

COVID-19 Briefing

Supporting Pharmacists to Respond to Domestic Abuse

The COVID-19 outbreak brings new challenges for people who are living through domestic abuse. Victims/survivors who are self-isolating may not be able to access support or escape abuse at times when they otherwise could. Self-isolating while living with an abuser may also see an increased risk of harm. During this challenging time, pharmacies are likely to be one of the few places that survivors can access to find out about support available.

We request that you display the enclosed poster to raise awareness of domestic abuse so that victims/survivors of abuse are supported to reach out for support while in self-isolation.

This briefing provides you with additional information to ensure that victims can safely access information and support when visiting the pharmacist.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It can consist of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and/or economic abuse and can result in someone being harmed or made to feel afraid or unsafe.

It is sadly very common with 3,000 people seeking support in our boroughs in the last year. During the lockdown period, we are likely to see an increase in cases. Domestic abuse can be experienced regardless of someone's gender, race, ethnic or religious group, sexuality, class, or disability.

What are the signs someone may be experiencing domestic abuse?

There is no definitive list, but someone may present at the pharmacy with the following:

Physical Symptoms	Emotional Symptoms	Behavioural Signs of Abuse	Signs of Control in an Abusive Relationship
<p>Bruising. Broken bones. Burns or stab wounds. Chronic pain. Injuries inconsistent with explanation of cause. Multiple injuries at different stages of healing. Injuries to the breasts or abdomen.</p> <p>A history of: Recurrent sexually transmitted infections. Recurrent urinary tract infections. Repeated miscarriage. Termination of pregnancy.</p>	<p>Repeat presentation with depression, panic, anxiety, self-harm or psychosomatic symptoms.</p> <p>Expressing suicidal ideation.</p> <p>Sleep disturbances.</p> <p>Eating disorders.</p> <p>Fear.</p> <p>Increasing likelihood of misusing drugs, alcohol or prescribed anti-depressants.</p>	<p>Patient is reluctant to speak in front of partner.</p> <p>Partner is aggressive or dominant, talks for patient or refuses to leave her alone.</p>	<p>Patient has limited access to money.</p> <p>Patient tries to hide injuries/ signs of abuse or minimise their extent.</p>



Domestic Abuse: Do's and Don'ts:

DO	DON'T
Do display the poster somewhere clearly visible and in any separate rooms.	Don't ask or discuss domestic abuse when someone else is present or could overhear.
Do allow someone to use the pharmacy phone to contact a helpline/emergency number – only if the phone is in a private area and out of earshot.	Don't confront the abuser.
Do provide information about additional support services if someone discloses abuse (see support below).	Don't see people together, always see people on their own.
Do recognise that the Pharmacy may be one of the only safe places a victim/survivor can access.	Don't suggest that the victim leaves their partner.
Do try and speak to the person alone if possible - take them in to a separate room (this may encourage a disclosure).	Don't feel the need to be an expert. Instead refer onto specialist support.
Do recognise that a woman is more likely to be at risk if she is pregnant. There may also be risk of harm to children or other vulnerable people at home.	Don't make assumptions, men can be victims, carers can be perpetrators.

What additional support is available?

In an emergency, always dial 999 or 101 for non-emergencies.

Our local support service:

The Angelou Partnership	020 8741 7008 https://www.angelou.org/ Mondays to Fridays: 10am – 6pm
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Additional support numbers:

NSPCC (for concerns about a child)	0808 800 5000 Monday to Friday, 8am to 10pm and 9am to 6pm at the weekends. https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/
National LGBT domestic abuse helpline	0800 999 5428 http://www.galop.org.uk Monday, Tuesday, Friday, 10am to 5pm Wednesday and Thursday, 10am to 8pm Wednesday and Thursday, 5 to 8pm - online chat service – access via the website You can make a referral and/or make contact via email at: help@galop.org.uk Please state if it is not safe to contact you via telephone
Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327 info@mensadvice.org.uk Monday and Wednesday, 9am to 8pm; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9am to 5pm
National Stalking Helpline	0808 802 0300 https://www.suzylamplugh.org 9am to 4pm weekdays except for Wednesdays when it is open 1pm to 4pm.
Modern Slavery helpline	08000 121 700 https://www.unseenuk.org https://www.unseenuk.org/news/92
Forced Marriage Unit	020 7008 0151 fmu@fco.gov.uk
Female Genital Mutilation Helpline	0800 028 3550 www.childline.org.uk
Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141 https://www.elderabuse.org.uk
Victim Support	0808 168 9111 https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help