



Guidance for GPs and Health Practitioners

COVID-19 - the increased risks for domestic abuse victims

Domestic abuse is rooted in power and control. At the present time it is likely that we are all feeling a lack of control over our lives with the Government directive for us to #StayHome. We know that when an abuser loses power & control they tend to take their frustrations out on their victim.

Isolation is generally the key tool used by perpetrators. The current enforced standards of living in isolation and under stress-inducing conditions to stem the surge of COVID-19 cases will increase risk to victims living in an abusive household. Social distancing and self-isolation will be used as a tool by perpetrators to exert coercive and controlling measures on their victims that will shut down their routes to safety and support, and potentially deny access to resources that can help them.

As a result of the pandemic some signs may be more prevalent, for example:

Adults who experience domestic abuse report more depressive symptoms, are at greater risk of suicide, and use mental health services more frequently than other adults in the general population. It is possible that victims will resort to unhealthy methods to cope with the abuse, such as misusing drugs & alcohol, or increasing incidents of self-harm; this will seriously impact their mental health.
Abusive partners may share misinformation about the pandemic to control or frighten victims, or to prevent them from seeking appropriate medical attention if they have symptoms. Victims may also be denied necessary items, such as hand sanitizer or disinfectants.
Abusive partners will find it easier to deny access to healthcare, medication or treatment following physical abuse.
Abusive partners may use the virus as an excuse to expel the victim from the family home e.g. they do not want to be contaminated, or they want the victim to become ill.
The virus is expected to push the world into recession; financial constraints may make it more difficult for victims to leave abusive relationships. With potential job losses and limited access to paid sick leave or benefits, access to money may become an issue. There is likely to be little opportunity for victims to utilise ways to save money in preparation for leaving.
Abusive partners may use COVID-19 as a 'legitimate' excuse to isolate and keep victims prisoner within the home e.g. claiming that the intent is to prevent the spread of the virus.
The perpetrator may increase coercive control by forcing the victim to engage in sexual activities, forcing or encourage the misappropriation of substances, enhanced monitoring of movements and communications, constantly putting the victim down, emphasizing male rights and reinforcing traditional gender roles.

#Keepingvictimssafeathome #Savinglives



Support Available during Covid-19

TDAS are regularly reviewing the way support is conducted during the pandemic, ensuring the victim's safety and wellbeing is priority.

Support from TDAS can be conducted over the phone, email, text, video or social media at the client's request.

TDAS staff are available Monday - Friday between 9am and 5pm

Appointments are also be available between 7pm and 9pm if requested.

If it is safe to do so, leave a voice message or send a text message to 07534066029 with you name, number and a safe time to call. One of our DA Advisors will call you back within 24 hours/at the time requested.

More information, including a copy of a safety plan can be found at www.tdas.org.uk

You can also email info@tdas.org.uk

Please note from 1st April 2020 TDAS will hold the IDVA service which supports high risk victims of domestic abuse.

Support is also available from:

National DV Helpline: 24hrs: 0808 2000 247

www.womensaid.org.uk