

Loving without abuse

How important are your relationships to you?

Loving without abuse

A guide for those individuals
taking a first step towards
changing their abusive behaviour

Produced by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland
Domestic Violence Co-ordinating Group PSA Working Group

The Benefits of having a Loving Relationship

Having a loving relationship not only affects the way you feel but also how your loved one feels about you.

What are the benefits?

- Children within the relationship will have you as their positive role model.
- People that you care about will be proud of the fact you are trying to change.
- You will feel good about yourself.
- You can be confident that someone wants to be with you out of love not fear.
- This will give you a better understanding of all your relationships.

Ask Yourself.....

Do you feel overwhelming jealousy towards your partner/ex-partner/family member?

Do you think you have an anger problem?

Do you feel you have a right to know where your partner/ex-partner/family member is at all times, doing what and with whom?

Do you feel as though your outbursts are not your fault?

Do you justify your behaviour by blaming drink, drugs, stress?

Do you often feel angry/frustrated/irritated with your partner/ex-partner/family member?

Do you find yourself answering the questions above with "yes but..."?

If so, have you behaved/do you behave in any of the following ways towards your partner/ex-partner/family member?

**Keep them
short of money**

Bullied

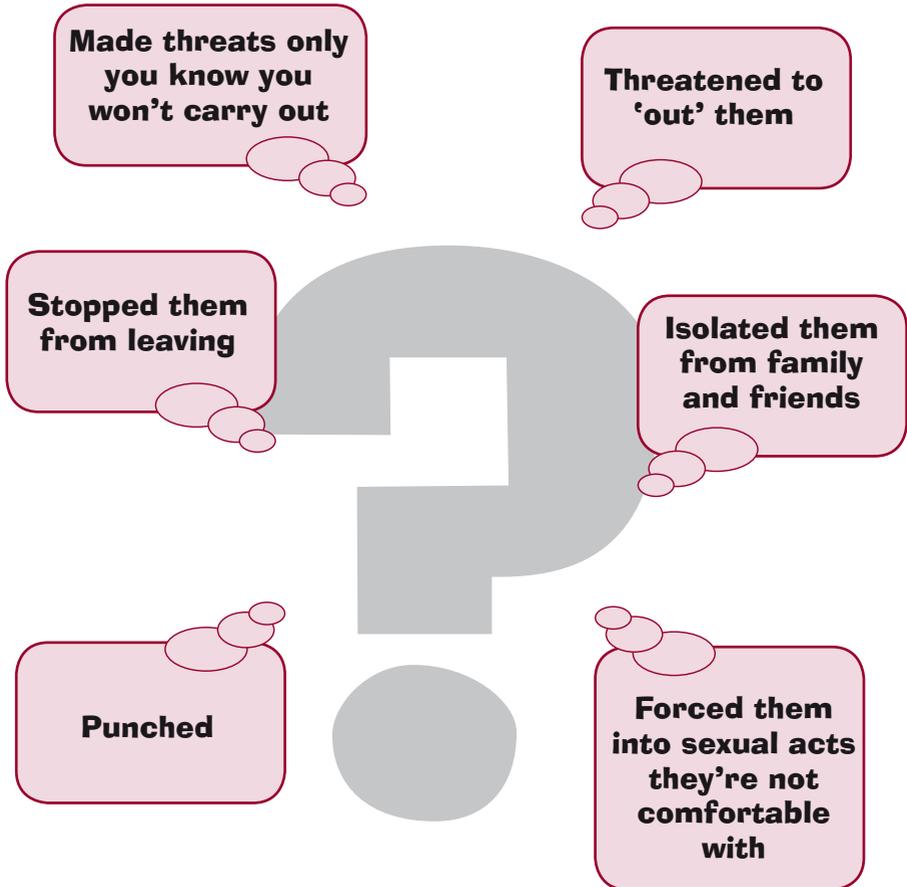
Slapped

**Destroyed
their precious
possessions**

**Made them
afraid of you**

**Used the
extended
family as an
excuse to
intimidate**

Kicked



These actions are a few forms of domestic violence and abuse—and they are your responsibility.

Some are recognised as **Serious Criminal Offences**.

Domestic Violence? What does this mean?

The Leicester Domestic Violence Helpline define Domestic Violence as:

“Domestic Violence is now a recognised crime and includes any physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, social or economic abuse of an individual by a partner, ex-partner, carer or one or more family member, in an existing or previous domestic relationship. This is regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, class or location.

Did you know?

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic violence over their lifetimes.
- An average of 2 women each week are killed by current or former partners in England and Wales alone
- UK police attend a domestic violence incident every minute of every hour of every day.
- In 90% of domestic violence incidents children are in the same or the next room

So, if you know, in your heart of hearts, that you have been abusive and you don't know what to do about it or how to stop, read on ...

This self-help guide can help you take responsibility and begin to address your behaviour. It is for both male and female perpetrators of domestic violence.

Please note this guide is not to replace a specialist perpetrator programme.

If you need further help there are programmes that will:

- challenge many of your beliefs
- reduce the risk of you hurting or abusing your partner/ex-partner/family member?
- help you improve your relationship and take responsibility for your behaviour
- help you gain a better understanding and appreciation of how your behaviour affects others – the people you love.

Please refer to page 13 for details.

This guide will not cure you of violent or abusive behaviour - only you can make the choice to stop. However, reading it could be the first step you take in making that choice.

If at any point you feel as though you are going to cause someone harm please see the section 'what to do in an emergency' on page 13.

How does your abuse affect others?

- People that you care about feel afraid of you.
- Your friends and family may exclude or disown you.
- Your children may not want to spend time with you.
- Your loved ones are always affected. They may lack confidence and self-esteem, feel alone, depressed and start to use other ways of coping such as drugs or self-harming.
- Children will be unable to play and more importantly be children; the family home will not offer security or feel safe. Sadly they will see violence as the norm and that it is acceptable and they may copy your behaviour. This could mean they grow up to become victims or perpetrators of abuse themselves.
- Your loved ones may suffer long term mental illness and experience nightmares, phobias, panic attacks, anxiety and other problems.
- Even one act of abuse can cause permanent physical disability or disfigurement

Choose to stop abusing

You have made the choice to be violent or abusive.

You can now make the choice to stop.

Many other people are changing their violent or abusive behaviour successfully.

You, like them, have the opportunity to free yourself of the bad feelings you feel after you abuse.

Remember this guide will help you if you want it to...

Your actions are **your** responsibility.

Take the first step towards a better future

What can you do?

There are a few things that you can attempt to do at home in order to start the process of changing your abusive behaviour.

Remember you can choose to stop responding with violence.

Leicester Action On Domestic Violence (LADV) recommends a **Time Out Plan** (adapted from the Change Programme).

What is a Time Out?

A time out is a tool that enables you to try and stop yourself doing or saying anything violent, abusive or thoughtless that you know you will regret later.

It enables you to remove yourself from the situation that may be building up. This will allow you to take a step back, think clearly, re-assess your position and manage your behaviour more appropriately.

Examples of a Time Out:

These can include taking a walk, sitting in the car (not driving), engaging in sports etc.

It is important to note that 'time out' is personal to you and you should plan your time doing something that you feel comfortable with.

In order to plan your time out effectively you need to go through the following steps:

1. Be on the look out for your early warning signs. These are the signals, both physical and mental, that tell you when you are going to act in an abusive manner - for example, are you feeling jealous? what is happening to your body? are you clenching your teeth/raising your voice/breathing heavily? Do you feel sweaty or agitated?

Think about the situations, your thoughts, and how you are feeling emotionally.

2. Explain what time out is to your partner/ex-partner/family member. It is about making yourself safe and taking responsibility for your actions.

It is important that your partner/ex-partner/family member is aware of your time out however, this should not be a way for you to control what **he/she** does. The time out is for **you**.

3. Agree with your partner /ex-partner/family member what you are planning to do and what you will say when you are taking time out, for example "I feel I need to take a time out".

This is important so that your partner/ex-partner/family member does not feel you are walking out but instead that you are taking responsibility.

4. Agree with your partner/ex-partner/family member in advance how long your time out will last.

We recommend it be at least one hour. You may find you want to make it longer.

A time out is a way of taking responsibility for your actions. If you say it will last an hour, and you return exactly one hour later, you demonstrate you are being responsible.

5. Plan what to do for your time out. It must involve you leaving the house.

Just going to a different room means you are too close.

6. **The Don'ts**

- Don't drink or take drugs- you need a clear head to think during your time out, alcohol will only make it worse.
 - Don't use driving as your 'time out' as this can be dangerous if you are angry.
 - Don't go over and over the issue in your head or talk about it with a friend, who may agree with you or push you further; instead, think of ways to move on from the abusive behaviour.
7. Make any necessary preparations so that you can take a time out immediately when you need to. For example, leave outdoor clothes near the front door or pack your swimming kit if that's your plan.
 8. Have an alternative plan agreed for times when your first plan may not be possible. For example, if it is a cold winter's night at 3:00 am will you still be able to use your original time out?
 9. Make your time out a positive exercise: use the time out to cool down and collect your thoughts. Think positively about yourself and about your relationship. Think about what you want from your relationship.
 10. A time out is for your self-control only. Your partner/ex-partner/family member does not have to stop talking or do anything else when you want time out. It is not a way for you to control your their behaviour.
 11. Return to the house in the agreed time. If there is still an issue to be resolved agree with your partner/ex-partner/family member how best to do this.

Only go ahead if your partner is willing. Maybe it will be better to talk it over with someone else present. If you decide to try and talk it out and you recognise your 'early warning signals' again, take another time out.

Fill in and remove the Time Out Plan from the centre of this booklet. Keep it with you as support and guidance.

Other Self-help Methods:

- If you feel as though you are going to be violent or abusive and for some reason cannot or do not think you will be able to manage the Time Out then count to 10 using deep, slow breathing from your diaphragm (not from your chest but from your stomach).

This will help you to relax and minimise your negative feelings.

- Keep a diary recording how you are feeling, your emotions, and any incidents where you have been violent or abusive.

Refer back to this in order to determine why you feel the need to control and to help you understand why you are abusive.

The example below may help you to write these details down:

Time:	<i>6.30 pm</i>
Trigger:	<i>Partner goes out</i>
Emotion:	<i>I feel jealous and ignored. I get angry</i>
Sign:	<i>Clenching my Teeth—my voice rises</i>
Action:	<i>I start to shout—going into a row</i>
Consequence:	<i>I am using violence and abuse to control</i>
Alternative:	Try Time Out

If you have had a particularly good week where you have not been abusive, you can reward yourself; this is something personal to you and must not include your partner.

- You can refer yourself to the Free to Change Programme to help recognise and change your abusive behaviour to supportive behaviour. Please see page 20 for contact details.

What to do in an emergency

If you feel you are at risk of harming someone then leave the situation immediately. Call for help for your loved one and yourself.

Call the Police on 999.

Call the Samaritans on 0116 270 0007. (This is a 24 hour service.)

Services available to support perpetrators of domestic violence:

LADV 0116 255 0004

(LADV, as part of the Domestic Violence Integrated Response Project offer a Programme for perpetrators of domestic violence both self and court referrals)

RESPECT 0845 122 8609

TEXTPHONE 0208 748 9093

(Offers support for perpetrators of domestic violence)

DVIP 0208 563 7983

(Domestic Violence Intervention Project—Intervention programmes for male perpetrators)

Samaritans 0116 270 0007

National Number 0845 790 9090

We understand that although domestic violence is about control, alcohol and drugs can influence emotions.

If you feel you need further support with such issues please see your GP who can refer you to specialist agencies.

Alternatively, you could contact:

- Alcohol Advice Centre 0116 222 9545
- Drugs Advice Centre 0116 222 9555

You can also ask your GP to refer you to a counsellor if you feel you may benefit from this type of support. There are different methods of counselling, so you will need to think about what might suit you.

If you have a mental health problem that may influence your behaviour you can contact:

- LAMP 0116 255 6286

All of these agencies operate under a confidentiality policy.

Although it is important to recognise that it is you who is making positive changes to your behaviour, we recommend the person(s) you have abused seeks support from one or more of the organisations listed below in order to understand the adjustments to your relationship.

Your children and other family members may also wish to get support from these agencies.

- Leicester Domestic Violence Helpline **0116 255 0004**
(Leicester Domestic Violence Help-line, as part of the Domestic Violence Integrated Response Project, offers telephone support and a signposting service)
- Women's Aid Outreach Services **0116 285 8079**
- Loughborough Women's Aid **01509 552 549**
- Loughborough Women's Aid Outreach Services
(also support male victims)
01509 552 2549 Mobile 07773 399 230
- Free to Change Programme for male perpetrators of abuse
0116 265 6017
- Broken Rainbows **0845 60 44 60**
(for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people)
- Leicester MALE **0116 223 0992**
(for male victims of domestic abuse)
- Leicester, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Centre
Helpline **0116 255 0067**
- Elder Abuse Helpline **0808 808 8141**
- Carers UK (Weds/Thurs) **0808 808 7777**
- NSPCC **0808 800 5000**
- ChildLine **0800 1111**
- Victim Support **0845 303 0900**

Myths about Domestic Violence

Myth:

“I can’t be done for DV because there’s no statutory offence called ‘domestic violence’”

Fact:

When the police are called to a DV incident they can arrest you if you have committed a criminal offence e.g. criminal damage, threats to kill.

From February 2005 the CPS has changed the way it works. This means that if you are convicted of a DV related crime you can be punished in a variety of ways and that includes being given a long jail sentence.

Myth:

“The police won’t be able to prosecute me – my partner will never press charges”

Fact:

The Crown Prosecution Service can decide to prosecute even if your partner doesn’t want to press charges. If there’s still enough evidence of the crime, you may still go to court.

The police will gather other evidence, which may include medical records or statements from neighbours. They may also take photographs of any injuries you have inflicted.

Myth:

“Even if I get arrested I’ll get out on bail and then I’ll go back home”

Fact:

If you are arrested you **will** be taken to the police station. If you’ve been charged with a crime, you **may** be released on bail while the police complete their investigation. Usually, there’ll be conditions attached to this bail which will mean you can’t go near the victim, communicate with him/her directly (in person or by phone) or indirectly (by sending messages via someone else). If you ignore these conditions, you can be arrested and may be kept in custody until the court case.

The CPS are now suggesting bail conditions which allow the victim more freedom by limiting the offender’s access to locations such as schools or other family members’ homes.

Myth:

“It’s not illegal to call someone up or visit them, text them or send things through the post”

Fact:

If you continue to harass (calling at regular intervals, constant threatening texting, going round uninvited, etc.) you can be reported to the police, who will issue you with a formal caution under the **Protection from Harassment Act**. If you don’t stop after you’ve been cautioned, you can be arrested and face up to 5 years in prison.

There’s also protection against perpetrators under the civil law such as an ‘occupation order’ or ‘non-molestation order’ (often referred to as injunctions).

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