

# What is domestic violence?

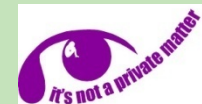
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[www.lincolnwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.lincolnwomensaid.org.uk)



**LINCOLN WOMEN'S AID**

Helping all women and their children experiencing domestic violence



## Domestic violence – two definitions ...

- Home Office
  - Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Women's Aid Federation of England
  - Domestic violence is the physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse of one person, usually a woman, by another with whom they have or have had a close or intimate relationship.

## Why do we call it domestic violence?

- To differentiate it from stranger violence
- To allow us to explore and acknowledge the crucial differences that exist
- To help us understand why women respond to their experiences as they do

## Putting it into perspective

- One in four women will experience domestic violence at some point in their lives
- In a rough calculation 80,000 of the women and girls living in Lincolnshire will be affected by domestic violence during their lives
- Two women are killed each week by a partner or former partner
- Repeat victimisation is common. More than half of all victims of domestic violence are involved in more than one incident

## Putting it into perspective

- 54,000 women and children stay in refuges in England each year
- 60% of women studied left because they feared the perpetrator would kill them or their children & 54% left because they could see the abuse was affecting their children
- 76% of women studied suffered post-separation violence
- On average a woman suffers domestic violence for seven years before leaving for good

## Putting it into perspective

- There appears to be a link between animal abuse, domestic violence and child abuse
- The link between child physical abuse and domestic violence is high – both occur in between 33% & 66% of cases
- In 90% of incidents children are in the same or next room
- 75% of mothers who had experienced abuse said their children had witnessed domestic violence incidents

## Putting it into perspective

- Violence against women has serious consequences for their physical and mental health
- Abused women are fifteen times more likely to misuse alcohol, nine times more likely to abuse drugs, three times more likely to be diagnosed as depressed or psychotic and three times more likely to attempt suicide
- 37% of women are attacked for the first time during pregnancy

# Why do women stay in or return to abusive relationships?

- Power
  - Fear of partner
  - Fear of living alone
  - Guilt
  - Lack of support
  - Lack of self-respect, self-confidence and self-esteem
- Practical difficulties
  - Money
  - Accommodation
  - Possessions
  - Children
  - Skills
- Emotions – Love, hope and pity

# Aspects of psychological torture

- Isolation
- Degradation
- Causing exhaustion/  
disability
- Enforcing trivial  
demands
- Threats
- Distorted perspectives
- Occasional  
indulgences
- Displays of total  
power

## Effects of domestic violence on children

- Children are individuals and react in different ways to living in a home with a violent person
- Pregnancy or childbirth is often a trigger for the first abuse, also putting the child at risk
- Actual physical harm or neglect
- Actual or threatened violence to children can be a way of controlling their mother

## Effects of domestic violence on children

- Psychological damage and distress
- Children may feel powerless or guilty
- Children can suffer symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder
- Impact on school attendance and achievement
- Interference with children's social relationships
- Having to assume a parental or caring role

## Characteristics of violent men

- They are self-orientated and narcissistic
- They have little conception of the needs of others
- Their violence is purposeful behaviour, used to dominate, punish, control or obtain sexual service
- Their violence is associated with conflicts about domestic labour and other every day matters, and about sexual possessiveness.
- Their violence is linked to other coercive and intimidating acts, e.g. threatening and belittling women
- They see violence as legitimate, or even heroic
- They reject or deflect responsibility for violence, blaming it on drink, work pressures or the victim
- They make light of the consequences of violence

## Contact information

- Boston Women's Aid
  - Refuge - 01205 311 272
  - Boston Women's Centre  
01205 364 292
  - W.A.S.H.  
01775 720 400
  - W.A.S.H. Holbeach  
01406 493 222
- Lincoln Women's Aid
  - Refuge - 01522 510 041
  - Lincoln Women's Centre  
01522 576 761
  - Grantham Women's Centre  
01476 561 131
  - [www.lincolnwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.lincolnwomensaid.org.uk)
- West Lindsey Women's Aid
  - Gainsborough Women's  
Centre - 01427 616 219
- Sleaford Women's Centre
  - 01529 308 260

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**National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247**

# NEW LINCOLN REFUGE APPEAL

Help us to raise the £100,000 needed to build and furnish a new refuge in Lincoln.

The new refuge will be purpose-built with disabled access, nine family spaces and two rooms for women without children.

For more information and to support our appeal see our website or ring Lincoln Women's Centre on 01522 575 490

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