

BERKSHIRE EAST DOMESTIC ABUSE CUE CARD

Domestic abuse is “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional.” (Family members are: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister & grandparents; directly-related, in-laws or step-family).

KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- Never assume someone else is addressing the domestic violence and abuse issues.
- It is not the professional’s role to comment on or encourage your client to leave their partner.
- Enquire sensitively; create an opportunity, providing a quiet environment where confidentiality can be assured for your client to talk about their experience.
- Be familiar with and give relevant information - about local domestic abuse agencies – if safe to do so.
- If a client does not disclose but you suspect otherwise, accept what is being said but offer other opportunities to talk and consider giving information.
- Focus on safety - Assess the immediate safety of your client and any children they have by asking if it’s safe for them to return home using tools such as the SafeLives-DASH (see overleaf) Risk Identification Checklist. Discuss and construct a basic safety plan if necessary.
- Document any suspicion of domestic violence and abuse in professional records kept at your organisation (not in client held record). Check where and how to send safe correspondence e.g. texting.
- Be familiar with local child protection and adult safeguarding procedures and use as appropriate.
- Share information appropriately subject to policy on child protection and adult safeguarding.
- Encourage informal information exchange i.e. children’s centres/schools.
- Be aware of and provide information on the laws around Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and safeguarding if appropriate.
- Use professional interpreters never family members, friends or children.¹
- Be aware of your own safety needs.

At every meeting with your client, always listen, assess, action, document.

ASKING THE QUESTION – A GUIDE

Ensure it is safe to ask

- Consider the environment: Is it conducive to ask? Is it safe to ask? Never ask in the presence of another family member, friend, or child over the age of 2 years.
- Create the opportunity to ask the question.
- Use an appropriate professional interpreter (never a family member).

Ask

Frame the topic first then ask a direct question.

Validate

Validate what’s happening to the individual and send important messages to your client.

Assess (Use SafeLives-DASH Risk Identification Checklist) Assess your client’s safety.

Action

Be aware of your local domestic abuse agency, how to contact local Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), offer leaflet and suggest referral.

Action any local safeguarding procedures.

Document

Consider safety and confidentiality when recording information in client notes and records. Be non judgemental and evidence your statements. Be relevant and concise.

Client records can be used by survivors in future criminal justice proceedings and may be called on to be used in MARAC.

¹ Standing Together Guidance on Use of Interpreters (Standing Together, 2008)



RISK

On disclosure of domestic abuse, the SafeLives-DASH Risk Identification Checklist should be completed.

To identify the level of risk of serious harm and homicide to a victim of domestic abuse, professional judgement, 'visible high risk' (i.e. number of ticks on the SafeLives-DASH Risk Identification Checklist - usually 14 ticks 'yes' or more) and potential escalation should all be considered. Below is a list of some high risk factors:

1. Victim's perception of risk
2. Separation (child contact)
3. Pregnancy/new birth (under 18 months)
4. Escalation
5. Community issues/isolation
6. Stalking
7. Sexual Assault
8. Strangulation (choking, suffocation, drowning)
9. Credible threats to kill
10. Use of weapons
11. Controlling and/or Excessive Jealous Behaviour
12. Child Abuse
13. Animals/Pet Abuse
14. Alcohol/Drugs/Mental Health
15. Suicide – Homicide

If a client is identified as being at 'high risk', the case should be referred to the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) via your agency's Designated MARAC Officer (DMO). The MARAC is a monthly multi-agency meeting, chaired by Police, attended by agencies where information is shared and an action plan agreed to manage the risk. Clients do not attend the MARAC meeting, but are represented by an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor).

For advice and information on referring to MARAC, contact the MARAC Administrator at Thames Valley Police via the non emergency telephone number or your agency's Designated MARAC Officer (DMO).

Clients identified as being at 'standard' or 'medium risk' can be referred to outreach support through local domestic abuse services.

CONTACTS

Berkshire Women's Aid IDVA, outreach and refuge service covering Bracknell Forest 0118 9504003 www.berkshireromensaid.org.uk

Bracknell Forest Council 01344 352000
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/domesticabuse or www.itsneverok.co.uk

Broken Rainbow National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) domestic abuse helpline 0300 999 5428 www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

The Dash Charity IDVA, outreach, refuge and children's service covering Slough, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks 01753 549865 www.thedashcharity.org.uk

Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151

Karma Nirvana Supporting victims and survivors of forced marriage and/or honour based abuse 0800 5999 247 www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Men's Advice Line Support for men experiencing domestic abuse 0808 801 0327 www.mensadvice.org.uk

National Centre for Domestic Violence Providing free, fast injunction service 0800 970 2070 www.ncdv.org.uk

National Stalking Helpline Support for victims of stalking 0808 802 0300 www.stalkinghelpline.org

Respect Phoneline Advice for perpetrators, partners and professionals 0808 802 4040 www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Slough Borough Council 01753 475111 www.slough.gov.uk/domesticabuse

Slough Domestic Abuse Services IDVA, outreach and refuge service covering Slough 0800 9232852

Thames Valley Police

- In an emergency 999
- In a non emergency 101 www.thamesvalley.police.uk

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
01628 683800 www.rbwmdvf.org.uk

Victim Support 0808 1689 274 www.victimsupport.org.uk

24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk