



**BECOME  
UNITED**

# **LIFE WITHOUT FEAR**

**ADVICE FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE**



# What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is an incident, or a series of incidents, of violent, manipulative and emotional abuse towards your partner (including your children), ex-partner or family member.

‘Domestic’ means within your relationship, or in a place that is meant to be safe, like your home. It can also include incidents outside and in public, such as a holiday, in a car, or on public transport like a bus.

Anyone of any age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality can be a victim of domestic abuse.

The majority of cases in the UK are experienced by women and committed by men, but men can also experience domestic abuse.

Research has shown that every year, 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 experience domestic abuse (1.6 million women, 757,000 men). One in 6 men and one in 4 women will be a victim of domestic abuse in their lifetime.\*

This guide explains what domestic abuse is, and how to find help.

## BAME community

The Office for National Statistics (2019) data has shown that rates of domestic abuse amongst BAME communities are **often higher** than in white communities, and were also **highest amongst those of mixed ethnicity**.\*\*

There are many different reasons why this may be happening, such as religious and cultural beliefs.

Please contact someone for help if you're experiencing domestic abuse.

\* Source: *Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2020*

\*\* Source: *ONS 2019 study: Domestic Abuse in Ethnic Minority Communities*

# If you experience domestic abuse

The person causing harm may try to justify their actions, but there is **never an excuse** for domestic abuse.

It's important to remember that it is not your fault.

They may be struggling to come to terms with what they are doing, and try to encourage you to stay or forgive them after each incident.

But that does not mean you should feel trapped.

You **do not** need to help fix the situation, or fix them.

The following pages give examples of what domestic abuse may look like.

**Call 999** if you believe you or someone else will cause harm.

The pages at the end of this guide have contact details of charities and communities you can contact if you need help.

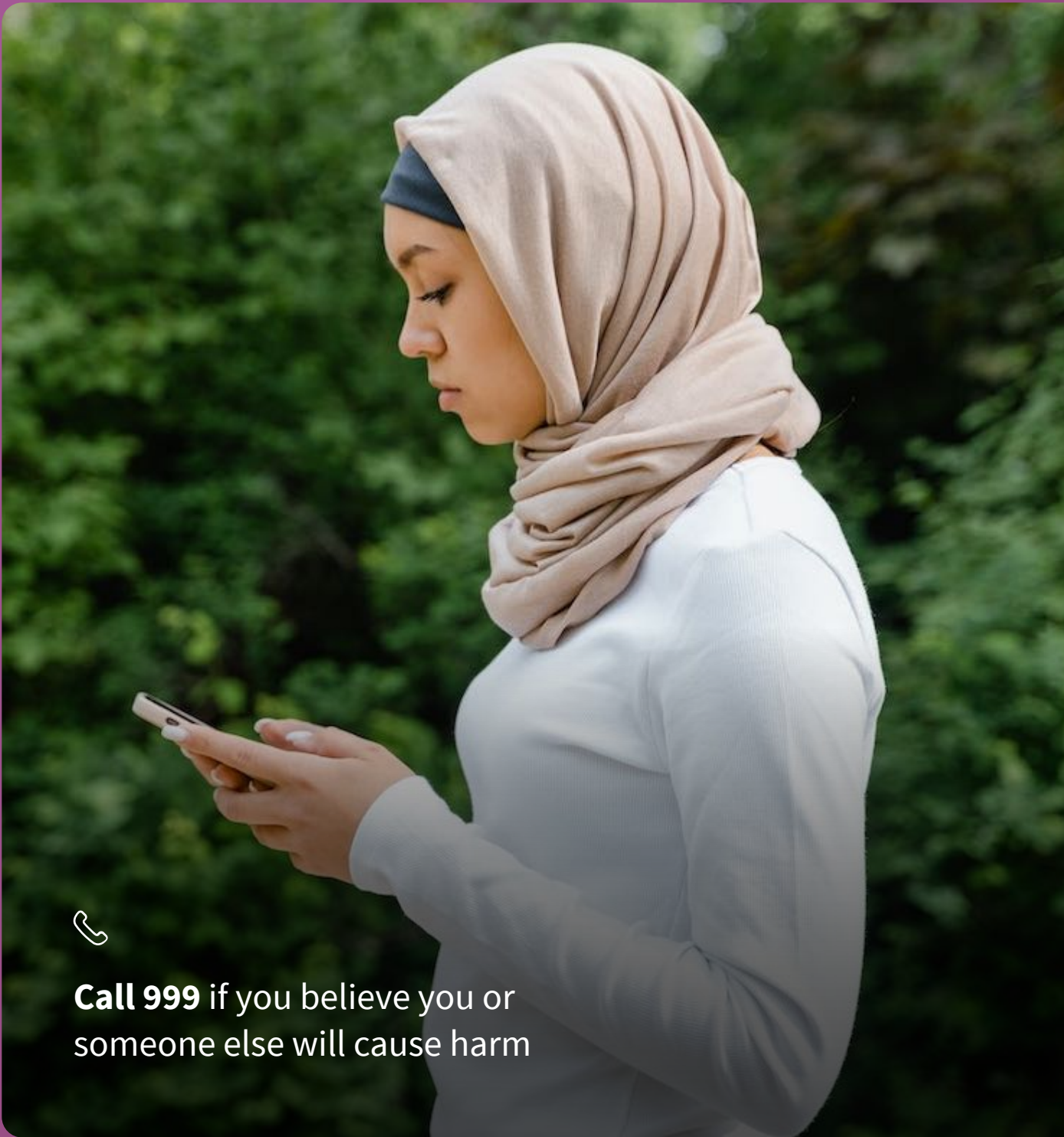
## Is it me?

Womens Aid have a short video based on the novel *Dressed up as Love*, by Bhavna Limbachia. It covers the type of comments, thoughts, and feelings experienced by those who have lived through domestic abuse.



Watch the 'Is it me?' video on womensaid YouTube channel

[youtube.com/watch?v=EDta0HY8Yp8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDta0HY8Yp8)



# Types of Domestic Abuse

Abuse can take many different forms.

The following pages give examples of what domestic abuse may look like.

It doesn't matter if it happens once, or several times - there is no excuse for domestic abuse.

Talk to someone if you feel unsure and need help.



## Physical

- Hitting
- Biting
- Throwing objects at or near you
- Handling and touching you when you tell them not to
- Choking
- Strangulation



## Financial

- Demanding money
- Preventing you from earning or spending money
- Questioning every decision you make about money
- Controlling bank account
- Your name being used to commit benefits or debt fraud



**Call 999** if you believe you or someone else will cause harm



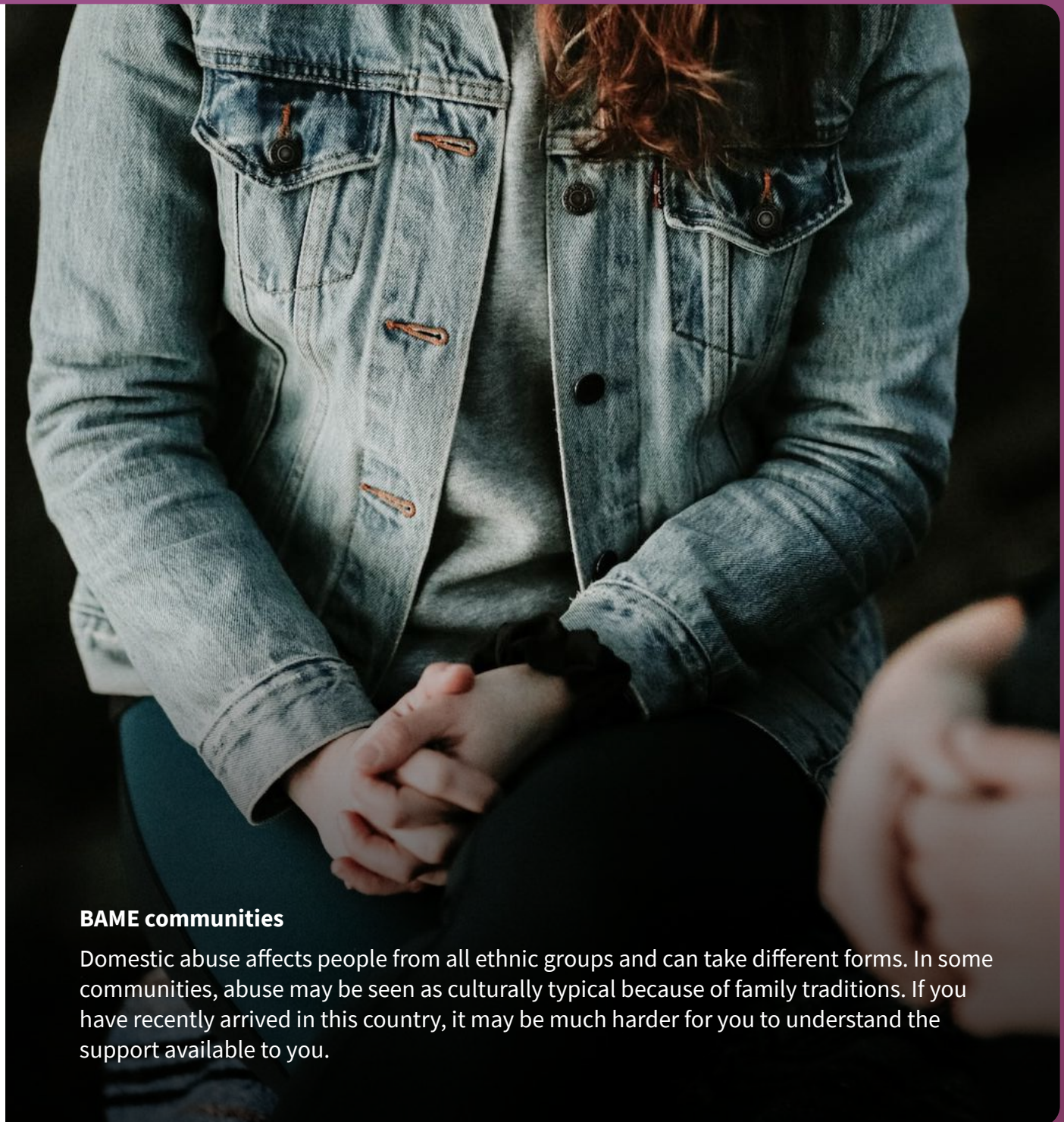
## Emotional and Psychological

- Being told you're not good enough, or making fun of you in front of others
- Making you feel shame because of your appearance or hobbies
- Online abuse, such as limiting your social media use or telling you what you can and can't post or follow
- Gaslighting
- Minimising feelings/opinions
- Threatening isolation
- Reducing support access



## Sexual contact

- Forcing you to have sex or sexual contact when you don't want to
- Pressuring you into a sexual act as a sign you 'forgive them'
- Weaponing sex, prostitution



### **BAME communities**

Domestic abuse affects people from all ethnic groups and can take different forms. In some communities, abuse may be seen as culturally typical because of family traditions. If you have recently arrived in this country, it may be much harder for you to understand the support available to you.



## Gaslighting

Gaslighting is an example of psychological abuse.

A person or a group of people cause someone to question their own sanity, memories, or understanding of reality. If you experience gaslighting, you may feel confused, anxious, or as though you cannot trust yourself.

Some phrases you might notice include:

"You're making things up."

"That never happened."

"You're being dramatic."

"You're blowing things out of proportion."

The aim of gaslighting is to confuse the person into doubting what they see, hear, feel, and know about what is real and what isn't. It's important to stand firm in your truth.

This means believing in yourself, your feelings, and what you know to be true.

## Stopping gaslighting

- Keep conversations simple
- Write things down and share with others you trust
- Leave the conversation when you know it doesn't feel right

## Staying safe online

If you're worried about someone finding out you are looking for help, Women's Aid have instructions on how to cover your tracks online.

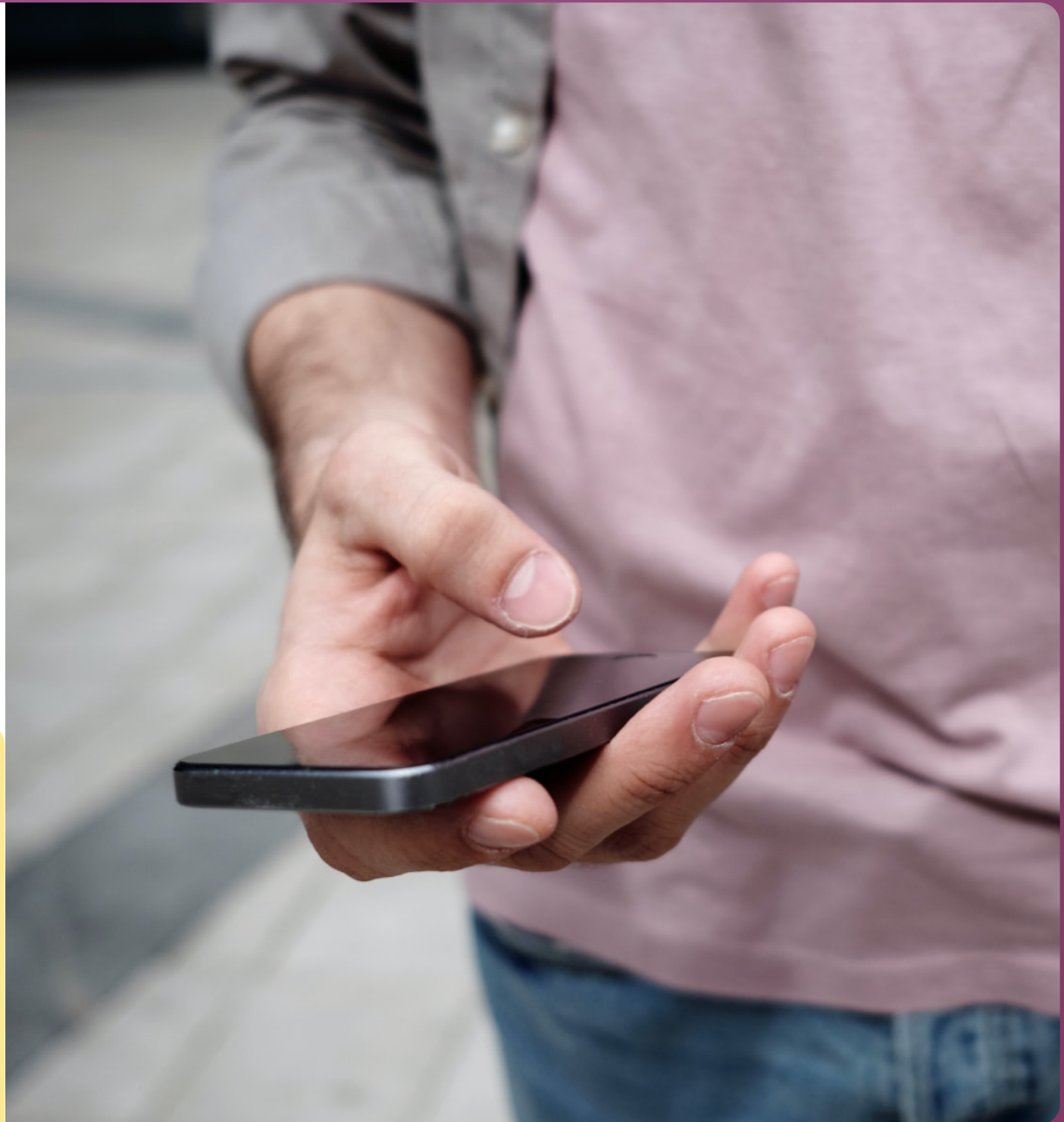
- How to do 'private browsing'
- Deleting your search history
- Creating passwords
- Safe social media use

[womensaid.org.uk/cover-your-tracks-online/](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/cover-your-tracks-online/)

## Contact with others

Controlling someone's phone and social media use, and going through their messages is a sign of coercive and controlling behaviour.

It can happen instantly, or over time. For example, asking you to remove photos or to stop following certain people or pages.





**Call 999** if you believe you or someone else will cause harm.

## If you are worried about someone else

Asking others to talk about domestic abuse isn't always possible.

They may feel frightened to talk about it – or not even willing to admit it is actually happening.

Some victims often feel they need to stay with their partner or family member, in the hope things will change, or that they can help them.

But this can often make situations more difficult.

What to look for if you believe someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse:

- They act withdrawn or isolated from your friend and family activities
- You have seen their partner act aggressive to them
- They have bruises, burns, or bite marks
- They act nervous when their partner or family member is nearby, or is mentioned
- They rarely leave the house, or you believe they're being stopped from going outside
- They have talked about being pressured into sex or sexual contact
- They often say the issue is 'their fault' and that they are the cause of the problems



# Advice for friends and family

It can be hard to know how to support a loved one who is being abused by friend or family member.

It may be that you have contributed to the situation in some manner, by thinking that your actions are simply 'part of tradition' for example.

There are things you can do to make them feel supported and safe.

## How you can help someone

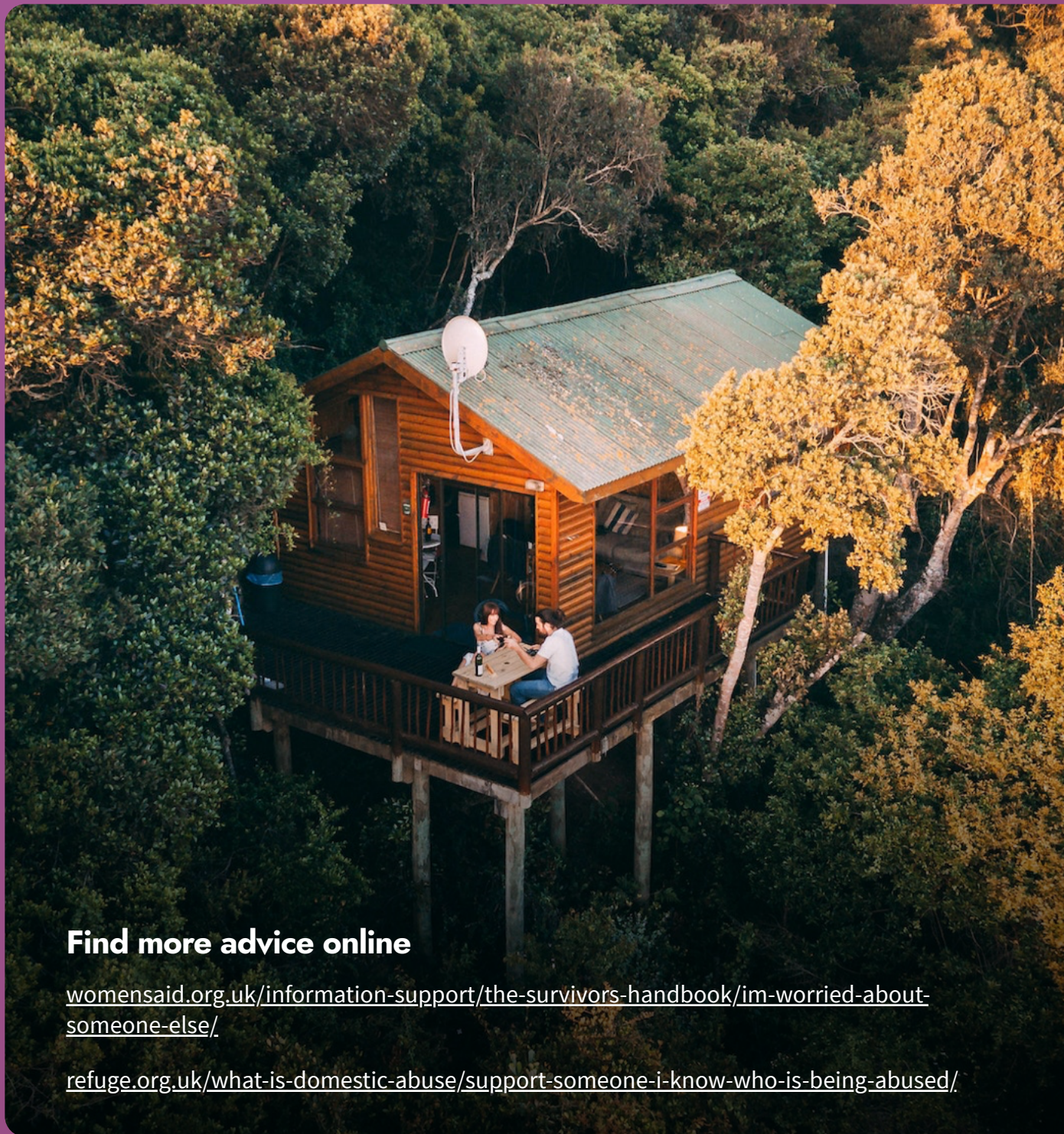
Womens Aid have a short advice video on what you can do if you're concerned about someone.



Watch the '*How can you help someone experiencing domestic abuse?*' video on womensaid YouTube channel

[youtube.com/watch?v=tSIJpCmYGaY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=tSIJpCmYGaY)





## Find more advice online

[womensaid.org.uk/information-support/the-survivors-handbook/im-worried-about-someone-else/](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/the-survivors-handbook/im-worried-about-someone-else/)

[refuge.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/support-someone-i-know-who-is-being-abused/](https://www.refuge.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/support-someone-i-know-who-is-being-abused/)

## Remind them, it's not their fault

They may feel it is their fault they're in this situation. They are not to blame, and help is always available to them.

## Create a safe space

Safety for you and your loved one is priority. Create a safe place to talk (like a room, a public place, or an online chat room) and move to if they feel threatened.

## Tell them you're worried

You might notice they're acting differently (diet, appearance, personality). Ask if there is anything they want to talk about and is everything OK at home – but try to do this in private or securely online if possible, perhaps in your safe space.

## Encourage them to contact helplines

Reassure them there is help from charities, communities, and the police when they need it.

## Record updates for evidence

Make a note of times when they have contacted you or mentioned disturbing behaviour by their partner. This can help with future police and legal action.

# Protecting your child

Domestic abuse can have a serious, lasting impact on a young person's life.

This includes their mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their behaviour and attitude towards relationships, family and friends, and their own confidence.

Even when you think your child has not seen or heard any abuse, or they continue to act normally, doesn't mean they haven't noticed incidents.

They may feel too scared or nervous to talk about their experiences.

All children and young people deserve to feel secure and grow up in a safe home.

## If a child reveals abuse

If a child talks to you about domestic abuse it's important to:

- Listen carefully to what they're saying,
- Reassure them it is not their fault, and they have done the right thing talking to you
- Don't confront the alleged abuser
- Report what the child has told you as soon as possible



**Contact NSPCC for more information**

[nspcc.org.uk/](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/)

Helpline **0808 800 5000**

Under 18s helpline **0800 1111**

# Make a safety plan

A safety plan is a list of steps you can follow to protect yourself and your children when you need to leave your place in an emergency.

Include these steps in your plan:

- **Pack an emergency bag** for yourself and your children, and hide it somewhere safe like a trusted friend's house (try to avoid mutual friends or family)
- **Know your escape route**, such as the doors you may use (and if you need keys), and avoid rooms where you might be trapped
- **Keep some money** on you at all times, to pay for calls, emergency food and drink, and bus and taxi fares
- **Teach your children to call 999** in an emergency, and what they need to say, such as their name and address
- **Keep your phone with you**, or find out where the nearest safe phone is, like a payphone or a neighbour's house
- **Have a list of important contact numbers**, including police domestic violence unit, your GP, your social worker, your children's school, your solicitor

Turn to the back pages of this guide book for groups and communities you can contact for more help.





# If your parents or family are being abused

Domestic abuse is when someone like your parent or a family member, bullies or hurts another adult in your family.

For example, your father and your mother.

It is not your fault, and there are people you can talk to if you feel unsafe or you are worried about someone else.

Call Childline **0900 1111**

Call **999** if it's an emergency. If you can't speak, make a tapping noise or cough to answer. Press 55 to signal an emergency.

Web: [childrenssociety.org.uk/](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/)

Web: [nspcc.org.uk/](https://nspcc.org.uk/)



## What you can do to help yourself and others

It's normal to feel worried or frightened if you see loved ones arguing or fighting.

There are things you can do to make sure you feel safe and calm.

- **Spend time with friends or family** who make you feel safe – you don't have to tell them everything that is going on, and they will not judge you
- **Do the things you enjoy** like hobbies or activities – this could be an after school club, reading, playing a sport or a video game
- **Do the things that your brothers and sisters enjoy** – if you have younger siblings, you can make them feel happy and safe by spending time with them
- **Write down what you are feeling or thinking** – this can help you relax more, like when you are trying to go to sleep

# Support

You are not alone. There are helplines and emergency services you can contact.

## Emergency services

### Greater Manchester Police

Find out what classes as domestic abuse, how to report it and how, under Clare's Law, you can find out if a partner has a history of domestic violence or abuse. We'll also show you how to delete your visit here from your web history, if you need to.

[gmp.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/](https://gmp.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/)

### UK Government

Information about domestic abuse definition and how to get help

[gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help](https://gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help)

Leaflet, aimed specifically at women in black and minority ethnic communities, covers advice on three steps to escaping violence and abuse.

[gov.uk/government/publications/three-steps-to-escaping-domestic-violence](https://gov.uk/government/publications/three-steps-to-escaping-domestic-violence)

## Greater Manchester

### End The Fear

Anybody who is experiencing domestic or sexual violence can find help, support and advice here.

[endthefear.co.uk/](https://endthefear.co.uk/)

### Domestic abuse helpline 0161 636 7525

a free, confidential line whose staff can provide advice, help you formulate a safety plan, and access refuge spaces across the country. (Mon – Fri, 10am – 4 pm excl. Bank holidays)

24/7 national helpline **0808 2000 247**  
Helpline for male victims of abuse **0808 801 0327**

### Shelter

UK homeless charity which also has details on finding a safe space if you have left home because of domestic abuse

Call **0808 800 4444**  
[england.shelter.org.uk/](https://england.shelter.org.uk/)

### Gilgal

Refuge at a confidential address in Birmingham. They provide a safe environment for women and their children who require emergency short-term accommodation and support after they have left a situation of domestic abuse.

Call **0800 008 6622**  
[gilgalbham.org.uk/](https://gilgalbham.org.uk/)

### Safety4Sisters

Safety4Sisters works to support migrant women across the North West who have experienced gender-based violence and who have no recourse to public funds or state benefits.

[safety4sisters.org/](https://safety4sisters.org/)

## UK charities

*There are many charities and safe houses across the UK. Even if you are not nearby, you can still contact them if you need advice and they will help you find local support.*

### Lantern Initiative

Workshops and seminars on Muslim mental health. They also host weekly Chai & Chat drop-in sessions for Muslim women in Peterborough.

[thelanterninitiative.co.uk](https://thelanterninitiative.co.uk)

### **Karma Nirvana**

National Honour Based Abuse Helpline, train professionals, gather data to inform policies and services, and campaign for change.

Call **0800 5999 247**

[\*\*karmanirvana.org.uk/\*\*](https://www.karmanirvana.org.uk/)

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### **Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre**

Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre has been part of the Tri Borough Angelou Partnership since its establishment in 2015. The partnership consists of nine other specialist organisations that have come together to support women and girls experiencing domestic or sexual violence and harmful practices across Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea.

[\*\*al-hasaniya.org.uk/\*\*](https://www.al-hasaniya.org.uk/)

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### **DVIP**

For over 25 years, we have been helping to make women and children safer. With services across London, we work to stop domestic violence and to reduce the harm it causes to women, children and families.

[\*\*dvip.org/\*\*](https://www.dvip.org/)

### **Faith Regen Foundation (FRF)**

Funded by The Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the London Community Foundation (LCF), Faith Regen is running a two-year programme in London (focused on Tower Hamlets), to support 80 women at-risk of or in standard-medium-high risk domestic violence through a range of services.

[\*\*thefrf.org/\*\*](https://www.thefrf.org/)

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### **IKWRO**

IKWRO is a registered charity which provides advice and support to Middle Eastern, North African and Afghan women and girls living in the UK, who have experienced, or are at risk of all forms of "honour" based abuse, including; forced marriage, child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), or domestic abuse.

[\*\*ikwro.org.uk/\*\*](https://www.ikwro.org.uk/)

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### **Kiran Support Services**

Kiran's overall philosophy is to offer empowerment, freedom & light to survivors of domestic abuse.

[\*\*kiranss.org.uk/\*\*](https://www.kiranss.org.uk/)

### **Latin American Women's Aid**

This charity runs the only refuges in Europe and in the UK by and for Latin American women and children fleeing gender-based violence. We also offer holistic and intersectional services, providing everything a Black and Minoritised woman needs to recover from abuse and live empowered lives.

[\*\*lawadv.org.uk/\*\*](https://www.lawadv.org.uk/)

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### **LBWP (London Black Women's Project)**

We are here to support women and girls. We can help with information, housing and homelessness, safe space, healing and recovery through art, advice and advocacy, keyworking and therapeutic support.

[\*\*lbwp.co.uk/\*\*](https://www.lbwp.co.uk/)

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### **London Fatwa Council**

London Fatwa Council offers legal advice and counselling in accordance with Islamic law. It acts as a voice for women silenced by violent, abusive and forced marriages; empowering them to achieve freedom and justice from their oppressive situations.

[\*\*londonfatwacouncil.org/\*\*](https://www.londonfatwacouncil.org/)



### **MEWSo**

Aids in Domestic Abuse & Violence, all of their advice and support is given in the strictest confidence.

[mewso.org/](http://mewso.org/)

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### **Muslim Welfare House**

MWHT is proud to present the EHUK Project. Domestic abuse, forced marriage, abuse of New Muslims and many other forms of abuse happens in all communities. As Muslims it is our duty to challenge this behaviour and support victims.

[mwht.org.uk/](http://mwht.org.uk/)

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### **The Muslim Community Helpline**

We have consistently worked with mosques, community leaders, schools, media orgs. NHS, mental health orgs and society at large to tackle the kind of 'taboo' subjects of domestic violence, sexual abuse, depression that have caused such distress to our callers. We have worked tirelessly, over 28 years, to work with Muslims and non-muslims to pursue the best possible service and support.

[muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk/](http://muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk/)

### **Nour**

Nour provide trauma-informed, culturally competent services to adult survivors of abuse, including, but not limited to, survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and childhood abuse. We work with survivors from minoritised communities, particularly from the Muslim community, however, our services are open to any adult survivor of abuse. We provide free counselling, legal advice, emotional and practical support, financial assistance amongst other services, with the aim to enable survivors to heal from the trauma of abuse and lead more meaningful lives.

[nour-dv.org.uk/](http://nour-dv.org.uk/)

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### **Wellbeing Connect Services**

We are a leading BAME Mental Health charity in London with an excellent track record of providing valuable and life changing services to mental health, e.g. Domestic Violence / Abuse Support – Holistic Assessment.

[wellbeingconnectservices.org/](http://wellbeingconnectservices.org/)

### **Muslim Women's Network Helpline**

The helpline is a national specialist faith and culturally sensitive service that is confidential and non-judgmental, which offers information, support, guidance and referrals. The helpline also supports women of other faiths, and no faith, as well as men and boys in need of help.

Call **0800 999 5786**

[mwnhelpline.co.uk/](http://mwnhelpline.co.uk/)

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### **Respect Men's advice line**

The Helpline for male victims of domestic abuse

[mensadvice.org.uk/](http://mensadvice.org.uk/)

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### **Saheli**

Saheli gives Asian women a chance to get away from violent domestic abuse situations by providing an environment which is safe, culturally familiar, and which helps them come to decisions of their own about their next steps

[saheli.org.uk/](http://saheli.org.uk/)

### **Sakeenah Foundation**

Specialised support to Muslim victims (sisters and brothers) of domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, and harassment.

[sakeenahfoundation.co.uk](http://sakeenahfoundation.co.uk)

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### **Roshni - honour based victims and South Asian**

Support for Black and Minoritised communities affected by domestic abuse including Forced Marriage & Honour Based Abuse.

[roshnibirmingham.org.uk/](http://roshnibirmingham.org.uk)

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### **Sharan Project**

Support and advice to vulnerable women, particularly of South Asian origin, who have been or are at risk of being disowned due to abuse or persecution.

Call **0844 504 3231**

[sharan.org.uk/](http://sharan.org.uk)

### **Women's Aid**

National charity which supports survivors of domestic abuse, and has details about raising awareness, how to create a safe plan, and staying safe online.

They also have details about local support groups and safe places

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

*Find a local support service*

[womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-directory/](http://womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-directory/)

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## **Places of safety and refuge**

### **Panahghar**

Panahghar provides free dedicated BAME multi lingual support, advice and advocacy and access to safe refuge for victims and their families of domestic abuse, sexual abuse or gendered abuse in Coventry and Leicester.

Call 24 hr helpline **0800 044 6519**

[safehouse.org.uk/](http://safehouse.org.uk/)

[safehouse.org.uk/our-services/leicester/](http://safehouse.org.uk/our-services/leicester/)

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### **Eden house**

EHUK provides safe housing to women and children from across the UK helping hundreds of victims, for both new Muslims to non Muslims.

[ehuk.org/](http://ehuk.org/)

Email: [info@edenhousesuk.com](mailto:info@edenhousesuk.com)

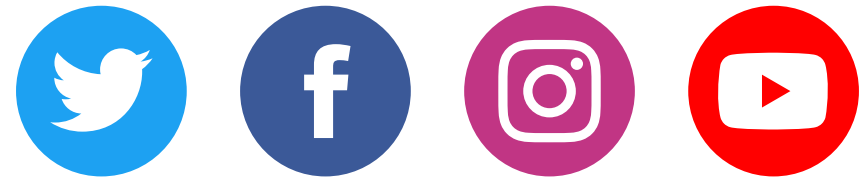
Thank you to our volunteers, staff, and partner organisations of Become United (BU) for helping us create this guide.

BU is a community group, focused on projects for the BAME community of Greater Manchester, with a focus on 4 areas: Mental Health, Sport, Youth and Resources in various languages for the BAME community.

Contact us to find out more about our projects or any feedback/comments on this pack.

Web: [becomeunited.org.uk](https://becomeunited.org.uk)

Email: [info@becomeunited.org.uk](mailto:info@becomeunited.org.uk)



# #BecomeUnited



BECOME  
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