

# The Wish Centre Behaviour Change Programme Newsletter – Issue 20

*Welcome to the latest installment of the WCBCN. This is an opportunity for us to share with you, the referrers, information relating to our behaviour change work monthly – namely the Gateway to Change workshop and the Make the Change programme. This will allow us to share case studies with you, not only on how the programme works, but how important your referrals are to making a difference in the lives of those affected by DA enabling them the chance to make changes to their behaviours and, ultimately, their lives and the lives of those affected.*

## Important Updates for October 2024

- We have updated our referral forms to eliminate the word 'perpetrator'. Our focus is on behaviour change and we recognise the word can be a barrier to men wanting to access the programmes.
- The Primary aggressor training can still be booked. It is an in-person training session. The session runs from 9.30am - 2.30pm. Please feel free to book on to the venue nearest to you by dropping me an email at [Andrew.mcauliffe@thewishcentre.org](mailto:Andrew.mcauliffe@thewishcentre.org)

Central	Tuesday 26th November	Moor Nook Family Hub, Ribbleson, PR2 6HN
East	Friday 29th November	Eanam Business Development Centre, Eanam Old Road, Blackburn, BB1 5NL
North	Friday 6th December	Poulton Children's Centre, The Old Fire Station, Clark Street, Morecambe, LA4 5HR





## INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING REFERRALS

We understand that time is precious when supporting people in the work we all do. In order to save you waiting time with referrals, there are a few key bits of information you may need to know.

- *There is a distinction between Make the Change and Gateway to Change. Gateway is a 2-session awareness raising workshop and comes with no report on completion. Make the Change is the full perpetrator programme which runs between 16-22 weeks (depending on the outcome of the assessment) which comes with a court accepted report upon completion.*
- *Make the Change and Gateway to Change are not anger management courses. They are for behaviour change in relation to DA and DV.*
- *We can only look at referrals relating to DA/DV towards an intimate spouse or ex/current partner.*
- *It is vitally important to complete the referral forms in as much detail as possible, providing relevant contact details where applicable. This saves time when processing the forms and enables the facilitator to have as clear a picture before going into any assessment.*
- *If open/known to Family Court/CAFCASS additional information/documentation will be requested.*
- *Men must acknowledge that their behaviour is or could be classed as abusive and want to change this.*
- *It's important to know that a referral does not guarantee a place. Acceptance on GTC and MTC is subject to assessment.*

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## Domestic Abuse in the Media

### Abusive ex banned partner from using the toilet.



Gareth Jones, 41, wants to share his story to help others who've experienced abuse. He endured months of emotional and physical mistreatment, including being kicked, punched, made to sleep on the floor, and denied access to a bathroom by his ex-girlfriend, whom he met online in July 2021. After more than a year of therapy, he's started on his journey toward healing.

The charity he reached out to highlight that male domestic abuse is more common than many realise, affecting roughly one in six or seven men in their lifetime. The Mankind Initiative also found that, in Wales, one in 25 men experiences abuse from a partner each year. Earlier this year, 41-year-old Sarah Rigby from Winsford, Cheshire, received a 20-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, at Chester Crown Court after admitting to coercive and controlling behaviour.

Detective Constable Sophie Ward of Cheshire Police described Rigby as having a "stranglehold" over her victim. She added, "*Many people assume that only women can be victims of controlling and coercive behaviour, but this case shows that's not always true.*"

Five months after the sentencing, he reflected on the relationship, saying it initially seemed "normal," though he later recognised signs of "love bombing." Rigby would punish him by making him sleep on the floor without covers, denying him access to the bathroom, and even refusing him entry to her home if he was trying to work. She controlled his social connections, monitored his phone, and isolated him from family and friends. The abuse, including physical attacks like biting and kicking, intensified after he moved into her home four months into their relationship.

## Domestic Abuse in the Media

### Building of The Independent's new safe houses begins.







The Brick-by-Brick appeal, launched last month in partnership with the charity Refuge, has now raised more than £350,000 – and construction on the first safe new home for families fleeing the horror of domestic abuse is now well underway.

Standing among the foundations and rising walls of the new sanctuary, Refuge chair Hetti Barkworth-Nanton described its construction as "*quite simply life-changing*". She added: "*To know that this is happening and know that people are really behind it and giving us the support is just incredible. It is like the phoenix coming out of the ground, and it typifies what our survivors do to reach out for help. We will continue to build hope, we will never give up.*"

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## **Domestic Abuse Around the World**

### **HONG KONG**

**Hong Kong police handled over 1,200 criminal cases of domestic abuse in 2023, the highest number since 2019.**



In 2023, Hong Kong police handled 1,236 criminal cases of domestic violence—the highest since 2019—per official data submitted to the legislature. Child protection cases also rose significantly, with the Social Welfare Department (SWD) managing 1,457 cases, a 45% increase since 2019, Secretary for Labour and Welfare Chris Sun noted in response to questions from lawmaker Lilian Kwok.

About 41% of these child cases involved physical abuse.

The SWD also dealt with 1,938 spouse or cohabitant abuse cases, the lowest since 2019, with nearly 80% involving physical violence. Reported offences included murder, assault, sexual abuse, and criminal intimidation. Sun told the legislators that the police would refer cases to the SWD with consent from the individuals concerned, who may be offered admission to refuge centres or immediate intervention by outreaching social workers. For high-risk cases, the department would make crisis intervention and provide necessary support after police referral, the minister said.

## **Domestic Abuse in the Media**

**New abuse survivors to lose support.**







Worcester will experience a "significant loss" after a domestic abuse charity revealed it has stopped supporting new survivors. The future is uncertain for DAWN Project, a domestic abuse charity run under Worcester Community Trust (WCT), after it revealed it has no guaranteed funding for next year.

It has until March 2025 to find guaranteed funding to help support its work - otherwise, the charity could be forced to close. WCT said unprecedented demand had forced it to close its waiting list because the March 2025 deadline had made it harder to support new survivors. Since 2020, the charity has supported over 1,000 people and affected the lives of around 1,500 children in south Worcestershire.

Jon Newey, WCT CEO, said: " *This is a significant loss to the city and will considerably impact individuals and families in need of support. It will also impact other services which are already extremely stretched. We are deeply saddened...* "

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Blackburn & Darwen District Without Abuse

Registered Charity No: 1116444 - Company No: 5834929

## **Featured Article**

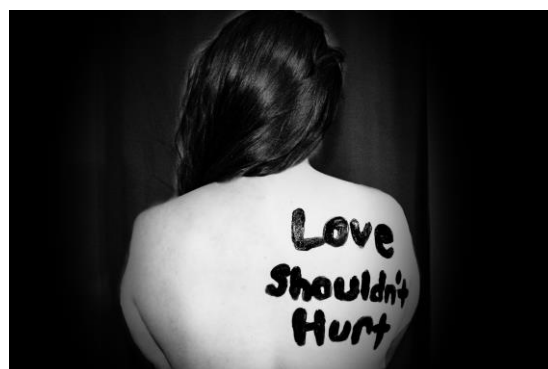
### **Surviving domestic abuse - my story**



**The following is an article produced by Warwickshire police about a real-life domestic abuse case.**





Domestic abuse remains a force priority and as part of our work to raise awareness, we spoke to a survivor of domestic abuse.

Sarah (not her real name) – a woman in her 20s – was subjected to physical, mental, emotional and psychological abuse by her ex-partner over a four-year period. After reporting it to us, she received support, and her ex-partner was given a four-year custodial sentence for a string of domestic abuse offences against her. She is now in a long-term relationship with a new, supportive partner and is expecting a child. Read Sarah's story below.



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***"I couldn't really say when it first started because before he first ever hit me there was so much more – emotional manipulation, gaslighting and constantly making me feel unworthy and not good enough."***

Like many people who experience domestic abuse, Sarah suffered mentally, emotionally and psychologically at the hands of her ex-partner. Sadly, for Sarah though, the abuse did turn physical. She explains how she felt responsible for what was happening.

***"The first time he hit me was around five months into the relationship after telling me he had cheated on me. At the time I blamed myself for shouting at him and asking how he could do that when he claimed to love me. I would think maybe if I was better, he wouldn't cheat on me, then I wouldn't question him, and he wouldn't feel pressured to lash out and hurt me. Even now I'm confused. I knew he should never have raised his hand to me, but I apologised for not being enough and he just hugged me until I stopped crying."***




In her mid-teens at the time, Sarah found herself forced to increasingly lie to her friends and family in a bid to hide the truth. As a result of not attending college, she was eventually thrown off her course.

***"Sometimes I would go in with bruises over my body, on my face, a busted lip but then most days I couldn't pull myself together enough to go in. I found myself making excuses for him, thinking there was a reason for the way he treated me and believing if I was better it would stop. One time he pinned me up and strangled me to the point I passed out and only woke up because he let go. I cracked my head on the concrete when I dropped, and he had a go at me for the way I fell. He dragged me to the bathroom because I couldn't stand or see properly, I felt drowsy, and I just remember him splashing water in my face."***

Despite suffering sustained abuse, Sarah struggled to understand what was happening and how her life was being negatively impacted.

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*"I never saw it as me being a victim, I just knew it was wrong. I couldn't understand how he could do anything like that then say he loved me. I ignored all the signs because I felt like someone who I loved could never abuse me and I refused to believe it was true."*

But while she wanted to get help, Sarah was emotionally torn by what could happen as a consequence of reporting her ex-partner.

*"It's hard to even consider calling the police because although you want the abuse to end, you don't want to lose that person. You come to think he's 'the one', he just needs help so you spend days and nights explaining what he's doing to you when it's you that needs to realise, he knows and if he cared enough to stop, he already would have. When we were good, we were great. I almost felt euphoric but when it wasn't good, I didn't even want to be alive."*





Like many victims, Sarah suffered multiple incidents of abuse and contacted police on a number of occasions but never took it any further. So, what was the turning point? She recalls how she hadn't spoken to her ex-partner for a number of days after he had physically assaulted her. He assured her things would be different this time, so she decided to forgive him, and the pair agreed to meet up.

*"Things just escalated as they did before. I found him cheating again and questioned him, which resulted in me being left in bruises and heartbreak. I went to the police because he needed help. I was scared of losing him the whole time, but I knew he needed help, and I needed help to get away from him. I'd take him back every time and he'd be the one I'd cry to even though it was him who was hurting me. He knew I'd stay with him no matter what he did to me. There was always the thought in the back of my mind: 'What if I don't wake up the next time, he hits me too hard? What if we carried on and had children? How would that affect them? I was a mess for a long time."*

And how did she feel after seeking help?

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*"The police were so understanding and listened to everything I had to say. I'd been through it all before and just felt weak going through it all again, but they reassured me my feelings were valid and helped me to see that what was happening wasn't normal. I felt stupid going back to them because I'd reported him before, got a restraining order and gone to a refuge but I loved him and went back. They told me it happens and that they were there for me."*

After reporting the latest incident to them, she bravely decided to take matters further this time and having been charged with multiple offences, her ex-partner was jailed in 2018/19 for four years and given a ten-year restraining order. So, what advice would she give to anyone who is going through a similar experience?



*"It's hard to leave someone you see as your world...but there is a bigger world out there and you have to explore that because if you don't you won't have a life to live at all. Going through this made me grow up fast. I messed up my education and all of my friendships. I ruined my relationship with my family. I threw everything away and the relationship was my only focus. I was trying to fix myself for him when he was the one who was making me broken. I've realised it's in these moments you need to see the bigger picture and if you could look back at everything, from how it started up to now, you'd know how wrong it was. But that's a part of recovering. It doesn't matter if it's the first time, or the 50th time, talk to someone – go to the police or speak to a support agency. It will be okay, and you don't have to suffer in silence."*

So, what does the future hold for Sarah and how does she feel now?

*"There's no doubt I found it difficult to trust people. I saw myself going for men with traits of his but left because they're not him. It's hard to explain. I was also diagnosed with a mental health condition, which is usually a result of a traumatic experience and that's challenging. I moved to a different area, got a new job and found some incredible people including a brilliantly supportive partner. And after my family found out the truth of what had really been going on, they were so*

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*understanding, which has really helped me as well. Making the initial step of getting away from him was really scary for me but absolutely crucial and necessary. The fact is no-one should live feeling belittled and unworthy because of someone else. They are no better than you no matter what has happened in your past or who you are. Nothing gives anyone the right to make you feel like that. Some days I struggle, which is understandable, but no matter what I do, I'm in a better place now than I was back then."*



### #YOUARENOTALONE





**CALL 999**  
FOR URGENT HELP

IF YOU CAN'T SPEAK,  
DIAL +55 WHEN PROMPTED  
BY THE OPERATOR  
(MOBILE ONLY)

FIND SUPPORT AT: [GOV.UK/DOMESTIC-ABUSE](https://gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

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## **Exploring the Dark Triad and its role in Domestic Abuse**





The **Dark Triad** consists of three personality traits: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Each trait plays a significant role in patterns of domestic abuse, revealing the complex psychological dynamics at play.

- 1. **Narcissism** is characterised by an inflated self-image and a strong need for admiration. Individuals high in narcissistic traits often feel entitled and may react with anger or aggression if their demands are not met. This entitlement can manifest in abusive behaviours that undermine their partner's self-worth, leading to a cycle of emotional and psychological abuse. Narcissism goes beyond mere self-love; it's a complex personality disorder that can significantly disrupt personal and professional relationships. It often manifests as grandiosity, entitlement, and a persistent need for attention and admiration. Victims of narcissistic abuse frequently experience low self-esteem, anxiety, and a profound sense of isolation. Their narcissistic partners often attempt to sever their support networks, further deepening their feelings of loneliness.

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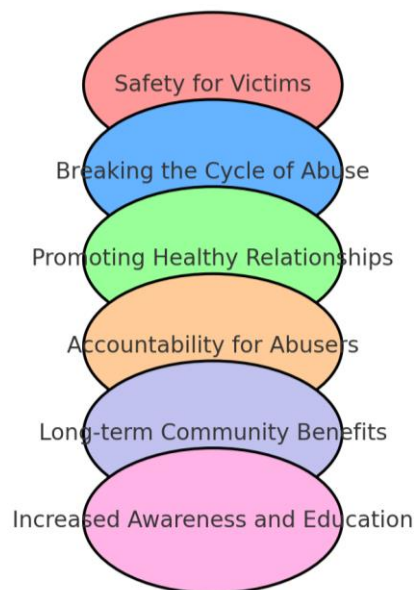
Research indicates that prolonged exposure to such abuse can lead to Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD), a condition characterised by enduring emotional distress. This highlights the serious and long-lasting impact that narcissistic abuse can have on individuals, affecting their mental health and overall well-being.

- 2. **Machiavellianism** refers to a manipulative approach to relationships, where individuals exploit others for personal gain. Those exhibiting high Machiavellian traits are often skilled at deception and may use guilt, emotional manipulation, and intimidation to control their partners. This calculated behaviour can make it difficult for victims to recognise the abuse, as the abuser often presents a charming facade to the outside world. Identifying Machiavellianism in relationships can be challenging due to the trait's inherent cunning and deceitfulness. Individuals exhibiting this behaviour are often strategic, meticulously planning their actions to achieve morally questionable goals. Their manipulative tactics can make it difficult for partners to see the true intentions behind their actions, leading to confusion and mistrust in the relationship. Recognising these patterns early on is essential for protecting oneself from emotional harm. To prevent manipulation, it's crucial to spot the signs. These include constant lying, emotional manipulation, and a lack of regard for your feelings. Also, it's key to set clear boundaries. And seeking advice is important when dealing with Machiavellian people.
- 3. **Psychopathy** encompasses a disregard for societal norms and the rights of others, leading to impulsivity and a lack of empathy. Individuals with antisocial traits may engage in harmful behaviours without remorse, making them particularly dangerous in abusive relationships. Their inability to empathise with their partner's feelings can result in severe emotional and physical violence. Psychopathy is often considered the most perilous trait within the Dark Triad. Recognising these signs early can help individuals protect themselves from potential harm. Victims of psychopathic abuse should seek legal help. They should also get counselling or IDVA support. This will help them move past the abuse. Depression is common in the victims of psychopathy. Organisations specialising in domestic abuse offer both immediate protection and long-term support strategies.

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Together, these traits create a potent mix that enables abusers to exert control and manipulate their partners effectively. Victims often find themselves trapped in these relationships, struggling to escape due to the abuser's tactics of isolation, emotional degradation, and intimidation.

Understanding the Dark Triad is crucial when working with victims of domestic abuse, as it helps professionals recognise manipulative behaviours and emotional dynamics that may be at play. Knowledge of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and antisocial traits can empower victims to identify unhealthy patterns and seek appropriate support. This understanding is vital for developing effective intervention strategies and fostering an environment where victims feel safe, validated, and understood, ultimately aiding in their healing and recovery journey. It also exhibits why Make the Change is a vital programme for our communities and why your referrals are important.



## **End of Programme Participation Feedback – PD**



**What has been your main learning from attending the Make the Change programme?**

Iceberg - how to approach others and the best way of doing so.

**Looking back, do you recognize your role in perpetrating abuse in relationships and do you accept responsibility for it?**

I look back on it and it was wrong. I could have gone a whole different way about it. I hold accountability for what took place yes to avoid it happening in future scenarios.

**Do you feel you have a better understanding and control of your own feelings?**

Yes 100%

**Do you feel you have a better understanding of other people's feelings and perspectives?**

Yes 100%

**What do you hope to achieve in future relationships?**

Happiness and understanding


**What part are you going to play in having a non-abusive relationship in the future?**

Always sit down and talk and listen to what other people have to say.

**How do you feel about the victim now you have completed the programme?**

I am not going to say I hate her because I do not. I have moved on, and she has moved on.

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I hope we can find a balance for the sake of the children.

### **Can you identify any of your belief system that has been challenged on the programme?**

When I came to the course, I felt that I sent the photo purely because I was in a very bad place and not to cause distress but on reflection it was with the hope it would play on emotions to change her decision in not allowing me to see the children. I could have approached it in a different way and a better way.





### **What was difficult for you on the programme?**

The most difficult thing was at the start understanding my own behaviour and how I reacted and how coercive control played a part and how I had sent the picture to try and get her to change her decision.

***Please do continue to  
send referrals for  
GTC/MTC to  
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