

Listen Support Empower

Welcome to the latest instalment 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 November 2023

- November sees the annual return of the 16 Days of Activism initiative and White Ribbon Day. More about these later in the newsletter.
 - Please see the highlighted red section below about Family Court/CAFCASS referrals and required additional documentation.

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 2session 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. A pre-assessment checklist will need to be completed with additional information. Please also send any available Section 7 and/or Finding of Facts documents with the completed referral form.
- *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

The government 'considering' Domestic Abuse lessons compulsory for college students.



Compulsory domestic abuse lessons for college students have moved a step closer, with campaigners hailing a "historic" win as the government considers making the change.

After weeks of delay, the government has now confirmed it is considering a recommendation by MPs on the Women and Equalities Committee. If put into action, it would mean relationships and sex education (RSHE) becoming compulsory in post-16 education.

The campaign is spearheaded by student Faustine Petron, who began the Make It Mandatory campaign following her experience of an abusive relationship.

"We have influenced the government as a group of five friends," Petron told The Big Issue.

"Today we'll be celebrating that but keeping the pressure up, so their considerations manifest in real – and potentially life-saving – changes for young people."

News From Around the World

Comedian Matt Rife Faces Intense Backlash Following Inappropriate DA 'joke'.



The comic, who gained popularity on TikTok and has appeared on various TV shows has stirred controversy with a sketch about domestic violence in his recent Netflix special, "Matt Rife: Natural Selection."

The set includes a misogynistic and cruel joke about a female server at a restaurant having a black eye. The humour didn't go over well with some, which Rife appeared to anticipate as he followed up the joke by saying, "I figure if we start the show with domestic violence the rest of the show should be smooth sailing."

Domestic abuse agencies worldwide have condemned Rife and called out other aspects of his set as "homophobic and ableist", pertaining outdated views which should have no place in 2023. Rife responded with a fake apology redirecting people to a site selling metal helmets.

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Blackburn & Darwen District Without Abuse

Registered Charity No: 1116444 - Company No: 5834929



Domestic Abuse in the Media

Renters' law 'devastating' for domestic abuse survivors, Welsh Senedd hears.



A law to protect renters could be having a devastating impact on survivors of domestic abuse who are seeking refuge, the Senedd heard.

Mark Isherwood raised Welsh Women's Aid concerns about the impact of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 on refuge provision. The Conservative shadow minister told the Senedd the charity believes the legislation, which came into force in December 2022, may break the system.

"I think it's about balancing the rights and interests of those living in refuge." Mr Isherwood said: "Refuge provision is never intended to be a home, and survivors reside there whilst fleeing risk of imminent serious harm or death. Refuge relies on flexible tenancies, such as licences, so that the survivor can be moved on quickly when refuge is no longer appropriate for them. This legislation, they say, has inappropriately treated the emergency accommodation that refuge provides as a home.... It has already caused lasting and devastating consequences for survivors and service provision, they state, since its implementation."

Jane Hutt, the social justice minister, said she has met the chief executive of Welsh Women's Aid, and an evaluation of the legislation is under way. *"They've raised concerns about the operation of the Act, and we do have to look at this,"* she said.

Welsh Women's Aid has called for an exemption for refuge accommodation.

Police prepare for increase in domestic abuse over festive period.



Police are due to launch a social media campaign, highlighting the devastating impact of DA at Christmas; speaking directly to those living in abusive households to empower them to speak out; and reminding anyone concerned about their behaviour after drinking where they can seek help.

A police statement says: "While in past years we have focussed our winter campaign on one crime type, this year we have decided to amplify our messaging around serious assaults where alcohol is a factor, as well as domestic abuse, as sadly we see an increase in calls relating to both over the festive season. We hope that through this campaign we can increase confidence in reporting incidents of domestic abuse and lessen the number of serious assaults by signposting to support agencies for those struggling with their behaviour when they've been drinking."

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The Vital Role of Healthcare in Tackling Domestic Violence

This article was written by Mr. Alexandre Borges Filho, a Brazilian 24-year-old medical student. He is affiliated with the International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)



Imagine the healthcare system as more than just a place to heal physical wounds. It's also a space where the hidden scars of domestic abuse come to light. Domestic violence touches countless lives, irrespective of age or background. The healthcare system plays a critical role in spotting, addressing, and even preventing these harrowing experiences.

Spotting the Signs Early On

Healthcare isn't just about treating illnesses. It's about being observant. When a patient walks in with unexplained injuries or seems unusually anxious, it's a clue for medical professionals. By recognizing these signs, doctors and nurses can step in early, offering a lifeline to those in need.

To make this possible, training is essential. Healthcare workers need to know what to look for: *repeated injuries, stories that don't add up, or visible fear*. It's equally important to offer a safe environment. A private chat, a listening ear, and the right resources can make all the difference.

More than Just Band-Aids: Comprehensive Care

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When we think of domestic violence, we often picture physical harm. But the wounds run deeper. Healthcare must address both the body and the mind. This means going beyond stitches and bandages. Counselling, support groups, and specialized mental health services can help victims heal emotionally.

Also, healthcare can act as a bridge. By connecting victims to local shelters, legal advice, or support groups, they provide a network of care that extends beyond the hospital walls.

Teaching and Preventing

There's a saying: "Prevention is the best medicine." Healthcare plays a big part in stopping domestic violence before it starts. This involves talking about what makes a relationship healthy. It's about discussing respect, understanding, and boundaries during regular medical check-ups.

Community programs, workshops, and seminars further amplify this message. By educating everyone, we can empower individuals to recognize and stand up against abuse.

The Power of Information

Numbers tell a story. Hospitals and clinics are treasure troves of data on domestic violence. By keeping detailed records and conducting research, they paint a clear picture of the issue. This data is invaluable. It helps decision-makers grasp the issue's scale and find effective solutions.

Speaking Up for Change

Healthcare professionals witness the aftermath of domestic violence firsthand. Their unique insights make them strong advocates for change. By sharing their experiences and expertise, they can influence laws and policies, ensuring that they truly protect victims and bring about meaningful change.

In Conclusion

The healthcare system is a beacon of hope for many facing domestic violence. By recognising the signs, offering holistic care, educating communities, gathering data, and advocating for better policies, it plays a vital role in shaping a safer, more understanding society.

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We need to talk about... What Can Employers Do to Support Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse?



The Crime Survey for England and Wales, conducted in 2022, unearthed a sobering reality — an estimated 5% of adults, with a notable gender disparity of 6.9% for women and 3% for men, experienced domestic abuse. This alarming revelation underscores the pervasive nature of this issue, necessitating a collective societal response. Employers, as key stakeholders in individuals' lives, are increasingly becoming recognised as pivotal players in the battle against domestic abuse, as the ramifications extend beyond personal realms to intricately impact the professional lives of those affected.

In response to this imperative, responsible employers are urged to proactively engage with the issue, adopting a multifaceted approach to address the complexities of domestic abuse within the workplace. Four crucial areas merit careful consideration and strategic intervention:

Creating a Supportive Workplace Culture

Establishing a workplace culture that actively promotes safety, support, and open communication is paramount. Employers should initiate dialogues with their workforce, emphasising the importance of fostering an environment where employees feel secure in sharing their experiences. Additionally, providing accessible resources for





those undergoing domestic abuse is crucial in creating a foundation of support within the organisational fabric.

Training and Awareness Programmes

Domestic abuse manifests in various forms, from physical violence to controlling or coercive behaviours, and psychological, emotional, or economic abuse. Employers must prioritise educating both managers and employees about the multifaceted nature of domestic abuse, ensuring they can recognise warning signs and respond appropriately. Implementing comprehensive training and awareness programs contributes to building a knowledgeable and empathetic workforce.

Collaboration with External Organisations

Recognising the limitations of in-house resources, businesses are encouraged to explore collaborations with external entities, such as local support services, charities such as The Wish Centre, or helplines. Partnering with organisations dedicated to assisting victims of domestic abuse extends the support network available to employees, creating a more robust framework for intervention and assistance. **The Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse** is a free-to-join network currently supporting 1400 businesses (akin to 25% of the UK workforce) to take action against DA. Their membership charter is as follows:

EIDA commits to...

- 1. Raising awareness about the role of employers in stopping domestic abuse
- 2. Equipping employers with tools they need to care for employees affected by domestic abuse
- Connecting our members to the right partners and initiatives for support, best practice and shared learning
- Leveraging the voice of our employers to influence domestic abuse policy in the UK and ensuring the voice of our members is heard

Our members commit to...

- 1. Raising awareness among their employees of the many forms domestic abuse can take
- 2. Fostering a safe, supportive and open environment to allow domestic abuse to be effectively tackled in their workplace
- Supporting employees who are affected by domestic abuse and those that report it by providing access to information and services
- 4. Providing education and support to help perpetrators of domestic abuse to stop
- 5. Sharing best practice with other employers

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Developing a Domestic Abuse Policy

Forward-thinking employers are crafting and implementing comprehensive Domestic Abuse Policies to formalize their commitment to supporting staff facing such challenges. These policies encompass a range of measures, including facilitating open communication about personal experiences, maintaining clear record-keeping practices, and offering tangible support. Importantly, these policies serve as a beacon for employees, signalling that the organization is proactive in addressing the issue. Such support may include –

- paid time off
- temporary flexible working arrangements
- safe communication channels
- access to confidential spaces
- redirection of calls
- financial assistance for expenses related to relocation or setting up new bank accounts.

While legislative mandates in the UK are currently in flux, with the possibility of future government intervention to enforce employer support for victims of domestic violence, many responsible employers are not waiting for legal compulsion. Instead, they are taking proactive measures now, aligning their policies and practices with the pressing need to address domestic abuse within the workplace. In doing so, they not only fulfil a moral obligation but also contribute to fostering workplaces that prioritize the well-being and safety of their employees.







The 16 Days of Activism



The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a **global campaign that takes place annually from November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to December 10th, Human Rights Day.** This powerful initiative seeks to raise awareness and mobilize actions to end violence against women and girls around the world. Originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991, the campaign has since grown into a widely recognized and impactful movement.

The primary objective of the 16 Days of Activism is to challenge the prevalent attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender-based violence. It serves as a rallying point for individuals, organisations, and governments to come together and advocate for meaningful change. The campaign spans across borders, cultures, and communities, emphasising the universality of the issue and the collective responsibility to address it.

Each year, the 16 Days of Activism adopts a specific theme to guide its efforts and discussions. These themes often reflect current issues and emerging challenges in the fight against gender-based violence. Past themes have included topics such as cyber violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence. For 2023, the UNITE campaign theme is Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls. The campaign calls on citizens to show how much they care about ending violence against women and girls by sharing the actions they





are taking to create a world free from violence towards women. This year's campaign also calls on governments worldwide to share how they are investing in gender-based violence prevention.

Education is a powerful tool in the battle against gender-based violence. The 16 Days of Activism encourages educational initiatives that promote awareness, challenge stereotypes, and foster a culture of respect and equality. By empowering individuals with knowledge, the campaign aims to break the cycle of violence and create lasting social change.

Local communities play a crucial role in the success of the campaign. Events and activities are organised worldwide, ranging from panel discussions and workshops to art exhibitions and performances. These initiatives provide spaces for survivors to share their stories, for advocates to connect and strategise, and for the broader community to stand in solidarity against gender-based violence. In the digital age, social media has become a powerful tool for advocacy. The 16 Days of Activism harnesses the reach of online platforms to amplify its message and engage a global audience. Hashtags, social media challenges, and virtual events contribute to the creation of a supportive online community dedicated to ending gender-based violence.

While the 16 Days of Activism is a concentrated period of advocacy, its impact extends far beyond the designated timeframe. Governments and organisations are encouraged to implement policies and programmes addressing gender-based violence, and individuals are urged to make lasting commitments to promote equality and safety. The true success of the campaign lies in the long-term changes it inspires.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a vital movement that continues to make strides in the global effort to eliminate violence against women and girls. By fostering collaboration, raising awareness, and empowering communities, the campaign reinforces the idea that everyone has a role to play in creating a world free from gender-based violence. As we reflect on the progress made and the work still ahead, it is evident that the 16 Days of Activism serves as a catalyst for change, driving us closer to a future where violence is no longer tolerated or accepted.

Over the 16 days of Activism via our social media channels, The Wish Centre will be sharing a victim's journey through refuge. Our social links are below –

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/wishcentre/

Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/_wishcentre/

TikTok - https://www.tiktok.com/@ wishcentre

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Domestic Abuse in Film

An Exploration of Domestic Abuse in new movie, "Cat Person"



In the cinematic landscape, where storytelling serves as a mirror to societal realities, the issue of domestic abuse has found its place in narratives that aim to delve deeper into the human experience. Numerous culturally significant events marked the beginning of the #MeToo controversy in 2017. Harvey Weinstein's exposure as a predatory figure gained momentum, with women globally sharing their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse, prompting a reckoning for other influential men. Additionally, a short story titled "Cat Person," published in The New Yorker, became a viral sensation. "Cat Person," a brand-new film inspired by Kristen Roupenian's critically acclaimed short story, emerges as an exploration of the intricate dynamics of sexual harassment and toxic relationships. This in-depth examination of abuse transcends the screen, inviting audiences to reflect on the multifaceted nature of domestic violence.

Cat Person Synopsis - When Margot, a college sophomore (Emilia Jones) goes on a date with the older Robert (Nicholas Braun), she finds that in-real-life Robert doesn't live up to the Robert she has been flirting with over texts. Cat Person is a razor-sharp exploration of the gender divide, the quagmire of navigating modern dating and the dangerous projections we make in our minds about the person at the other end of our phones.

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Domestic abuse encompasses a spectrum of behaviours that extend beyond the physical realm, encompassing emotional, psychological, and financial abuse. These insidious forms of control are often difficult to detect, creating a pervasive and silent struggle for victims who grapple with fear, shame, and societal stigma. "Cat Person" attempts to navigate this spectrum, providing a nuanced portrayal that resonates with the complex realities of abusive relationships.

At the heart of "Cat Person" is the protagonist, Margot, whose journey becomes a symbolic representation of countless individuals trapped in toxic relationships. The film explores the power dynamics, manipulation, and blurred boundaries that characterise abusive partnerships. Margot's emotional journey becomes a microcosm of the broader societal struggle to recognise and address the subtle signs of abuse.

One of the film's strengths lies in its ability to dissect the intricacies of emotional manipulation. "Cat Person" delves into the subtle nuances of coercive control, revealing how emotional abuse can be as damaging as physical violence. Viewers witness the erosion of Margot's sense of self as she grapples with Robert's manipulative tactics, highlighting the devastating impact of emotional abuse on one's mental well-being.

"Cat Person" challenges prevailing societal stigmas associated with domestic abuse, portraying Margot not as a passive victim but as a complex individual navigating a challenging relationship. The film prompts viewers to question ingrained stereotypes and confront their own biases, fostering a more empathetic understanding of the survivors' experiences. It underscores the importance of dismantling victimblaming narratives and acknowledging the strength it takes to break free from an abusive relationship.

Consent, a fundamental aspect of healthy relationships, is a central theme in "Cat Person." The film explores the nuances of consent in the context of power imbalances





and emotional manipulation. By doing so, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on the importance of clear communication and respect within relationships, irrespective of their nature.

"Cat Person" exemplifies the influential role of media in advocating for social change. The film allows for post-screening conversations surrounding domestic abuse, prompting viewers to reflect on their own perceptions and biases. By weaving a compelling narrative, it encourages audiences to become active participants in the fight against domestic violence.

"Cat Person" stands as a rather complex cinematic exploration of domestic abuse and coercive control, unravelling its layers in a multitude of ways. The film allows for societal introspection, challenging us to confront the uncomfortable realities of toxic relationships. Through empathetic storytelling, "Cat Person" contributes to the ongoing collective effort to raise awareness, foster understanding, and ultimately eradicate the shadows that shroud the experiences of survivors of domestic abuse. "Cat Person" will not be to everybody's taste, however. Reviews have been mixed to negative. Depicting domestic abuse in the context of a horror movie setting will undoubtedly trigger some adverse reactions. Yet, the horror genre has never shied away from bringing to light from the darkness what needs to be revealed.



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The Economic Imperative of Fully Funding Domestic Abuse Services



At the recent Women's Aid annual general meeting (22^{nd} November 2023) a report was shared presenting a compelling economic case for the UK Government to make a decisive commitment to invest a minimum of £427 million annually in specialised domestic abuse services across England. This financial allocation is not just an act of support for victims but is backed by a robust economic analysis, revealing a profound impact on public finances.

The economic analysis, commissioned by Women's Aid, underscores a crucial point: for every pound invested in domestic abuse support services, there is a remarkable saving to the public purse. The report estimates that a minimum investment of £427 million per year would yield a benefit-to-cost ratio of at least 9.14:1. In clearer terms, this means that for every pound invested, **the public stands to gain a saving of at least £9**.

The staggering economic cost of domestic abuse in England is laid bare in the report, totalling a staggering \pounds 77,963,000,000. This includes both direct and indirect costs, ranging from healthcare expenses to the impact on workplace productivity. However, the report suggests that by fully funding domestic abuse services, a substantial benefit of £3,898,100,000 could be realized.

The report advocates for a strategic allocation of funds, with a portion ringfenced specifically for services led 'by and for' Black and minoritised women, d/Deaf and disabled women, and the LGBT+ community. This targeted funding approach ensures that the provision of services is not only available but also



accessible to all those who need it, addressing the unique challenges faced by diverse groups within the community.

Beyond the moral imperative of supporting victims of domestic abuse, the economic argument is clear. Fully funded domestic abuse services not only save lives but also bring about significant cost savings to other public services. The investment is not just in crisis intervention but in preventive measures that can alleviate the burden on healthcare, law enforcement, and social services. Additional funding is also a necessary conversation when it comes to working with perpetrators. The Wish Centre has a holistic approach to domestic abuse. It's important to work with perpetrators as well as victims in order to make societal changes in DA.

In conclusion, the report by Women's Aid serves as a clarion call for the UK Government to recognize the economic imperative of investing in fully funded domestic abuse services. The government's Autumn Budget pledged an additional $\pounds 2$ million to help victims. This is not enough. By committing to a minimum annual investment of $\pounds 427$ million and ensuring targeted funding for specific communities, the government can not only make a profound impact on the lives of victims but also create a ripple effect of positive economic outcomes for the entire nation. The numbers speak for themselves - it's not just a matter of compassion, but a wise investment in the well-being of society as a whole.

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White Ribbon Day

25th November 2023



The White Ribbon campaign originated in Canada in 1991, sparked by the tragic mass shooting of 14 women at École Polytechnique in Montreal. This heinous act of violence against women prompted a group of men to take a stand against gender-based violence, using the white ribbon as a symbol of their commitment to change. Since then, the movement has grown and expanded globally, engaging millions of people in the ongoing battle against domestic violence.

The white ribbon represents peace and a dedication to breaking the silence surrounding abuse. Wearing it signifies a promise to neither commit nor tolerate violence against women. The campaign aims to raise awareness about the prevalence and impact of domestic violence, fostering a culture of respect and equality.

Communities globally engage in White Ribbon Day through marches, seminars, and awareness campaigns, uniting people to share stories and discuss solutions. The day is a call to action, encouraging advocates to promote healthy relationships, challenge harmful behaviours, and actively contribute to the broader movement against gender-based violence.

White Ribbon Day serves as a reminder that eliminating domestic violence requires collective effort. By wearing a white ribbon, individuals contribute to a global movement striving to create a future where everyone can thrive in safety and





respect. As we commemorate White Ribbon Day, let us renew our commitment to breaking the silence and working towards a world free from violence and fear.





Songs About Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

The Chicks



Gaslighter

The term 'gaslighter' gained meaning in George Cukor's 1944 film, Gaslight. Ingrid Bergman plays a housewife whose husband manipulates her into eventually doubting her sanity. More recent associations of the word led to speculation of a politically charged entrance back into the industry that all but exiled them in 2003. Though always tuned in on a cultural level, The Chicks' song seems to be more personal. This punchy breakup song finds Natalie Maines calling out an ex-lover about his manipulative, coercive behaviour.

Gaslighter - <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbVPcPL30xc</u>

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The Crystals



He Hit Me (And It Felt Like a Kiss)

"He Hit Me" is the perfect reflection on the power of abusive relationships and the length by which victims of physical abuse feel in most relationships. The song narrates a heartbreaking tale of a woman desperate for love and acceptance that she willingly takes on abuse. It speaks to a culture of women who are emotionally manipulated. Carole King and Gerry Goffin wrote this song. They were inspired to write it after their babysitter Little Eva told them about her relationship with an abusive boyfriend who beat her almost on a regular basis. When they asked her why she tolerated the abuse, she answered that it symbolized how much he loved her.

He Hit Me (And It Felt Like a Kiss) - <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-</u> <u>MBpL4GbUY</u>

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End of Programme Participation Feedback – AS



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

The definition of domestic abuse, I did not know many times that I was abusing my partner. Learning about how it affects her as I did not know this or the effects on the kids. The cycle of abuse.

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

Do you feel you have a better understanding and control of your own feelings? Yes, definitely.

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

Yes.

What do you hope to achieve in future relationships?

I hope for a better relationship, not much argument, happier life, and better understanding.

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

Try to be more patient, obviously not aggressive, being understanding and reasonable.

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

I am just sorry and hope I can have another chance to make things up.

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

The way I would discipline my kids.

What was difficult for you on the programme?

To go back through things again and again.

Available Training at The Wish Centre

If you or your staff are interested in any training, please contact Rebekah Wilson who will discuss this further with you. Her email address is <u>Rebekah.wilson@thewishcentre.org</u>

Please do continue to send referrals for GTC/MTC to <u>info@thewishcentre.org</u>

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