

Cheshire West and Chester Domestic Abuse Partnership

Domestic abuse guidelines for professionals to assist in dealing with disclosure

1. Provide a confidential space

Inform about confidentiality and its limitations_(e.g. Safeguarding Children, serious concerns about their safety as adults). Be clear about the time you can offer, check whether they need an interpreter or would prefer a woman or someone from their own background to speak with. Give time, allowing them to come to the point in their own way.

2. Ask open-ended, non-threatening questions like:

"How are things at home?"

3. Explain there are many people in this situation:

1 in 4 women experience domestic abuse in their adult life. They are not alone. Never ask for graphic details of the abuse they have suffered. Be aware that men too experience domestic abuse and need support and services.

4. Avoid using stereotypes in your wording:

Use words that they do to describe their experiences, avoid using the term ' domestic abuse' until they use it.

5. Listen carefully:

Asking for help is not easy, it can be embarrassing and distressing so they may 'talk around' the subject before coming to the point. Be non-judgemental - an expression of disbelief or shock could dissuade them from telling you anymore. Acknowledge how hard it is for them to talk about it.

6. Reassure them....

...that they are not to blame, no-one has to put up with abuse and responsibility for the abuse lies with the abuser. If they deny it and you suspect that abuse is happening, tell them they can return to talk later.

7. Offer Options that focus on safety:

Help them to think logically about what they need first and from whom, particularly in relation to keeping safe. Using the multi-agency Risk Assessment can be helpful to identify risks and begin a safety plan. (See local partnership website for the assessment and safety planning information). If you are seriously concerned for someone's safety or they reach 'high risk' in the assessment you can refer them, with or without consent, to the Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit (see overleaf) for specialist intervention.

8. Be clear and honest:

Give reliable information; explain what you can and cannot do, and what delays or uncertainties there might be.

9. Deal with the initial request:

You need to understand exactly what they are asking for so you can respond effectively. Make sure they have the information required and, if needed, they can come back to your agency again.

10. Be safe. Ask for help from colleagues:

You have the right to withdraw from any situation where you feel your personal safety is at risk. No one person and no one agency can deal with domestic abuse, so please use the Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit to share the load. They can also make sure those at very highest risk are supported via Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing.

Useful Numbers

- National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247
(Language Line and Type Talk available)
- Cheshire West Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit: 0300123 7047 Option 2
01606 351375 (Public Line)
- Refuge WHAG: 0151 356 4686
- Refuge Cheshire Without Abuse: 01270 250390
- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
- NSPCC Text Helpline: 88858
- Children's Safeguarding: 0300 123 7047 (i-ART)
- Adult Safeguarding: 0300 123 7034
- Out of hours Safeguarding: 01244 977277
- Cheshire Cares (Victim Services): 01606 366 336
- National Stalking Helpline: 0808 802 0300
- Rape and Sexual Abuse Support: 0330 363 0063
- Respect: 0808 802 4040
- M.A.L.E Helpline: 0808 801 0327
- LGBT Helpline: 0300 999 5428 or 0800 999 5428
- Forced Marriage Unit: 020 7008 0151

www.thehideout.org.uk

Help and support for children and young people who are living with domestic abuse.

www.womensaid.org.uk

Help and support for women experiencing domestic abuse.

www.digital-trust.org

Managing online digital abuse

For more information see: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/domesticabuse

In an emergency dial 999