

The Wish Centre Behaviour Change Programme Newsletter



Welcome to the latest installment of the WCBCN. This is an opportunity for us to share with you, the referrers, information relating to our perpetrator 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/DV by enabling them the chance to make changes to their behaviours and, ultimately, their lives and the lives of those affected.

Important Updates for October 2023

- October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Information on this month can be found here <https://shorturl.at/fPWY2>
- October was first declared National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the USA in 1989. Since then, it has been used as a time to acknowledge domestic abuse survivors and be a voice for its victims. Globally, one in three women experiences physical or abusive behaviour, usually by an intimate partner. One in six men also experience physical or emotional abuse.
- A pre-assessment checklist has been provided for those MTC referrals where Family Court/CAFCASS have been or are currently involved.





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

Domestic abuse victims' location data breached.

According to the UK Information Commissioner, data breaches have jeopardised the safety of domestic abuse victims by revealing their locations to their alleged abusers. Data breaches have occurred within various organisations, including a law firm, a housing association, an NHS trust, a police service, a government department, and local councils.

Since June 2022, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has reprimanded seven organisations for data breaches that have affected domestic abuse victims. Four of these cases involved the inappropriate disclosure of the victim's secure address to alleged perpetrators. In one instance, a family had to be urgently relocated to emergency housing.

In another case, an organisation divulged the home address of two adopted children to their incarcerated birth father, who had been convicted of raping their mother on three occasions. Furthermore, organisations had exposed the identities of women seeking information about their partners to those very partners. There was also a breach in which an unredacted assessment report concerning children at risk of harm was mistakenly sent to their mother's ex-partners. John Edwards, the UK Information Commissioner, has called on organisations to handle personal information properly to avoid putting vulnerable people at further risk.

Mr Edwards said: *"These families reached out for help to escape unimaginable violence, to protect them from harm and to seek support to move forward from dangerous situations. But the very people that they trusted to help, exposed them to further risk."*

He called on organisations to handle personal information properly and stressed that "getting the basics right is simple" through training, double checking records and contact details and restricting access to information.

SmartWater spray used to protect domestic abuse victims.



Derbyshire Police is giving canisters of SmartWater to high-risk victims to spray on their domestic abusers.

The forensic liquid is used to mark property to prevent it being stolen, but the force said it could deter abusers from contacting their victims. Officers said the substance, only visible under ultraviolet light, could provide key evidence when suspects denied allegations. The spray is being trialled in Chesterfield and the Erewash area. The force said the areas had higher levels of domestic abuse than other parts of the county, but it hoped to roll the scheme out more widely in the future.

Det Insp Adam Gascoigne said: *"If a suspect was arrested for a primary offence [of domestic abuse], it might be they are going to get bail so the victim will be given a vial of SmartWater. The suspect, upon release, will be told the victim is protected by forensic marking and SmartWater and they will be given a notice to explain that to them."* <https://shorturl.at/owyFZ>

Domestic Abuse in the Media

Kellogg's brings in domestic abuse policy for staff.

Food giant Kellogg's has announced a new domestic abuse policy of support to workers, including extra paid leave.

Anyone suffering the impact of domestic abuse will be entitled to 10 days of additional leave, as well as cash help for an initial legal support meeting. Also provided is a one-off payment to set up a bank account, or other activity providing employees suffering domestic abuse with financial security. The food company employs more than 1,360 people across the UK. Staff at its head office in Manchester and its two factories based in Trafford and Wrexham, will all be covered by the new policy.

Michelle Hill, chief executive of the charity Talk, Listen, Change, said: *"Kellogg's has created a supportive policy with key elements that will enable its staff to feel safe and confident in disclosing domestic abuse. The new domestic abuse policy not only commits to supporting employees, but also to increasing awareness of domestic abuse through resources. We know that the stress and trauma that come with domestic abuse have a profound effect on victim-survivors. Kellogg's has demonstrated, as an organisation, that they are committed to supporting victim-survivors to the best of their ability."*

News From Around the World

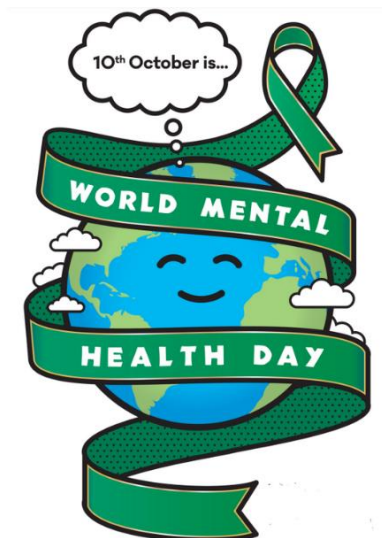
Model faces fierce backlash for using DA as a "Fashion Accessory."



Renowned supermodel Irina Shaykh has found herself embroiled in controversy following her appearance at London Fashion Week. Shaykh, a top model, ignited a storm of criticism for prominently featuring a simulated black eye as part of her runway ensemble. This eyebrow-raising choice was not unique to Irina alone; it was a central component of Mowalola's brand presentation, with all models sporting makeup that simulated cuts and bruises. What's particularly striking about this unsettling aesthetic choice is that it was not intended to raise awareness about domestic abuse, nor were any relevant agencies consulted in the process. Critics have vehemently condemned this decision, arguing that it risks "normalising abusive behaviour" due to the overwhelming emphasis on fashion over a more meaningful social message.

Nicola Miller from the Dash Charity said - *"A black eye is not a designer handbag. A black eye is not empowering. A black eye represents the power and control in an abusive relationship. Victims our charity supports who genuinely have injuries from assault would be trying to hide them, not parading them like some sort of fashion statement. I'm ashamed of what they, of all people, must think when they see this. What is it teaching society?"*

World Mental Health Day and Domestic Abuse







World Mental Health Day, ***observed annually on October 10th***, is a day dedicated to raising awareness and advocating for mental health issues on a global scale. It serves as a reminder of the importance of mental well-being in our lives and communities. This day encourages open conversations, promotes understanding, and seeks to reduce the stigma associated with mental health challenges. It provides an opportunity for individuals, organisations, and governments worldwide to come together, share resources, and work toward a world where mental health is ***prioritised, supported, and treated with the same significance as physical health***. Mental health and domestic abuse are often very intertwined facets. The link between these two issues is complex, interwoven by a web of causation and consequence. Understanding this connection is crucial for breaking the cycle of abuse and providing support to those affected.

Victims of domestic abuse often experience a myriad of mental health challenges, stemming from the relentless psychological trauma inflicted by their abusers. The constant fear, manipulation, and emotional abuse take a toll on their self-esteem, self-worth, and overall mental well-being. Anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are common among survivors, creating a cycle that keeps them trapped in the abusive relationship.

Conversely, the perpetrators of domestic abuse may also have their own mental health issues, which can fuel their violent behaviour. Some abusers struggle with anger

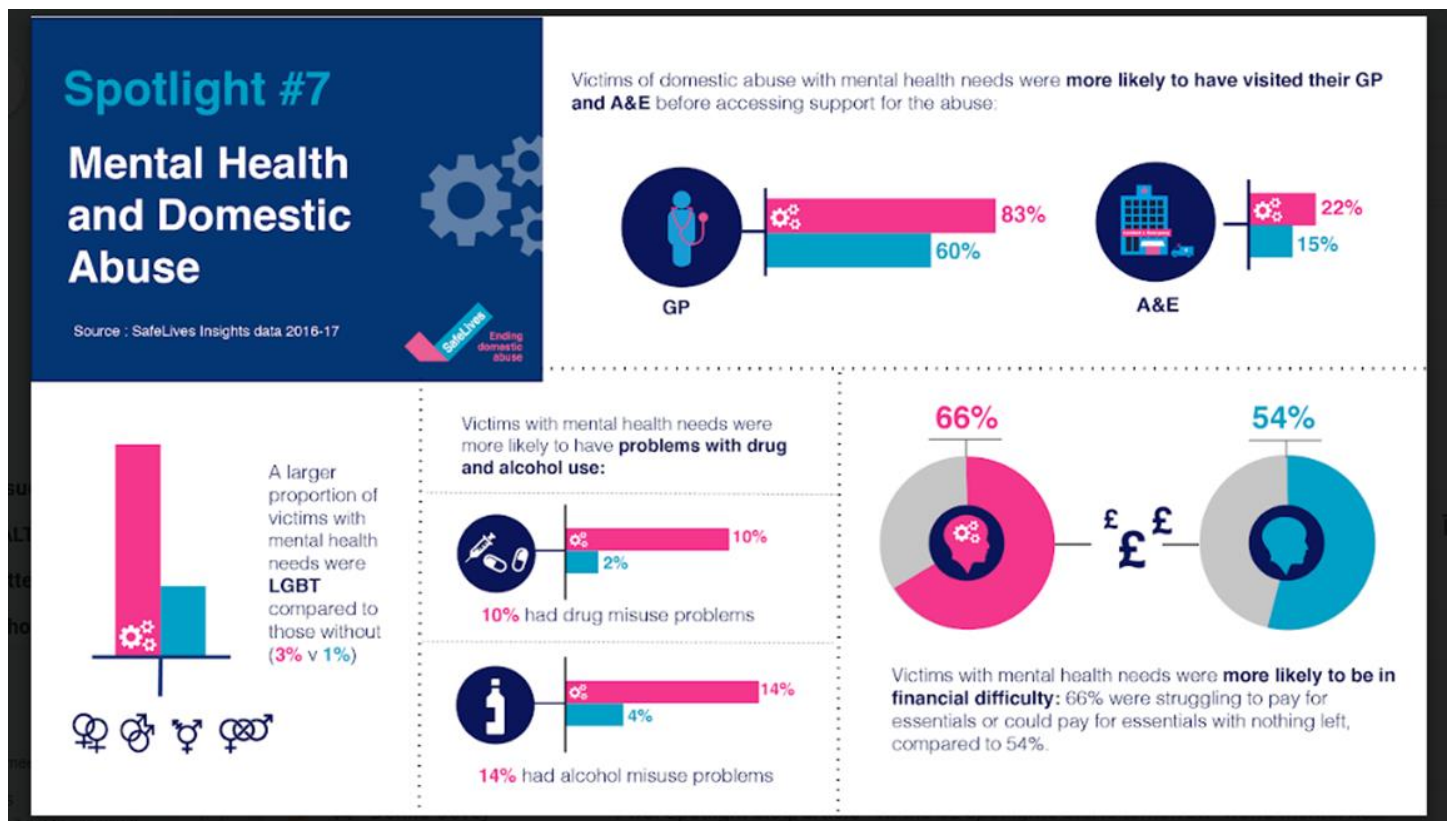
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management, substance abuse, or unresolved childhood trauma. These issues do not excuse their actions, but they can contribute to a toxic environment where violence and control are normalised. As part of the behaviour change programme, we see a lot of referrals with a number of ACES, or Adverse Childhood Experiences. ACEs are common. The original study found almost two thirds of participants experienced 1 or more ACE and more than 1 in 5 experienced 3 or more ACEs. Adverse Childhood Experiences are stressful events occurring in childhood including -

- Domestic violence
- Parental abandonment through separation or divorce
- A parent with a mental health condition
- Being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional)
- Being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional)
- A member of the household being in prison
- Growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems.



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It is essential to recognise the link between mental health and domestic abuse to address both issues effectively. By doing so it helps us identify and support survivors of domestic abuse and reduce the stigma they feel or may face. It can help in the rehabilitation of abusers and offer them access to different interventions, such as Make the Change at The Wish Centre. It can also aid in the education of others. For example, teaching young people about healthy relationships, consent, and coping mechanisms for stress and anger can help prevent abuse from taking root.





By recognizing and understanding this connection, we can take a significant step toward breaking the cycle of abuse and fostering healthier, more resilient individuals and communities.

Always remember –

Mental health matters, and just because you can't see it, its profound influence on people's lives should never be underestimated or overlooked.

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We need to talk about...

Why Victims Don't Disclose Domestic Abuse







Domestic abuse is a pervasive and deeply troubling issue that affects individuals and families worldwide. While awareness campaigns and support systems have made significant strides in recent years, a disturbingly large number of victims still choose not to disclose their experiences of abuse. Furthermore, when a victim of historic abuse bravely chooses to disclose their past experiences, they often encounter an unjust cloud of suspicion that can linger both in the media and within the public's perception. Understanding the reasons behind this silence is crucial in order to provide the necessary support and resources to those in need. In this article, we will explore the complex web of reasons why victims often remain silent about domestic abuse.

Fear of Retaliation

One of the paramount factors that severely inhibit victims of domestic abuse from coming forward and disclosing their ordeal is the deeply entrenched fear of retaliation. In many cases, abusers exercise a chilling level of control over every facet of a victim's existence, including their physical safety. This absolute dominance creates a harrowing scenario where victims harbour genuine concerns that speaking out against their abuser could lead to a horrifying escalation of violence or other malicious reprisals. The insidious spectre of this fear looms large, casting a long and paralysing shadow over the lives of survivors. This psychological torment makes it exceedingly arduous for victims to summon the courage to break their silence and seek help, perpetuating the cycle of abuse and entrenching their suffering in a painful silence.

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Financial Dependence

A significant and often intricate barrier that entraps many victims of domestic abuse is their profound financial dependence on their abusers. This economic reliance presents a multitude of daunting challenges that can render it exceptionally strenuous for victims to extricate themselves from the clutches of an abusive relationship, let alone summon the courage to disclose the abuse.

The cloud of financial entanglement casts a pervasive and suffocating shadow over these survivors. Their fears extend to losing their homes, financial stability, and potentially even custody of their children if they dare to speak out against their abusers. The haunting prospect of becoming even more vulnerable and destitute can become a grim reality that keeps victims ensnared in a relentless cycle of abuse, shrouding their path to liberation in an intricate web of economic dependence.

Shame and Stigma

Society frequently exacerbates the plight of domestic abuse victims by heaping blame and shame upon them, thereby perpetuating a pernicious stigma that serves as a formidable barrier to disclosure. This societal censure can inflict agonizing emotional wounds, rendering it excruciatingly difficult for survivors to summon the courage to step into the light.




Victims of domestic abuse often internalise this shame, shouldering a heavy burden of self-blame that further silences them. The insidious notion that they bear some responsibility for their own suffering can become a deeply ingrained belief, reinforcing their silence, and diminishing their self-worth. Moreover, victims may harbour profound concerns about the potential judgment, scepticism, and disbelief they could encounter from friends, family, and the broader community should they dare to disclose their harrowing experiences. This fear of societal condemnation can be a powerful deterrent, discouraging survivors from reaching out for the assistance they so desperately need and deserve. It perpetuates a heartrending cycle of isolation and silence, making their path to healing and justice even more challenging.

Isolation

Abusers employ a sinister tactic of isolation, systematically severing the victims' ties with friends and family, effectively rendering them alone and bereft of support. This calculated isolation is a deeply insidious tool that plunges victims into a profound sense of isolation, leaving them with a pervasive feeling of abandonment and helplessness. The consequence of this isolation extends far beyond mere physical separation. Victims begin to internalise the belief that nobody cares about their well-being, compounding their emotional anguish.

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The relentless emotional manipulation inflicted by abusers can convince survivors that no one would believe their harrowing stories, further deepening their isolation and despair.

In the absence of a support network, victims may feel an overwhelming reluctance to disclose the abuse, as they are convinced, they have nowhere to turn. This sense of utter abandonment becomes a crippling barrier, preventing them from seeking help or sharing their ordeal, and perpetuating their suffering in a harrowing silence.

Manipulation and Gaslighting

Abusers frequently wield a sinister arsenal of manipulation tactics and gaslighting techniques to confound and dominate their victims. This relentless psychological warfare inflicts profound and lasting wounds, rendering it exceptionally challenging for survivors to not only recognise the abuse but also summon the courage to disclose it. The insidious nature of gaslighting, in particular, leads victims to doubt their own perceptions and reality. The abuser cunningly distorts the victim's sense of self and truth, leaving them in a bewildering and disorienting state. As a result, victims often find it exceedingly difficult to trust their own instincts, question their own experiences, and discern the boundaries between reality and manipulation.

The abuser's relentless psychological onslaught can culminate in convincing victims that the abuse is their fault, further deepening their self-doubt and emotional turmoil. This pervasive self-blame becomes an oppressive weight that victims carry, complicating the already arduous process of disclosure. The fear of being met with disbelief or condemnation from others, combined with the twisted narrative woven by the abuser, makes it an even more formidable task for survivors to break their silence and seek help.




Love and Attachment

Within the complex dynamics of abusive relationships, it's not uncommon for victims to grapple with profound and conflicting emotions, including lingering feelings of love and attachment towards their abusers. This emotional entanglement adds a layer of intricacy to the already challenging task of disclosure. The enduring love and attachment that victims may feel can foster a sense of hope – hope that the abuser will change, that the relationship can be salvaged, and that the pain they endure will eventually subside. This hope becomes a powerful force that compels victims to protect their abuser's reputation and avoid disclosing the abuse, as they believe that revealing the truth could jeopardise the fragile possibility of transformation within the relationship.

This internal struggle becomes a deeply personal battle for survivors, as they attempt to reconcile their genuine love for the person with the profound harm they are experiencing. It creates a poignant conflict that often leaves victims feeling trapped, torn between their emotional attachments and the urgent need to escape the cycle of abuse. This internal

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turmoil can be yet another impediment to breaking the silence and seeking help, further entrenching them in the complexities of an abusive relationship.

Cultural and Religious Factors





Cultural and religious beliefs wield considerable influence over the decisions of domestic abuse victims, often serving as formidable barriers to disclosure. The intricate interplay of these factors can complicate the already arduous journey toward seeking help. In certain cultural contexts, there exists a pervasive fear that revealing instances of abuse will cast a deep and lasting shadow of shame upon one's family or community. The prospect of tarnishing the family's reputation or defying cultural norms creates a profound and paralyzing pressure on victims to suffer in silence, fearing that their disclosure could result in not only their own stigmatization but also the ostracization of their entire community.

Religious beliefs can also act as a potent force, with some victims firmly believing that divorce or separation is morally unacceptable within the tenets of their faith. This conviction can weigh heavily on survivors, compelling them to endure the abuse, even when their safety and well-being are at stake. The intricate interplay of cultural and religious values, shame, and moral codes can create an overwhelming environment that makes it exceedingly challenging for victims to break their silence and seek help. These external pressures, coupled with the internal turmoil they generate, serve to further entrench victims in a cycle of suffering, making it imperative for society to provide culturally sensitive support and resources to assist survivors.

Understanding why victims of domestic abuse often remain silent is essential for creating a more supportive and empathetic society. To help victims break free from the cycle of abuse and find the courage to disclose their experiences, we must address these underlying issues. This includes improving access to safe housing, financial resources, and mental health support, while also combating the stigma and misconceptions surrounding domestic abuse. By doing so, we can create an environment where victims feel empowered to speak out and seek help without fear or shame.

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Featured Article

Ancient Rome didn't have specific domestic violence legislation – but the laws they had give us a window into a world of abuse.

by Anna Walker

Domestic violence was endemic in the Roman world.

Rome was a slave-owning, patriarchal, militarised culture in which violence (potential and actual) signalled power and control. Tragically, but predictably, the names of most of the victims of domestic violence do not show up in the historical record. And yet the identities of a handful of victims survive.

Nero's second wife Poppaea Sabina was kicked to death while pregnant. His first wife Octavia and his mother Agrippina were murdered on his orders.







Nero and Agrippina, painted by Antonio Rizzi (1869-1940) Wikimedia Commons

According to her epitaph, Julia Maiana was killed after 28 years of marriage. Appia Annia Regilla, an aristocratic woman and wife of the Greek author Herodes Atticus, was murdered while pregnant. Prima Florentia was drowned. Apronia was thrown from a window.

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The love poets Ovid and Propertius depicted relationships with “Corinna” and “Cynthia” involving physical abuse.

John Chrysostom, a church father, described the nightly shrieks of women echoing through the streets of Antioch.

The Roman household

Relationships between members of the Roman household (both free and enslaved) were characterised by significant power imbalances – a scenario ripe in possibilities for physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and coercive control.

The head of the Roman household, the *pater familias*, was famously powerful. His power included the so-called “power of life and death” and ownership of the property of even adult children within his control. His wife might exercise violence and coercion (for instance against slaves, lovers, or children) and be its victim.





With a society-wide belief in correctional education, children were often victims of violence. There is also scattered evidence for elder abuse and the routine sexual and physical abuse of slaves.



Angelo Visconti, The Massacre of the Innocents (1860 - 1861) Asciano, Cassioli Museum

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Legal responses to domestic violence

The autonomy and authority of the *pater familias*, the comparative ease with which a Roman marriage could be dissolved and endemic inequality have been viewed as reasons why Rome did not develop specific domestic violence legislation.

But a patchwork of Roman laws (including Rome's complex murder laws) sought to address coercive and violent behaviour.

The first Roman emperor, Augustus (27 BCE until 14 CE), brought in anti-adultery legislation, criminalising extra-marital sexual activity. This legislation was a deliberate and unprecedented intrusion into the realm of the family, including limits on circumstances under which a father could kill his daughter.





Stalking and sexual harassment were illegal – although the law focused on preserving a woman's chastity, not on the perpetrator's desire to control or terrify his victim.



Hans Van Aachen, The Rape of Proserpine (1589) Brukenthal National Museum

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The emperors Theodosius (379 to 395) and Valentinian (364 to 375) accepted physical abuse as a just cause for divorce – but this appears to have been revoked under the emperor Justinian (542).

The emperor himself was known on occasions to have taken an interest in specific domestic murder cases, but his intervention probably depended on the status and connections of the complainants.

Laws which incidentally addressed abuse and coercive control were much more common. Roman laws offered extensive and detailed legal provision for dowries, wills, and inheritance. Laws provided recourse for a child wrongfully disinherited and worked against a *pater familias* who intentionally cheated a wife out of her dowry.

The need for these laws opens a window on a world of abuse.

'Good fatherhood'

If the law rarely directly addressed domestic violence, a public rhetoric of "good fatherhood" did seek to speak to family duties and relationships.

Exemplary fathers exercised self-control and restrained their anger. They showed severity and *pietas* (familial duty) rather than cruelty.

This rhetoric was made use of by the emperor Hadrian (117 to 138) who exiled a father who had killed his son.

The emperor Trajan (98 to 117) also ordered a father who was maltreating his son to set him free since he viewed the treatment as a breach of *pietas*.





Of course, not all acts of violence were punished. When Egnatius Mecenius beat his wife to death with a club for being drunk (a story dating back to the legendary days of Romulus), he was commemorated for his exemplary *severitas* (acceptable strictness).

The voices of women

Roman matrons could be respected and influential figures within both household and state.

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The ancient Roman historian Livy gave an account of the public murder of Verginia by her father, who killed her in order to protect her chastity from an abuser.

In his telling of the story, Livy examines the public presence of women during the incident. He depicts a crowd of respectable matrons standing with Verginia throughout her ordeal, jostling her accuser.

Their weeping moved the crowd of onlookers more than her father's complaints.







Guillaume-Guillon Lethière, The Death of Virginia (circa 1800) Los Angeles County Museum of Art

After her murder, Livy reports the women lamented loudly and publicly: the actions of the male protagonists are highlighted through the protesting voices of the matrons.

The presence of domestic violence in ancient Rome may not be surprising. But of interest is how Romans formulated limited legal and non-legal challenges to cultures of violence and how we can continue to interrogate such responses today.

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Songs About Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

Music possesses a tangible influence on society, serving as a catalyst for social interaction and connection. Our personal encounters with the music we listen to remain profoundly intimate and emotionally charged yet the rhythm, tone, and phrasing evoke sensations and convey significance that transcend mere lyrical content and have a way of allowing people to empathise and relate to somebody's experience more in depth. Since starting work at The Wish Centre, I have been hearing songs all over the place which have struck me quite intensely with their descriptions of DA/DV and thought it would be interesting to share some of these with you each month.

Jennifer Nettles



“His Hands”

“His Hands” by country singer Jennifer Nettles is a bit of a trojan horse. Starting off depicting what appears to be a loving intimate relationship suddenly changes to reveal its true meaning of physical abuse. Jennifer says she wrote the song with the hopeful intention of helping others.

His Hands - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iozCemxLCs>

Aurora



“Churchyard”

Quite possibly one of the most stirring of modern songs about the subject of domestic abuse, Norwegian songstress Aurora is a true artist in all ways. Of “Churchyard” Aurora says, *“It talks about someone hurling words of abuse or harassment at people and then, like karma, finally hitting back and haunting that person.”* Overall, “Churchyard” is a powerful and haunting song that explores themes of abuse, control, and emotional pain.

Churchyard - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00hbcQ8aUjU>

Joni Mitchell



“Not to Blame”

Queen of Folk, Joni Mitchell has never been one to shy away from exploring sensitive subjects in her songs. Taken from her Grammy award winning 1994 album “Turbulent Indigo”, this bitter song describes a celebrity who is abusive to one woman and drives another to suicide, all the while claiming he is not to blame. The likely inspiration is Jackson Browne, whom Mitchell dated for a time in the early '70s. Browne's first wife, Phyllis Major, committed suicide in 1976, and in 1992 Daryl Hannah suffered injuries at the home she and Browne shared in Santa Monica, California. Hannah didn't file charges against Browne, and he vigorously denied any wrongdoing. The incident happened at the end of their relationship.

Mitchell claimed the song was not about a specific person, but about "batterers of women" in general, but Browne was so clearly implicated in the song that he took to the press to defend himself, reiterating that he never struck Hannah.

Not to Blame - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T5sCCodvtk>

End of Programme Participation Feedback – SY



What has been the main thing you have learnt from attending the Make the Change programme?

Impacts of domestic abuse on my wife and children, how it impacts them. Abuse is not just physical it can be verbal. MTC has taught me to accept responsibility for my actions.

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

Most certainly yes, the programme has reinforced my role in perpetuating the abuse. I accept full responsibility for it.

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

Yes, learning the 'iceberg' and temperature gauge from the programme is very useful. Coping mechanisms when I feel emotions are running high and how I'm preventing them correctly.

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

I do have a better understanding of other people's feelings and perspectives and how the cycle of abuse affects all concerned because of the programme- the videos for example are hard hitting.

What do you hope to achieve in future relationships?

Treat people with respect, Respect boundaries. Listen more attentively and other perspectives. Create more harmony and love and understanding. Just be a better person overall.

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

A full part. Learn from mistakes of the past and to not repeat them. At the end of the day everyone's actions have consequences and ultimately everyone wants a happy life as do I and for that to happen you must be kind, caring, loving and respectful amongst other things.

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

I do have a lot more sympathy and empathy for my victims and feel deeply ashamed of myself and extremely remorseful.

What was difficult for you on the programme?

The videos were particularly difficult to watch as they were hard hitting and graphic. Also, the consequences to children were very hard for me as a father and a husband.

What did you find less helpful? Less relevant?

I think pretty much it was all relevant and useful.





Future recommendations for the programme e.g., content, resources etc

More videos would be good. Overall, the tutors were very helpful and knowledgeable.

***Please do continue to
send referrals for
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