happy. I needed love safety, peace and contentment. I live alone now but I have never been happier and at peace with myself and the world. He hit me three times. The third time I had it recorded at a solicitors and the doctors, as I knew no one would ever believe me and he would always deny it. His behaviour was the epitome of domestic abuse.

He almost destroyed me. Eventually I summoned up the strength and courage to "flee" one Monday afternoon with my daughter after school to a hotel. We hid for days while he subjected us to verbal abuse. The police and my solicitor were informed and our address was made a safe house. We moved around a lot as I was paranoid he would find me. For two years or more I felt he was following me. He never did find us and slowly we accumulated a home again but the post-traumatic stress I suffered was almost as severe as the abuse. My daughter was traumatised and under police guard at school for a while. She also suffered an eating disorder and depression. Thirteen years later we have both recovered to the point where we can live again and are no longer scared of him at all, but it has taken thirteen years. We both have good careers and work hard and take care of each other. Her relationship with her father is still very estranged. But today we wear the proud badge "Survivor" and live peacefully in the world.

ERADICATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE IN FAITH COMMUNITIES OVER THE LONG HAUL

Domestic Violence & Abuse (DVA) is a pandemic that has been permitted to fester in faith communities over decades, as if it cannot be remedied¹. But how can the systems that have sustained it be transformed, and its generational consequences be undone? The extent of DVA indicates that any progressive work will need to be deployed over the long haul.

Statistics reveal that this society group is not immune from the pandemic. In fact, the incidence of DVA is at the same level as non-faith communities^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6}.

To make matters worse, I have found that due to religious codes and belief systems, experiences of DVA are the most complex in faith communities¹.



**A SURVEY BY JEWISH WOMEN'S
AID SHOWS THAT 1 IN 4 JEWISH
WOMEN ARE VICTIMS OF DVA**



A survey by Jewish Women's Aid shows that 1 in 4 Jewish women are victims of DVA³. The study which was carried out across the spectrum, from Liberal to Orthodox Jews, showed bare differences between religious affiliations. But figures were higher among strict Orthodox Jews.

The survey also reports that most of the women interviewed believed that DVA was a hidden issue, often "brushed under the carpet" when it appeared, within the Jewish community³. 62% said they were not aware of any rabbi who publicly addressed the pandemic, but 11% of strict Orthodox Jews mentioned that their Rabbi had specifically addressed it. Otherwise, as one woman in the study also reported, her Rabbi turned her away, commanding her to return to her perpetrator, despite her injuries³.

Another report also illustrates how a church refused to assist a victim who had been strangled, left for dead, and had then suffered a complete psychotic breakdown for a year⁴. She was told,

"We do not believe in divorce. Go back to your husband". She asked them if they really wanted her to return to the man who had tried to kill her. They responded, "Yes ... no help at all".

A 2002 study by the Methodist Church showed that 1 in 4 women, and 1 in 9 men, in the church experienced DVA, with the main perpetrators being husbands or male partners⁵. Furthermore, 25% had experienced DVA for a year or less; 54% for up to 5 years; 21% for 10 years or more, with one respondent reporting to have lived with her abuser for 30 years. 1 in 5 reported that they had lived with and witnessed DVA in their childhood.

The response of faith leaders, and their communities is entwined to their belief systems¹. The study by the Methodist Church, also reports that 74% of ministers and lay workers "felt" that their approach to DVA had been influenced by their beliefs⁵. Some stated that the church was either out of touch with the reality of this pandemic, or out of touch with the rest of the society.



Others expressed that they saw a conflict between the church's mindset on marriage, redemption, endurance, forgiveness – and that of dealing with violence and abuse. Hence they would preach for perpetrators to be forgiven, and for a marriage to be saved, rather than for victims to flee from their abuser. This is a consistent pattern in faith communities, though there is no mention of repentance on the part of the perpetrator. Where there is seeming sorrow from the perpetrator, abuse soon starts again⁵.

All survivors in this study said that they stayed in their marriage because they believed they had a huge responsibility of preserving their marriages. Although survivors found support from individual colleagues, they reported that the response of the church as a whole was "very poor and wanting". Christian forgiveness was largely seen to imply continuing welcome

to the abuser as a member of the church, while their ex partner was excluded. Victims who were church ministers reported that they put up with DVA due to fear of losing their jobs, and homes provided by the church.

Some faith communities like Muslim and Sikhs reveal the complexities brought in by closely knit extended families, in the exertion of DVA on women⁶. These exacerbate experiences of women, with actions branded as "honour" to their religious codes. In addition, there are incidences of family members – not in laws or husbands – abusing women and girls. At times these are carried out in the context of long held cultures and traditions especially among people of Black and Minority Ethnicities^{1, 2, 6, 7, 8}.

In turn victims from these ethnicities are less likely to access help because of cultural

or traditional reasons; and the feeling that the honour of their families would be damaged if they seek help^{6, 8}. There are a multitude of social and cultural pressures, which lead women to believe that leaving their abusive husband is wrong, and that they must tolerate sexual abuse, where it occurs, because it is their duty to be submissive and obedient.

The National Zakat Foundation also reported that Muslim victims who contact them range in age from 18 to 72, as compared to the national average of 15 to 44⁹. These women were victims of mental and physical abuse, sexual abuse, and forced marriages. Refusal to comply with an arranged marriage could result in honour killing. The report also showed that where women know of the help available to them, they reach out to access it^{1, 7}.

The Metropolitan Police Sikh Association (MPSA) exposes that 20% of Sikh families in Britain are affected by DVA, in a context where families extend the most pressure regarding marriage and relationships to 30% of British Sikhs⁶. The MPSA report that in the Sikh culture, boys are often brought up as superior to girls. Hence girls are at times treated as commodities. Horrendous crimes are then committed against them by their own male and female family members⁶.

MPSA adds that violence against women is a manifestation of historical unequal power (and control) relations between men and women that have resulted in domination over and discrimination against women by men. This has developed a crucial contributor to violence and abuse, and a social mechanism by which women are forced in to a subordinate position as the property of men. Unfortunately, this is reinforced by both customary practices, and the legal system^{6, 8}.

MPSA also emphasises that though there is now a greater recognition of women's rights, gender based violence has been on the increase in South Asian communities.

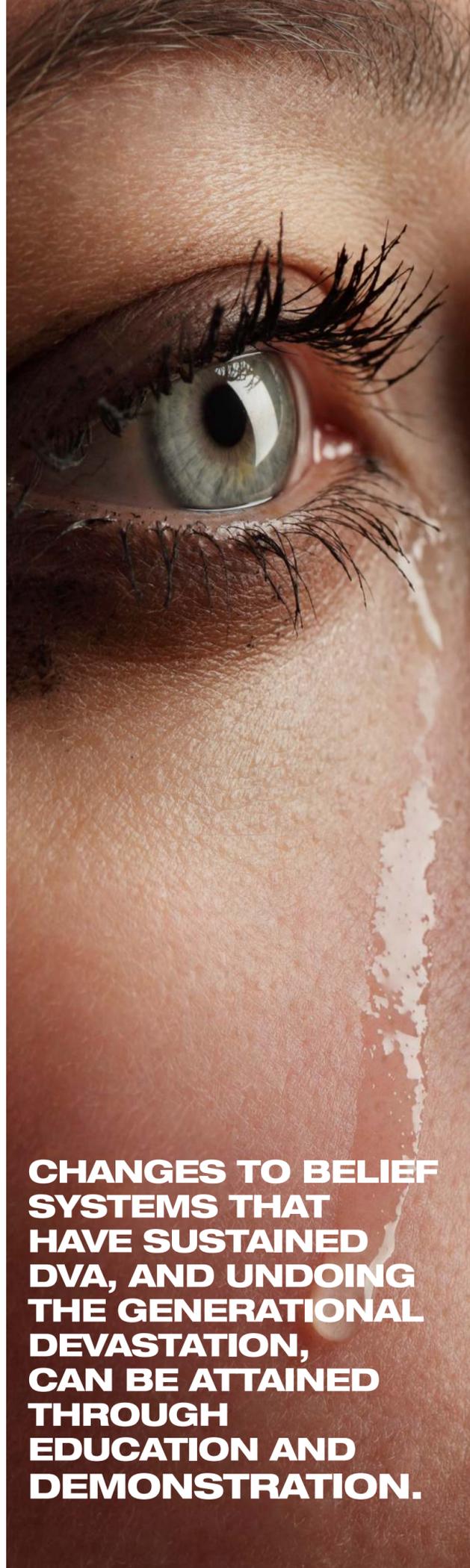
Women become the most vulnerable to violations of rights to life, liberty, and security. They expose that the numbers of women murdered in the UK over recent years in the name of "honour", clearly shows how some men and women, believe they are entitled to commit DVA, even resulting in killings. The National Zakat Foundation also makes similar reports⁹.

The remedy for DVA in faith communities would require for us to overcome the manipulations and misinterpretations of religious texts that have build systems that promote violence and abuse - over generations. It has to be noted that there is isolated positive work that attempt to support victims of DVA in some faith communities. A number of them are run by faith based organisations like Imams Against Domestic Abuse, Jewish Women's Aid, and Restored. Hidden Hurt reveals that 14% of victims in their survey received help from their church¹⁰.

However for us to completely eradicate DVA in faith communities we need to invest more time and resources in transforming the communities themselves, instead of investing more on treating the wounds inflicted by the pandemic. Changes to belief systems that have sustained DVA, and undoing the generational devastation, can be attained through education and demonstration.

Education would focus on understanding the nature of DVA, its multi-dimensional impact, and the social responsibilities of all community members. Positive role models will also be required for the budding generation to observe the demonstration of safe faith communities. These methods would have benefits that will curb the number of children who would grow into perpetrators of violence and abuse in the long term, thereby transform future generations.

In the immediate term, faith communities need to be aware of three fundamental aspects of benefit to adult and child



CHANGES TO BELIEF SYSTEMS THAT HAVE SUSTAINED DVA, AND UNDOING THE GENERATIONAL DEVASTATION, CAN BE ATTAINED THROUGH EDUCATION AND DEMONSTRATION.

victims¹. The most paramount need for victims is safety. No other area can be effectively addressed if safety is not achieved. It can be assumed that victims only need physical safety from their perpetrators - which is very crucial, but safety is actually multi-faceted.

Safety ranges from internal to external aspects, as it responds to the interlinked areas of an individual's life devastated by DVA. When all safety needs are satisfied, victims recover from the multi-dimensional impact of DVA easier. Faith communities must be dedicated to placing the safety of adult & child at a primary position - before the emphasis of any other doctrines or traditions.

The next fundamental aspect is that of accountability - accountability of faith leaders, as well as of perpetrators. Faith leaders are accountable for creating & sustaining safe environments, where true compassion and justice flourish. In their capacity as "servants of God", their accountability is to God in regard to their leadership responsibility; & to man in regard to their service.

To facilitate their accountability, faith leaders need to be educated on the nature, impact & adverse consequences of DVA, & be equipped to act in an appropriate response with efficiency to do so in a way that protects the welfare of adult & child victims. Faith leaders also need to become knowledgeable & empowered to skilfully & radically deal with perpetrators, who are the key agents of DVA, applying the significant measures necessary.

It is very critical to understand that perpetrators are entirely accountable for all their actions & behaviours. They make a conscious decision & wilful choice to use violence & abuse, further more to use all manner of deception to mask who they really are¹. Teachings on "forgiveness" can be misconstrued to imply that perpetrators should not be held accountable for their actions &

behaviours¹. Any teachings on forgiveness should not be used as substitutes for a perpetrator's accountability¹.

The last fundamental aspect is that of restoration. DVA devastates every area of life, removing or ruining human dignity, the sanctity of family life, emotional, psychological & spiritual wellbeing, & career or professional achievements. This makes the need for restoration multi-dimensional, as it works at rebuilding every area of life once devastated, stage by stage, till fully functional, bringing all round fulfilment.

Restoration for children needs a long term focus that also addresses multi-dimensional areas. Some children damaged by DVA become perpetrators or victims in their adulthood. Helping children achieve restoration can be a preventative intervention that facilitates full recovery, resulting in removing vulnerabilities for them to become future perpetrators or victims. Complete restoration will nurture growth & development, removing the damages of DVA, while instating & preserving goodness.

Complete restoration empowers victims to become survivors who are replenished, productive & vibrant participants in the community, ensuring they experience the fullness of life once again¹. Because the human spirit bears the brunt of all DVA, spiritual restoration, supported by excellent pastoral care, is the cornerstone to complete & fulfilling restoration. Spiritual restoration is a primary asset for victims in faith communities.

Totally reversing the state of DVA in faith communities will need significant work over the long haul - with the need for education on the intrinsic value of empowered and educated women and girls tied to any work. No civilisation has been created without the existence of women, and yet they have been the most down trodden¹. This education would foster the right mindset on the esteemed role of women in society.

KUDAKWASHE'S PROFILE: Kudakwashe Nyakudya is a Domestic Violence & Abuse (DVA) consultant, and a mentor and life coach for survivors. She is tenaciously dedicated to assist survivors of DVA to completely rebuild and restore every area of life once devastated by the pandemic, after they leave abusive relationships.

She is also a recognised expert witness for DVA legal proceedings, involving both adults and children. She is also a sought after dynamic speaker for professional conferences, religious and cultural gatherings, where many have testified of the powerful inspiration her messages carry.

Kudakwashe is a qualified mental health nurse who specialised in Child & Adolescent psychiatry and nutrition. She holds a Master of Science in Child Psychology, and is pursuing further studies. Kudakwashe is also a Wellness Recovery Facilitator.

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A Few Things You Could Do

TO SUPPORT SOMEONE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE



The way you respond to someone experiencing domestic or emotional abuse is very important and it can make a real difference.

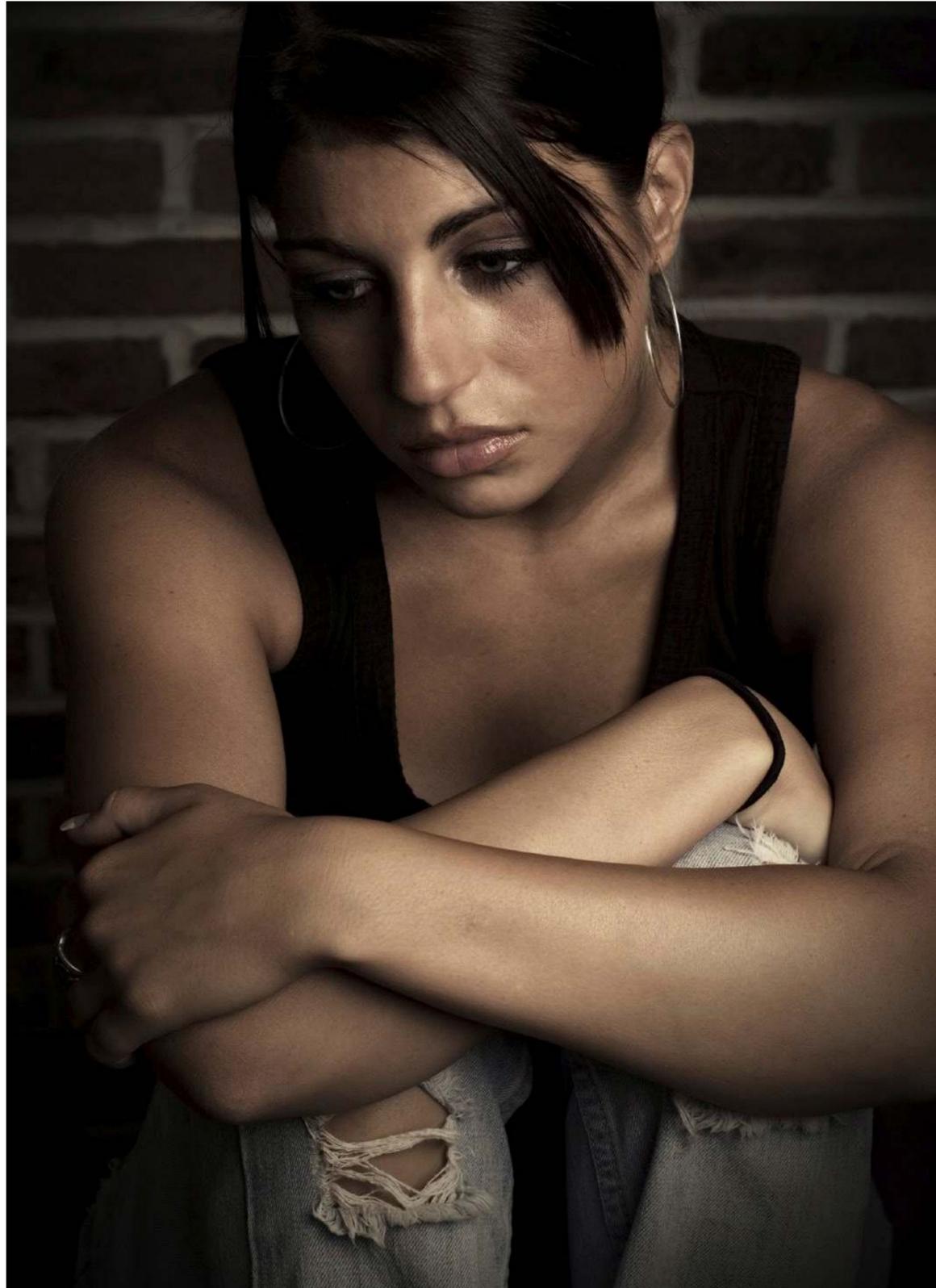
There are a few practical things that you can do to support the person physically and emotionally.

Please Note: You may not be able to help immediately because they need to spend time thinking about the whole situation but it's important you are readily available to provide some form of support when it's required.

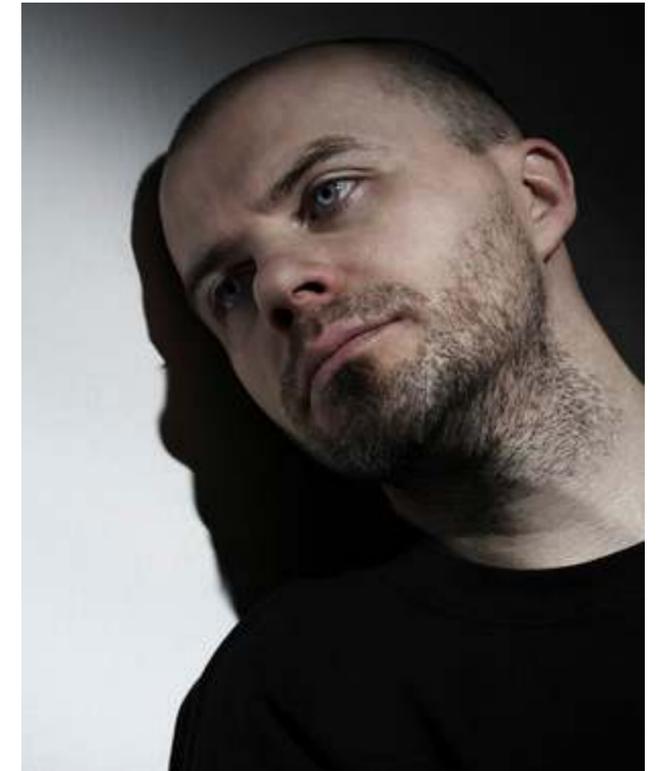
The suggestions below might help you in supporting people you know who are currently experiencing domestic or emotional abuse

- Do not judge them
- Show some concern about the situation and encourage them to open up with time
- Always talk to them in private
- Ensure your response supports and encourages them to talk about the situation. It could create an opportunity for them to explore their options and in time make their decisions

support



- Always be there for them even if they give excuses, reject your support, become defensive or deny there is a problem
- It's extremely important that you listen to and believe what you are told because it helps to build an ongoing friendship based on trust. You could also find further help and support from specialist support organisations
- Reassure them that the abuse isn't their fault. Violence is a choice the abuser makes and they (the abusers) are solely responsible for their abusive behaviour
- Do not assume the abuse experienced isn't that serious
- Always have it at the back of your mind that their safety / that of their children is extremely important
- Do not tell anyone to leave or criticise them for staying in a relationship. Allow them make the decision to leave in their own time because it involves both emotional and practical considerations
- Endeavour to be clear that abuse is wrong BUT support them regardless of the decisions they make
- Offer to go with them to the hospital or GP if they've received any injuries or require medical attention
- As much as possible, do not panic but be very sensitive, caring, cautious and respectful
- Focus on helping them rebuild their self-confidence
- You must be equipped physically, mentally and emotionally to support them through the whole situation
- Acknowledge their strengths and constantly remind them of the fact that they are coping well with a challenging and stressful situation
- Do not mediate or be the contact person between them and the perpetrator



- Volunteer to keep copies of their important documents or items
- Remember to take things easy and look after yourself while supporting victims of emotional and domestic abuse
- Assure them of the fact that they are not alone and there is help available to them
- Encourage them to speak to a specialist support organisation if they haven't spoken to one already for further support
- Cautiously remind them of the importance of calling 999 if they are in immediate danger and offer the necessary helplines eg. **The National Domestic Violence Helpline** on 0808 2000 247, **The Men's Advice Helpline** on 0808 801 0327 or **The National LGBT Helpline (Broken Rainbow)** on 0300 999 5428.
- If you witness an assault, **CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY ON 999.**

****Most of all, be very patient and do not give up on them because your help and support can make a difference****

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