

# think of it as building a relationship of trust

Domestic abuse is any violence or abuse that occurs between one person and another within the context of an intimate, family or close relationship. This can include physical violence, emotional, sexual or financial abuse, or control over a person's movement. Domestic abuse occurs in every social class regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography but it is predominately women who suffer the most.

Extract taken from Torbay Strategy Against Domestic Abuse 2008-2011

All statutory workers with child protection responsibilities should receive training to enable them to understand the dynamics of domestic abuse, its links with child protection and to recognise significant risk indicators.

Extract taken from Working Together 2006

## More information

### Safer Communities Torbay

01803 841274

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

### Domestic Abuse Unit

01803 841469

### Childrens Services

01803 208100

### Safer Communities

01803 841274

### Named Nurse Safeguarding Children TCT

01803 546557

07825 027627

### Named Nurse/Consultant SDHCT

01803 655720

07789 504638

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

[www.torbay.gov.uk](http://www.torbay.gov.uk)



Torbay exposing domestic abuse

Speak  
out  
break  
free

Understanding  
domestic abuse  
and its impact  
on health



## There were on average 244 incidents of domestic abuse in Torbay each month in 2007.

- 86% of victims in Torbay are female
- 900 children were recorded by the police as being present at incidents from April to December 2007.
- Of the children who have a Child Protection Plan in Torbay, 40% are living in households where domestic abuse is a significant concern.
- Alcohol and/or drugs are involved in approximately 50% of DV incidents in Torbay.
- 20% of all DV incidents (crime & non crime) reported in Torbay are Very High Risk.
- 1 Domestic Abuse Homicide 2007-08

### The Impact

Domestic abuse will vary from person to person and can cause the following health problems:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Alcohol/drug dependency
- Eating disorders
- Low self esteem
- Still-birth/miscarriage
- Insomnia
- Unexplained somatic symptoms e.g. stomach pains, palpitations, headaches
- Physical injuries – bruises, burns, vaginal bleeding, black eyes etc.

### What to do when

#### Domestic Abuse is disclosed?

- Respect the wishes of the individual
- Discuss the individual's immediate needs e.g. health care, personal safety etc.
- Believe her and reassure that the violence is not her fault.
- Be sensitive and allow her to discuss fears.
- Respect her right to choose to stay in the relationship
- Let her know that she is not alone in being abused.
- Document the evidence – use body maps to show the nature and location of all injuries.
- Record a statement from the victim regarding how she was injured and who caused the injuries, also, if appropriate, record a statement regarding the history of violence.
- Give written information regarding options
- Individuals should not be referred on to other agencies or organisations without their consent except in Child Protection cases.
- Discuss a safety plan

## Behavioural Indicators of Abuse and other early warning signs

Along with the physical and psychological signs of abuse there may be other indicators that a woman is experiencing domestic abuse:

- The woman appears evasive, embarrassed, nervous or ashamed.
- She may be in denial of the abuse.
- The injuries are present on areas of the body usually covered by clothing.
- Repeated visits to hospital A&E departments or medical history reveals repeated suspicious injuries.
- Explanation of injuries do not correlate with objective evidence.
- The woman may always be accompanied by her partner or another person.
- She may seem nervous or afraid of her partner.

### Raising the question

- Talk to the woman alone and stress confidentiality issues.
- When questioning show a caring, non-judgemental attitude.
- Approach the issue of domestic abuse by asking non-threatening, in-direct questions in an empathetic manner. This should help build a relationship of trust with the woman.

### Examples of indirect questions

- How are you feeling?
- Is everything alright at home/do you get the support you need at home?
- Do you get on well with your partner?

If the woman affirms that there are problems at home or gives an answer that suggest that she may be living with domestic abuse, it is important to ask more direct questions.

### Examples of Direct questions

- Are you frightened of your partner?
- Do you feel unsafe at home?
- How did you get those injuries?
- Has your partner ever hurt you physically?
- Has your partner used threatening and controlling behaviour towards you?
- Has your partner ever hurt your children?

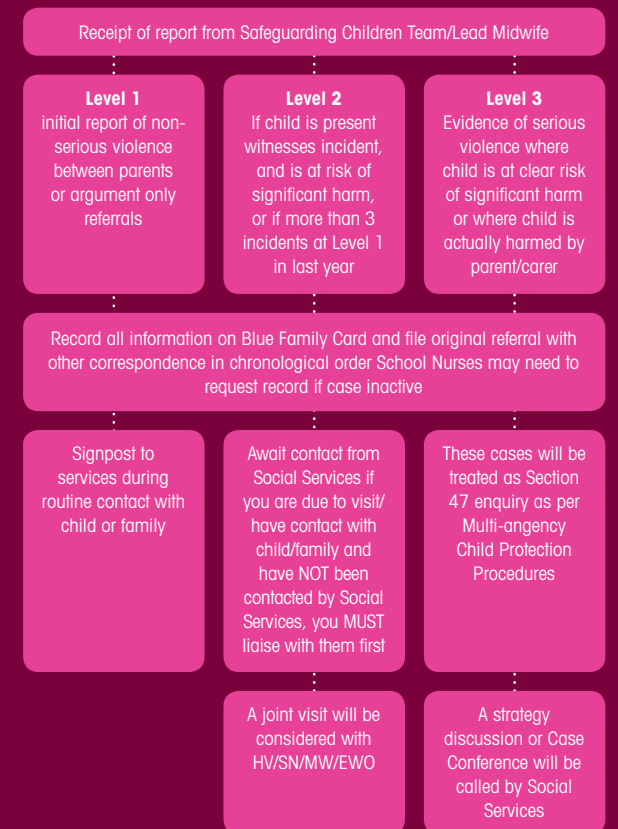
If it is believed that children are at risk, Child Protection policies and procedures must be adhered to

## Domestic Abuse and Pregnancy

Research has shown that domestic abuse often manifests for the first time or increases in severity during pregnancy. The number of unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and terminations is higher among women experiencing domestic abuse

The actions of health professionals *should not* increase the risks or dangers for individuals.

## Management of domestic abuse reports by specialist community public health nursing teams and midwives



The Domestic Violence Police Officers are very happy to discuss any queries you have regarding how cases are awarded their levels. Please contact the appropriate team directly on:  
 Torbay: 01803 841469  
 Teignbridge: 01626 336552