



Respect toolkit

2nd edition January 2013

**Work with
male victims of
domestic violence**

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Foreword – Jo Todd, Respect CEO

Work with male victims has increased rapidly over the last three years since we published the first edition of this toolkit. There are now more male victims' workers in local domestic violence projects, including some specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs). Research has also developed, as has the depth of information our Helpline workers record about each caller to the Men's Advice Line. As a result, we are able to update this toolkit with the latest information and lessons about how to work most effectively with male victims.

Our training course on male victims continues to be our most popular course for a range of reasons. Some people come on the course because they are expanding an existing domestic violence service, some because they work in frontline services (such as housing workers, police officers, health professionals and social workers) who want to be able to respond most effectively to male victims. Feedback from the training course participants has informed both the training course and this second edition of the toolkit.

One of the most common questions we are asked is why we provide separate services, resources and training courses on male victims – some people initially assume that the needs and ways of presenting to agencies are the same for male as for female victims. There are also persistent ideas that men won't want to talk about violence they are experiencing, or that they won't seek help. We believe we have learnt a great deal about male victims and about other men who commonly present to helplines and projects for male victims – and one of the lessons we have learnt is that it isn't all the same. Men seem to have different experiences from women, gay men seem to have different experiences from heterosexual men. Yes, some things are the same – and the law is both available to and used by male victims as well as female. But it would be unfair on male victims if we ignore the key differences in both their experiences and needs.

We recommend the use of assessment processes for male victims and also for female victims. This allows practitioners to identify what is going on, to provide the most appropriate help and to make best use of scarce resources in projects. These assessment processes are sometimes referred to as screening procedures. We prefer to use the descriptive term 'assessment process' as it is clearer. The term 'screening procedure' is also sometimes taken to mean a way of marking out solely whether an individual is a victim or not a victim, rather than assessing what can sometimes be a complex situation with multiple needs.

We also know, from our work with perpetrators of domestic violence, that many, perhaps most, sometimes identify themselves as a victim. In some cases they describe themselves as a victim of their partner's retaliatory or defensive violence, which can indeed be dangerous for both adults and children and needs to be addressed with victims to find alternative strategies, without providing perpetrators with an excuse or justification for their own use of violence. Others identify themselves as a victim of their partner's refusal to meet their

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expectations and demands. That's another key reason why we recommend assessment – because perpetrators often present to male victims' services and we want to make sure we are giving them the most appropriate advice, for the sake of everyone's safety.

We are very proud that we have helped several thousand male victims on the Men's Advice Line and to be able to share what we have learnt with readers of this toolkit and those who come on our training course. Please do share the resources and let us know what you think – feedback is always welcome.

Jo Todd, Respect CEO

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1. Introduction

This is the second edition of the Respect toolkit for work with male victims of domestic violence.

Why develop a toolkit for work with male victims?

The purpose of this toolkit is primarily to support and inform work with male victims of domestic violence, in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. This work may be delivered via a helpline, in a service dedicated to male victims of domestic violence or in any other setting where men might present as domestic violence victims looking for information, advice and support.

In order to do this as effectively as possible, the toolkit has also included information from research, policy and practice experience with a wide range of men presenting as male victims at specialist and non-specialist services and men who have not sought help from anyone. It therefore includes guidance for how to work with any man presenting in this way, including genuine male victims, those in unhappy but not abusive relationships and those who are actually perpetrators of domestic violence.

The first edition was developed from the work of the Respect Male Victims' Development Worker in 2007-8 in two London Boroughs, from the work of the helpline workers on the Men's Advice Line particularly from the expertise and analysis of calls taken by the helpline in 2008-9. It was also informed by the developing body of research about male victims of domestic violence and about how gender and intimate partner violence are connected.

Development of the second edition of the toolkit

Since the publication of first edition, Respect trainers and staff have delivered training on work with male victims of domestic violence across the country to hundreds of frontline workers – and the toolkit has formed the basis of this work. We have gathered feedback from people who attended those training courses and are working with male victims. This has helped us to improve and develop this second edition.

The second edition of the toolkit features new case studies that illustrate the different client categories; an updated analysis of calls to the Men's Advice Line based on 5,214 callers in 2010 and 2011; and a new section looking at quantitative and qualitative differences between heterosexual and gay men in their reports of sexual abuse experiences. We have also incorporated the screening and assessment forms in the main body of the text (it was in an appendix in the first edition) following the brief assessment process section, hoping that frontline workers and organisations supporting male victims will use and adapt whatever is relevant to their particular service. The idea of 'Identify-Assess-Respond' in relation to work with male victim runs throughout the toolkit and it aims to provide a step-by-step approach to supporting male victims. Finally, the Research chapter has also been updated to include research and findings after 2009.

2. Men and domestic violence

2.1 What do men tell us about their experiences of domestic violence?

These are examples of experiences described by men calling the Men's Advice Line. This section describes things experienced by heterosexual and by gay or bisexual men. There are also some additional experiences which are specific to gay and bisexual men which are listed later in this section.

These experiences are examples of what victims tell us – but do not in and of themselves define being a victim. Some of these may be experienced from a partner who was using self-defence or as an act of violent resistance. Others may come about for other reasons.

In the following chapter we provide tools to help identify who is doing what to whom in a relationship.

Coercion, intimidation & threats

- Being threatened with violence by a perpetrator, if they don't do what the perpetrator wants them to do or if they do things the perpetrator doesn't want them to do
- Being threatened by the perpetrator that they will call the police or children's services and allege that the man is a perpetrator
- Being threatened with other legal proceedings
- Being denied access to medical care/medicine(s) etc
- Being put in fear by looks, actions, gestures
- Having personal items, family heirlooms, computer etc smashed or broken
- Being told that nobody will believe him because he is a man
- Being threatened with knives and other objects as weapons
- Being told if he tries to leave he will never see the children again
- Being denied sleep or being attacked whilst he is asleep

Emotional abuse

- Being put down and made to feel bad about himself
- Being called names
- Having mind-games played on him
- Being humiliated
- Being made to feel guilty and to blame for abuse
- Experiencing 'the silent treatment', being ignored
- Being told he is crazy, mad
- Being told that he is not the father of their child(ren)

Sexual abuse

- Being coerced or threatened overtly into sex

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- Being coerced into using objects
- Being coerced or pressured into sexual acts that he does not want
- Being coerced or pressured into having unsafe sex
- Having his sexual behaviour ridiculed in front of others
- Feeling he has to participate in sex out of fear he will be 'punished' for refusing because he doesn't feel safe
- Being made to participate in sexual activities with others against his will

Physical abuse

- Being hit, punched, kicked
- Male victims of female perpetrators also particularly talk about blows to groin area or scratches to face
- Being hit with objects
- Being attacked with a knife

Using gender

- Being forced or coerced into specific responsibilities and activities based on strict traditional gender roles without any negotiation and under fear of consequences of not complying
- Being told he is not a real man if he does not do certain things or in a certain way

Using isolation

- Being controlled about what he does, who he sees, what he reads, who he talks to
- Having social life, friends, hobbies restricted or stopped
- Being constantly accused of having affairs and ending up afraid to go out or talk to anyone out of fear of the consequences

Using children

- Receiving messages through the children
- Being excluded from activities with children
- Being belittled for attempts to look after the children

Minimising, denial and blame

- Being told that the abuse didn't happen or wasn't that bad
- Having injuries not taken seriously
- Being told he was responsible for abuse, that he deserved or caused it

2.2 Male victims and diversity

Gender: gender is a significant risk factor for domestic violence in various ways. The most obvious is that most researchers (though not all) have concluded from the available evidence that the majority of victims are female and the majority of perpetrators male. However, this also means that men in relationships with men are at increased risk. It also means that because male victims are in a minority, they are often invisible or overlooked by agencies or friends and family when they are victimised, or their experiences are trivialised.

Disability: disability is a risk factor for domestic violence. Disabled people can be in some cases very vulnerable to abuse, unable to seek help independently and highly dependent on their carer, who, if they are also their abuser, will have additional power and ability to control them. On the other hand, someone who is being abused by a disabled person may find it difficult to be believed.

Age: young people in general are in the highest risk age group for domestic violence. There is also some emerging evidence that older men may be at increased risk. In some cases this will be because of increased vulnerability and exacerbated by dependency on carers. In others there is the suggestion that men who have used abuse against a partner in the past are in turn abused by their victim if he becomes more vulnerable and she feels stronger than him.

Ethnicity: Men from specific cultural or linguistic groups may be abused in specific ways, or face specific obstacles to seeking help. Different cultural groups have different ways of describing gender based expectations, which will mean different justifications for abuse.

So-called 'honour'-based violence: Some men are abused by family members other than their intimate partner, such as in-laws or others who are forcing them to marry someone against their will or for reasons of family so-called 'honour'. These are often Asian men, but they may also be from other ethnic or religious groups.

Immigration status: men with uncertain immigration status or whose right to remain in the UK depends on remaining married can face difficulties in seeking help. They may have had passports removed or been told that no-one will help them. They may be additionally isolated due to lack of friends, family and language skills.

Sexuality: some aspects of these experiences are the same regardless of gender and sexuality of victim or perpetrator. However, some are specific. Domestic violence affecting men who have sex with men, trans-gendered people, gay and bisexual men will have specific aspects and can often be overlooked by many agencies.

Men in same sex relationships may experience:

- Being threatened with being 'outed' to family, friends or work colleagues

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- Being forced to stay in the closet / not be out
- Being told that violence is a normal part of same-sex relationships
- Being told that other abusive behaviour is a normal part of same-sex relationships
- Being controlled through fear of having HIV/AIDS status revealed to others

There are various specialist resources such as leaflets for use with men in same-sex relationships, which can be downloaded for free or obtained at low cost in print. Details are in the resources section of this tool kit.

2.3 Categories of clients who may approach services for male victims

In common with many specialist services, helplines, refuges and outreach projects offering help to male victims of domestic violence will regularly be approached by people who aren't the category of client the service is funded to help. However, this isn't just a simple matter of spotting them and referring them elsewhere.

There are many male victims of domestic violence and they deserve and have a right to our help and protection. **It is vital, in the interests of these men, that we ensure that we are prioritising our time to helping them.**

However, you will often find that perpetrators of domestic violence perceive themselves to be the victims. This is a very common strategy (unconscious or conscious) for perpetrators to use and one which they may use very effectively if we don't have ways of identifying who is doing what to whom and with what consequences.

There are longer assessment tools in Chapter 4 - Assessing. Practitioners have asked us why it is important to identify who is doing what to whom. Some have been concerned that this means they shouldn't believe what a client is telling them. In fact, we find that what the client tells us usually helps us to identify which category of client they are in – they might present as a victim, but listening to what they say about their experiences helps us to work out that they are in fact a perpetrator.

This is something we do to make sure we are doing everything we can to protect victims, male and female, and not unwittingly helping perpetrators, male or female. It's also something we do because many people aren't sure if they are victims or not and some aren't – they are unhappy in their relationship perhaps but not being abused or abusing. We also assess because we have to make the most of our finite resources and prioritise those in need of our specialist services over those who may actually need something else. In summary, **we don't assess clients because we don't believe them, we assess them because we want to meet their needs appropriately, because we want to increase safety and decrease risk.**

There are no definitive categories into which everyone can fit – there will always be some exceptions. The experience of the Men's Advice Line, the Respect Phoneline for perpetrators and other services working with perpetrators, guided by rigorous, relevant research on prevalence and frequency of domestic violence, indicates that the following categories of clients are the most common:

1. Victim/survivor of domestic abuse
2. Perpetrator of domestic abuse
3. Victim who has used violent resistance against the perpetrator
4. Perpetrator whose victim has used violent resistance
5. Mutual violence
6. Unhappy relationship with no abuse or violence

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Respect matrix of use and experience of intimate partner violence

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We have used our experience on the helplines, our work with perpetrators and male victims on the ground and current research lessons to develop a way of structuring our identification process. The diagram below helps to illustrate this.

	<p>IN coercive control OVER partner/ex, because of own use of violence, abuse, controlling behaviour, threats etc - causing fear, control, injury in partner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Living UNDER coercive control FROM partner/ex, experiencing fear, control, injury, anxiety about partner's reactions etc</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
<p><i>Uses or has used physical or non-physical violence or aggression against partner/ex</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>	<p>Perpetrator of intimate partner violence</p>	<p>Victim who has used some form of violent resistance</p>
<p><i>Experienced or experiencing physical or non-physical violence or aggression from partner/ex</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>	<p>Perpetrator whose victim has used some form of violent resistance</p>	<p>Victim of intimate partner violence</p>

Notes on the Respect matrix:

- Someone who is USING violence/abuse and as a result of this is in coercive control OVER their partner is a **perpetrator**.
- Someone who is EXPERIENCING violence/abuse and as a result is living in coercive control UNDER their partner is a **victim**.
- However, if someone is USING violence and abuse or has used it, they could also be a victim, but a **victim who has used violent resistance**. Violent resistance may be self-defence or it could be an action out of frustration or desperation in response to abuse – it is usually dangerous for the victim to do this and could result in them ending up being

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arrested or even charged. However, for domestic violence practitioners it is important to be aware of the difference – the victim is the one living under coercive control (with specific indicators listed in sections below) and the perpetrator is not controlled by the victim's use of any violence. This is not to defend or justify their use of violence – it may be criminal and it is usually risky – but to understand it so that you can work more effectively with this category of client.

- Similarly, if someone is EXPERIENCING violence or abusive behaviour from their partner but they are the one who is able to exert coercive control OVER their partner, through their own use of violence and controlling behaviour, they then are a **perpetrator whose victim has used violent resistance**. Again, this is not to excuse or justify the victim's use of violence but to help you to work effectively and appropriately with the client.

How can clients be wrongly identified?

Clients are sometimes referred to domestic violence services as 'both victims and perpetrators' when they are actually a perpetrator and a victim who has used violence. Some clients refer themselves as victims but don't seem to be experiencing abuse or coercive control, just unhappy. Some are not clear at all. Based on our experience with male victims and with perpetrators we have identified four key ways that someone may have been wrongly identified or self identified by the time they present at a male victims service.

1. Someone in a relationship which is unhappy but not abusive

We are often contacted by people who appear to be very unhappy but not in an abusive relationship. About one in ten of the callers to the Men's Advice Line who initially present as victims of domestic violence appear to be, from what they say, not in an abusive relationship at all. Instead they appear to be angry or upset or sad about a relationship, or at relationship breakdown and wanting to find someone to blame. When asked about the relationship and any violence or abuse, they either identify no abuse or identify behaviours which may be unreasonable or frustrating but are not abusive. When asked about fear or control, they appear not to be experiencing any of either. We also have calls and emails which appear to have a similar sense of entitlement to their partners' services as perpetrators do – however, instead of responding with violence or abuse when their needs aren't met, some of them respond with feelings of being abused by the lack of services. For example, some men have complained about their partners' choice of food, cooking, or clothes and identified this as being victimised.

2. Someone in a relationship where both are using or have used violence

When referred to or presenting at a service, men and women are sometimes described or describe themselves as both being violent. Professionals and the clients may well infer from this that they are both **equally** violent or with equal

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consequences for risk. This often takes place when one or both clients are also experiencing compounding problems such as substance misuse or mental ill-health.

The situation is often complex. Victims may well be using legal reasonable force but nevertheless present a higher risk of injuring their abusive partner than vice versa. Perpetrators may be escalating their own use of violence, which could be leading to an increased risk that the victim will retaliate.

When a client is presenting or being described in referral as being in a mutually violent relationship, this indicates the need for more detailed assessment, using if possible a range of sources of information from the client, their partner or other agency working with their partner, other agencies and professional judgement if the worker is skilled and experienced at specialist work responding to intimate partner violence.

3. Perpetrator who is actually a victim

Sometimes, if the victim has used violence in resistance, self-defence, retaliation or to defend children or others they may be wrongly identified – or wrongly present – as a perpetrator. This mis-identification can be further exacerbated if the person concerned does not want to identify themselves as a victim

4. Victim who is actually a perpetrator

Sometimes, if the person using intimate partner violence has experienced force used by their victim as self-defence, defence of children, resistance or retaliation they may be wrongly identified – or wrongly present – as a victim. In these cases they may have used this incident or incidents to distract attention away from their own abusive behaviour, or other agencies may have identified them as 'both as bad as each other'.

Examples of each category of client as they may present to a service for male victims

In this section there are descriptions of each category together with an example of a relationship which is likely to be in that category, described as they are likely to present or be referred to a service for male victims. Each case study is accompanied by suggestions about the vulnerabilities and risk, questions to ask and suggestions for responses.

1. Victim/survivor

Someone who is or has recently been experiencing violence, abuse, fear, force, threats and coercive control from an intimate partner or ex-partner. They may need legal or practical protection, emotional help and support, advocacy and other forms of help.

Example: Daf and Megan

Daf is 73 years old and has been married to his wife Megan (aged 60) for 27 years. Last night she attacked him with a glass and he ended up in hospital. He says Megan has always had a fierce temper and that this has been getting worse for the past few years. Until recently the abuse was mostly verbal but there have been several incidents recently where he has been punched and kicked. Now he is worried that this will be the start of an increase in violence. He doesn't want the police involved as he doesn't want to get her in trouble or to end the relationship. He wants some advice.

2. Perpetrator

By definition this is someone who is or has recently been using violence, abuse, fear, force, threats and coercive control to an intimate partner or ex-partner. They are likely to be suitable for domestic violence intervention programmes for perpetrators. They are likely to have committed criminal acts and may need criminal or civil legal sanctions to enforce changes in behaviour. However, when presenting to a service for male victims, they are likely to use some language of victimisation, rather than being explicit about being a perpetrator wanting help to change. The example below is a common one.

Example: Terry

Terry describes himself as 'unfairly arrested' by the police when he pushed his girlfriend away from him during an argument. He says that she is verbally abusive to him and that she is always winding him up to see how far she can push him. He says that he has only pushed her away 'once or twice' and that he doesn't understand why the police have arrested him. He wants to know how he can get legal help as he feels he is the victim in the situation.

3. Victim who has used violent resistance

A victim, as defined above in (1), who has used or is using violence. This includes violence used for defending themselves or their children or property, or as a way of preventing a likely attack on them or their children. This is likely to be legal 'reasonable force'. It also includes violence used as a means of resistance against, or expressing frustration with, the patterns of coercive control and fear being used against them. When presenting to a service for male victims they may have been identified as a perpetrator, or they may be more concerned about their own use of violence than their partner's, or they may be clear that they are the victim but want help not to use violence. Even if the violence they are using appears to be reasonable, it is not safe and is likely to increase the risk to both adults and to any children. They may need legal and other help and also consideration of how their own use of violence may be or become illegal or unsafe. They will also need safety planning which incorporates an understanding of their own use of violence and strategies for reducing this.

Example: Aftab and Judy

Aftab says he left hospital this morning after being stabbed in the chest by his partner; he says he was lucky it wasn't too deep but could have been a lot of worse. Aftab has been in a relationship with Judy for 9 years and they've had their ups and downs with disagreements like all couples. Aftab says that over the years the arguments gradually escalated and she's hit and slapped him. He's been walking on eggshells in case he said or did the wrong thing and often Judy would get angry with him if he didn't do something she expected him to. Today, for the first time, Aftab retaliated by slapping Judy and pushing him away after she hit and slapped him. He is embarrassed to admit this as he hates men who hit women but he felt that the mental and physical abuse had gone for too long for him; that's when Judy grabbed a knife and stabbed him. It wasn't the first time she grabbed a knife but the first time she used it so now Aftab is afraid for himself and his son. Aftab says that Judy has a lot of past stress from her childhood and maybe that's why she behaves like that. Aftab and Judy have a 3 year-old boy who Judy expects Aftab to look after full-time and he's happy to do that as he loves him to bits. Aftab doesn't know where to turn or what his options are.

4. Perpetrator whose victim has used some violence

A perpetrator, as defined above in (2), who has experienced some violence from his victim but is presenting to a service initially at least as a victim. This is commonly someone whose victim has used or is using force to defend themselves or their children or as a means of defence from, prevention of, resistance against or frustration with the patterns of coercive control and fear the perpetrator (presenting as a victim) is using against them. When presenting to a service for male victims, this category of client tends to emphasise the violence used against them and use language of victimisation but nevertheless will talk about violence they have used or give other information which helps to identify what is going on.

Example: Olufeme and Ayo

Olufeme describes being 'wrongly arrested' by the police. He has a long list of complaints about the police. He says that he has been banned from his home town by the terms of a legal order. When asked by the worker how this order came about (as this is quite difficult to get) Olufeme says that he did hit his girlfriend Ayo but that she was 'disrespecting him' and that he also has marks from Ayo's abusive behaviour (his words) - he has scratches - but adds that he was able to 'deal with her'. When asked what this means, Olufeme says 'She deserves what she gets, she's argumentative and she knows what I am like - the police should have seen this, but they are all against men and believed her, just because she was crying and on the floor when they came'. Eventually he explains that Ayo was on the floor because Olufeme had been repeatedly kicking her. She had tried to push him off her, which he described as him being abused.

5. Mutual violence

Relationships which appear to be mutually violent, with control either exercised in both directions at different times or violent abusive behaviour without any apparent control of one or other party.

Example: Dave and Julie

Dave and Julie have been together for 5 years, married for 3 and they have a four year old daughter. Dave tells us that Julie has an alcohol problem which is also present in many of her family of origin. He says that she has hit him and bit him, including in front of other people. However, he also tells you that he has hit her, causing bruises. He says he has been arrested several times and had to spend a night in the police cells on one occasion when he assaulted her in the street. He was cautioned but not charged. He resents the fact he has been in trouble with the police and blames her. He says that Julie is not a fit mother and wants to separate from her and have custody of their daughter as he thinks she will not be safe living with Julie, plus his extended family have always been very involved in her care. He says they both want to separate but they are still living in the same house as they can't sell it. There is violence from each of them regularly. He doesn't say if this has happened in front of their daughter.

6. Unhappy relationship but not abusive

Men who are in relationships which are unhappy, experiencing and/or using unkind behaviour which, whilst unpleasant, is not causing fear or control. This often happens at the time of relationship breakdown – however, abuse and violence can also occur or increase at relationship breakdown, so it is important to assess whether or not this is really an abusive relationship. Sometimes men present to male victims services when there is no abuse – sometimes because they aren't sure who to turn to for help, sometimes because they aren't sure if they are living with domestic abuse or not and sometimes just because they want someone to listen to them.

Example: Aaron and Jamila

Aaron has a list of complaints about his partner, Jamila. He is not fearful of her, doesn't think she is fearful of him and says neither have used violence. They do regularly call each other names. He describes her not wanting to be in the same room as him. They are both critical of each other and unhappy.

7. Male victims being abused by a partner who is a former victim

Some men describe being abused by a perpetrator who has in the past been a victim. This is obviously not acceptable or safe and the men deserve protection, support and help just like any other victim. They are often very concerned about their partner and the impact of past abuse on her or him – if your service is working with both parties you may need to consider carefully how to challenge abusive behaviour in the perpetrator constructively, acknowledge the impact of past abuse but not let this become a justification for abusive behaviour.

Example: Liam and Noelle

Liam is engaged to be married to Noelle, his partner of 10 years, mother of his three children. He says he has a stable relationship with Noelle but that occasionally she physically attacks him when she has had too much to drink, which isn't often. He says he is bigger and stronger than her and that although he can deal with the physical side of this, such as a black eye or split lip, which he has had from her, he doesn't understand why this is happening to him. He says Noelle claims she can't remember the latest episode and was extremely upset when she saw his injuries the next day. He is scared that one day he might retaliate. He also wants to understand why Noelle is doing this. He thinks it might be because she has been abused in a past relationship – she has told him early on in their relationship about a past violent relationship and said she will never let that happen to her again.

3. Identifying

3.1 Value and purpose in identifying who is doing what to whom - The need to explore the situation with men presenting as victims

Exploring and assessing the experiences, needs and risks of men presenting as victims will give practitioners a good understanding about who is a genuine victim, who is a perpetrator and who is a client in an unhappy but not domestic violence relationship. This will improve the effectiveness and safety of interventions with domestic violence.

It will help practitioners to:

- avoid the unintended consequences of mistakenly identifying someone as a perpetrator or victim
- identify more clearly the legal use of 'reasonable force' and also to use this understanding in safety planning and risk monitoring
- work more empathetically and effectively with genuine victims who have used legal violence or other forms of violent resistance; working with them to identify the risks of continuing to use violence and the possible benefits of other forms of safety; helping them to develop a safer plan
- be clear with perpetrators about the illegality and impact of their own use of violence on their partners and ex-partners
- have opportunities to discuss with perpetrators how their use of violence differs from that of their partner, particularly when their partner's use of violence is legal
- ensure their risk assessment, monitoring and management processes and procedures are well informed
- develop safety planning with adults experiencing and in some cases using violence or abuse
- make informed decisions about suitability of specific responses and services, such as advocacy for victims, referral/signposting onto perpetrator programmes etc

Key learning point

Correct and well informed assessment of the different uses of and impacts of violence and abuse in intimate relationships will help practitioners to protect everyone in the family from further harm, including adults and children.

3.2 The dangers of incorrectly identifying someone

If male victims are incorrectly identified as the perpetrator or as part of a mutually violent couple, there are consequences which will put them and others at increased risk. Similarly, if men are incorrectly identified as the victim when they are in fact the perpetrator, this will mean that their partner/ex is identified incorrectly as the perpetrator or as part of a 'mutually violent couple'.

In either case, incorrect identification is likely to have the following possible consequences:

Consequences for a victim incorrectly identified as a perpetrator

- Not taken seriously as the victim by the Police thereafter
- Losing care of children
- Becoming even more isolated
- Feeling there is no alternative but to use violence and/or weapons to protect self and/or children, increasing risk to everyone
- Increased use of alcohol, prescription drugs and other substances used as a coping strategy, which presents additional risks to self and to children, and also makes it harder for agencies to respond appropriately
- Psychological impact of not being believed – which may mean shutting down emotionally, minimising to self and others the nature and effects of the violence and thereby making it harder for agencies to respond
- Being referred to a perpetrator programme, which would be a waste of resources, inappropriate or unsafe and may increase depression or anger in the victim and increase control by the real perpetrator
- Increased risk of suicide, of abuse from perpetrator and of harm to children, as a result of the above

Consequences for a perpetrator incorrectly identified as a victim

- The perpetrator may be referred to victims' services, which is inappropriate, unsafe and a waste of resources
- The perpetrator/abuser may feel that they can do what they like to the victim without a fear of consequences and this in turn may result in an increase in severity and frequency of physical or other attacks
- The perpetrator will not have access to services which can help them change

Consequences for the children

- Child contact or residence decisions may be unsafe or inappropriate for meeting children's needs and welfare
- Children may be confused about what is happening and why
- Children may mistrust authorities if they see the decisions as wrong or unsafe
- Children may be put in situations of risk and danger

3.3 Brief assessment process - gathering evidence during a short meeting or telephone call

Even in a short session on phone or in person, it is both possible and important to find out as much as possible about who is doing what to whom, with what consequences and in what context. Practitioners on the helplines and in projects for male victims have found the following questions useful:

- Can you tell me about the last time something violent or frightening happened?
- Can you tell me about the worst time there has been?
- Can you tell me what you usually do when this happens?
- Do you ever feel afraid to make certain decisions or do certain things because of what you think your partner/abuser might do?
- Have you ever been injured by your partner/family member – tell me more about that?
- Has your partner/family member ever been injured during an incident? Can you tell me more?
- Are you frightened of your partner/abuser? Are you frightened of what they might do to the children?
- What are you frightened of in relation to your situation?
- Do you think your partner is frightened of you? Have they ever said that they are frightened of you?
- What do you want to happen now?

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To analyse the implications of what you have been told:

- Use the checklist below
- Carefully consider which of the statements has evidence to support it and which has evidence to suggest it is not the case in this client's life
- Consider the categories of clients presenting as male victims
- Now think about the information, safety planning and support the man might need according to the levels of risk he is living with or causing, using the checklist below.

If you have longer, or are working with a man over several meetings or phone calls, you may find it helpful to refer to the formal assessment process included in this toolkit in Chapter 4. This process will take a few hours and should usually be carried out over more than one session.

3.4 Checklist tool to use to help identify who is doing what to whom and with what consequences

Record a tick in the 'evidence' column for all those statements for which you have some evidence and indicate in the final column if there is a lack of evidence or evidence to the contrary.

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Evidence type	Evidence	Lack of evidence
1. Client has experienced incidents of violent or abusive behaviour from partner or other		
2. Client has been injured or needed medical attention as result of partner's behaviour		
3. Client is in fear of violence to self or child		
4. There is a pattern of coercive control – e.g. client feels controlled and can't make decisions		
5. Client is fearful of violence at separation or separation violence has already taken place		
6. Client is NOT using violence or threats		
7. Authentic descriptions of incidents, injuries, fear, control etc.		
8. Client has made some use of violence as self-defence during attack or to prevent attack from partner/ex		
9. Client has made some use of violence to protect children from partner/ex		
10. Client has made some use of violence in retaliation to violence from partner/other		
11. No injuries to client or child		
12. Client is NOT afraid of partner/other		
13. No pattern of coercive control in either direction		
14. Client's descriptions of violence from partner/ex are inauthentic		
15. Client has used violence against partner/ex and NOT as self defence or resistance		
16. Client's partner/other been injured/needed medical treatment as result of client		
17. Client's child has sustained injuries as result of something client did		
18. Client's partner/ex has NOT used violence or only in self defence		
19. Client's partner/ex is afraid of client		
20. Pattern of coercive control in which client is controlling partner		
21. Client has threatened partner/other person or child		
22. Client has used coercion/threats/violence to gain sexual access to partner/child		
23. No clear evidence or unclear patterns of evidence, such as evidence mixed throughout this list		

3.5 Analysis and coming to conclusions

This tool is intended to record information systematically to guide a professional's judgement, not to produce exact answers in every case. Professionals who are skilled and experienced in working with responses to intimate partner violence will be able to use their experience, clinical judgement and sense of authenticity, as well as the number of ticks in each row or section to come to a conclusion. Those without specialist skills will need to rely more on the ticks and on collecting verifiable evidence.

Victim of domestic violence

If **there is evidence** to support the statements in rows 1 – 7 **and no evidence** to support those in rows 14 – 22, this is likely to indicate that the client is the victim of domestic violence. If there are any in rows 14 – 22, check that they are not actually violent resistance or self-defence (which should be recorded in rows 8 – 10). Clarifying questions about the incidents will help to provide more information, as will other information from other sources.

Perpetrator of domestic violence

If there is evidence to support the statements in rows 14 – 22 and no evidence to support those in rows 1 – 7, this is likely to indicate that the client is the perpetrator of domestic violence.

Victim who is also using or has used violent resistance

If there is evidence that some of the statements in rows 1 – 7 are true but also some evidence that the statements in rows 8, 9 or 10 are true and evidence that the statements in rows 11 – 22 are NOT TRUE this is likely to indicate a victim who is also using or has used violent resistance.

Perpetrator whose victim has used or is using violent resistance

If there is evidence that some statements in rows 14 – 22 are true, some evidence that statements 1 and 2 are true and evidence that the statements in rows 3 – 7 are NOT TRUE it is likely that the client is a perpetrator whose victim has used or is using violent resistance.

Unhappy relationship or not clear

If there is evidence that rows 11 – 13 are true, it is possible that there is no domestic violence in this relationship but that the client is unhappy in the relationship and has identified some behaviour as abusive. If there is evidence that rows 1 – 10 are true it is possible that the client is a victim of domestic violence. However, if there is little evidence in rows 1 – 10, particularly if there is evidence that rows 1 and 2 are NOT true, this is likely not to be a victim of domestic violence. If there are also ticks in rows 14 – 22 it is likely that the client is a perpetrator. More information will be needed to be clearer about this.

Unclear evidence – no conclusion yet

In some cases there will be insufficient evidence to form even a tentative conclusion. In these situations it is important not to reach a hasty or false conclusion and to record instead that there is no conclusion and carry out further assessment if possible.

Risk

Professionals should complete a CAADA/DASH risk identification form for each client, using the information gathered above and if necessary supplementing this with additional questions. This should be reviewed and amended regularly, particularly at key risk points such as separation.

4. Assessing

Longer assessment tools and forms for work with men presenting as victims of domestic violence

The assessment tools and forms that follow are designed for agencies offering a face-to-face service to male victims of domestic violence, ideally in a multi-agency setting. There are four parts:

Part One: Confidentiality Agreement

Part Two: Introducing the assessment process

Part Three: Gathering information about the history of abuse in the relationship and any interventions

Part Four: Client self-completion questionnaire

Your organisation/project/service can adapt the forms if needed. We think it is unlikely you will be able to complete all four parts in one session. It's best to plan to offer at least two sessions to your client and this will help with staffing resources.

Part One: Confidentiality Agreement

In order to help and support you I will need to ask you some very direct questions about subjects that you might find distressing – is that okay? I also want to tell you that we ask all our clients the same questions so this isn't aimed at you. We need to get a good picture of what is happening in your relationship so we can determine how best to support you and your family with safety at the centre of all we do.

Agreeing limits to confidentiality:

With that in mind we should agree the limits of your confidentiality with the service.

Basically everything you say is confidential with two exceptions:

1. We will share information with other services in order to gain a broader understanding of your case and of the systems responses already underway and in order to advocate with other professionals for the safety and wellbeing of you and your family.
2. We will break your confidentiality in order to decrease the risk to others, including your children.

If we do not think that sharing information will decrease the risk – first to any children involved and secondly to the adults – then we will not do so.

I understand that to ensure the safety of all parties concerned enquiries have to be conducted by

_____ **project/organisation.**

I hereby consent to such enquiries being made.

Signed.....

Date.....

Part Two: Introducing the assessment process

Do not disclose these categories 	Healthy Relationship	Unhealthy Relationship	Abusive Relationship
Disclose these sections below 			
Sharing Feelings	You feel safe and strong enough to tell your partner how you really feel	You feel awkward telling your partner how you really feel	You are afraid to tell your partner how you feel because you fear getting put down, ridiculed or threatened
Communicating	You respect and listen to each other even when you have differing opinions on the same subject	Your partner ignores you and does not respect your opinions when there is a difference of opinion	Your partner treats you with disrespect and ignores or makes fun of your ideas and feelings.
Disagreements	You can have disagreements and still talk respectfully to each other. You resolve your disagreements.	Your disagreements turn into fights	You are afraid to disagree because you don't want to unleash your partner's anger and violence. The disagreement is an excuse for abuse.
Intimacy and sex	Both of you can be honest about physical affection and sex. Neither of you feels pressured to do anything you do not want to do.	You are embarrassed to say how you feel because you think that your partner may not listen or care. You 'go along' with some things.	Your partner ignores your needs and wants. Your partner pushes you into situations that make you uncomfortable, frighten or degrade you.

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	Healthy Relationship	Unhealthy Relationship	Abusive Relationship
Trust	You trust each other. You are comfortable with your partner spending time with another man/woman.	Your partner feels jealous every time you talk to another woman. You feel jealous every time your partner talks to another woman or man.	Your partner accuses you of flirting or having an affair, and orders you not to talk to another woman.
Time Alone	You can each spend time alone and consider this a healthy part of your relationship.	You think that there may be something wrong if you want to do things without your partner. Your partner tries to keep you to herself.	Your partner does not allow you to spend time doing things on your own. Your partner sees this as a challenge or threat to your relationship
Violence	You and your partner take care not to speak harsh words or make mean comments. There is absolutely no physical violence in your relationship.	There have been a few incidents of emotional abuse or controlling behaviour in your relationship. There is no pattern of abuse or violence	There is a pattern of increasing ongoing abuse in your relationship; emotional, physical, sexual and/or intimidation.

Part Three: Gathering information about the history of abuse in the relationship and any interventions

This form should be completed from information from the client and where relevant, from other agencies. If you obtain information from other agencies, this should be clearly indicated on the form (e.g. police record, social service assessment).

Date		Number of years in this relationship	
Name		Partner's Name	
Address		Address	
Age		Living arrangements	
Ethnicity		Ethnicity	
Contact Number		Partner's Contact Number	

Children	Male/ Female	Age	Is parental contact an issue of conflict?	Is there a Contact Order in place?	
				Yes	No
				Yes	No
				Yes	No

Have either you or your partner applied for:	
Divorce	
Residence	
Child Contact?	
If YES, please give details	

Have Social Services ever been involved with your family? If so, please give details?	
Have any of the children ever been placed on the Child Protection Register? If so, please give details	

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Legal Orders	Yes	No	Applies to		Date Issued/ Details
Non Molestation	Yes	No	Self	Partner	
Injunction	Yes	No	Self	Partner	
Bail or Conviction for domestic violence-related offence	Yes	No	Self	Partner	
Any police involvement	Yes	No	Self	Partner	Most recent date:

Do either of you or your partner have a history of early trauma – e.g. being in care or suffering physical or sexual abuse in your childhood or teens? IF SO, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS

Did either you or your partner grow up at home with domestic violence? If so who, you or your partner and who was the perpetrator in the family? IF SO, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS

Have you ever • been to counselling or therapy?	Yes	No	When?
• experienced any mental health problems?	Yes	No	When?
• received treatment?	Yes	No	When?
Has your partner • experienced any mental health problems?	Yes	No	When?
• received any treatment?	Yes	No	When?
Have you ever had an evaluation for alcohol or drug dependency?	Yes	No	Where?
Did you complete treatment?	Yes	No	
Has your partner ever had an evaluation for alcohol or drug dependency?	Yes	No	Where?
Did your partner complete treatment?	Yes	No	

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History of violence/abuse

Can you tell me about the latest incident?

When was the first violent incident that you can remember in this relationship?

Are the incidents of violence/abuse getting more frequent or more severe?

What is the worst incident that happened?

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Are you scared/in fear about what your partner may do to you?

How do you think you will react?

Are you scared/in fear of your partner?

Is your partner scared/afraid of you?

Have your children ever seen or heard your violence to your partner?

Have your children ever seen or heard your partner's violence to you?

Have you or your partner ever physically harmed your children?

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What is the worst that has happened to your children?

Have any of the children ever intervened to stop the violence?

Do you feel like it is always your fault?

Do you feel like it is always your partner's fault?

Are you planning on separating from your partner or have you recently separated?

Do either you or your partner have access to weapons, such as guns? Please tell me who has access and if they/you have ever used a weapon against the other or the children:

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Are you afraid of anything in particular at the moment - has there been a specific threat?

Is there anything else you think I should know, particularly anything about your safety or anyone else's safety?

Part Four: Client Self-Completion Questionnaire

*Our primary focus is safety. In order to ensure we provide appropriate intervention and support strategies to both you and your partner we need to go through them. It may be that you feel some of these questions do not apply to you. **If there is anything that you are unsure about or don't understand, please feel free to ask. Please answer giving as much detail as possible.***

1. Injuries you have sustained from your partner

Thinking about all the incidents that have occurred over the last twelve months, please complete the following indicating how many times **your partner has done any of the following to you.**

Violence assessment index	Never	Only once	2 to 4 times	5 or more times
Restrained me from moving or leaving the room				
Choked me or held their hand over my mouth				
Slapped me on the face, body, legs or arms				
Pushed or shoved me				
Used an object or weapon to hurt me				
Threw things at me or about the room				
Punched or kicked the walls or furniture				
Tried to strangle, burn or drown me				
Kicked me on the body, legs or arms				
Threatened me with an object or weapon				
Kicked me in the face				
Threatened to kill me				
Twisted my arm(s)				
Dragged or pulled me by my hair				
Other violent behaviours				

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2. Controlling behaviour your partner has used against you

Thinking about all the incidents that have occurred over the last twelve months, please complete the following indicating how many times **your partner has done any of the following to you.**

Controlling behaviours index (Client)	Never	Only once	2 to 4 times	5 or more times
Threatened me				
Shouted at me				
Sworn at me				
Called me names				
Questioned me about my activities				
Had a certain look/mood				
Tried to provoke an argument				
Criticised me				
Criticised my friends/family				
Put me down in front of others				
Made me feel sexually inadequate				
Pointed at me (threateningly)				
Made to hit me without doing so				
Restricted my social life				
Used kids in an argument against you				
Other controlling behaviours				

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3. Violence you have used against your partner

Thinking of all the incidents that may have happened over the past twelve months, please complete the following indicating how many times **you have done each of the following to your current or former partner**.

Violence assessment index (Partner)	Never	Only once	2 to 4 times	5 or more times
Restrained them from moving or leaving the room				
Choked them or held your hand over their mouth				
Slapped them on the face, body, legs or arms				
Pushed or shoved them				
Used an object or weapon to hurt them				
Thrown things at them or about the room				
Punched or kicked the walls or furniture				
Tried to strangle, burn or drown them				
Kicked them on the body, legs or arms				
Threatened them with an object or weapon				
Kicked them in the face				
Threatened to kill them				
Twisted their arm(s)				
Dragged or pulled them by their hair				
Other violent behaviours				

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4. Controlling behaviour you have used against your partner

Thinking about all the incidents that have occurred over the last twelve months, please complete the following indicating how many times **you have done each of the following to your current or former partner**.

Controlling behaviours index (Client)	Never	Only once	2 to 4 times	5 or more times
Threatened them				
Shouted at them				
Sworn at them				
Called them names				
Questioned them about their activities				
Had a certain look/mood				
Tried to provoke an argument				
Criticised them				
Criticised their friends/family				
Put them down in front of others				
Made them feel sexually inadequate				
Pointed at them (threateningly)				
Made to hit them without doing so				
Restricted their social life				
Used kids in an argument against them				
Other controlling behaviours				

Thank you for completing these. When you have finished please hand them to the project worker. If there is anything you are unsure of, please feel free to ask. The more details we have the greater the chance of ensuring your safety and that of your partner and children.

5. Responding

Suggested responses to clients following assessment

Guidance: when you have gathered information from the man about what happened and about the patterns in the relationship, either by using the formal assessment process outlined in this section of the toolkit or by more informal methods if you have less time, you will have a clearer idea of whether they are a victim, perpetrator or some other category of client. Use the Respect matrix and identification process in Chapter 3 to help to identify which category they are in. Now use the table below to help plan your response.

Category of client	Possible responses
<p>Victim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have injuries, likely to be fearful and feel controlled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss level of risk & concern with man & outline options • Discuss safety planning such as emergency numbers on mobile phone, panic button, alarm etc • Legal options & specialist Solicitors • Expert Risk Assessors if child contact case • Report writing if & when necessary • Onward referral to specialist agencies if needed e.g. alcohol, drugs, mental health • Specialist referral for children • Referral to Parenting/Family Support/Sure Start • Explore alternative housing options • If refuge is appropriate explain the implications of this • Advocacy including attending court • High Risk case referred to MARAC • On-going emotional support/counselling which should deal with abuse, internalised resentment & anger
<p>Perpetrator (presenting as victim)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of violence and abuse towards partner • Sense of entitlement • Partner (and children) facing significant amounts of violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make clear that the violence is unacceptable and illegal and that he is putting himself, his partner and children in danger • Be clear that he has a choice to change his behaviour • If appropriate and possible, talk through with him alternatives to being violent / abusive, but stressing that one conversation is not enough and he is likely to need more help • Motivate him to get help • Referral to perpetrator programme and/or Respect Phoneline 0808 802 4040 • Contact/Referral to Child Protection Team

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<p>Perpetrator (presenting as victim) whose victim has used violence in self-defence or resistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used violence against partner which results in partner feeling controlled, fearful, injured • Sense of entitlement • Client is not afraid, does not feel controlled 	<p>As above, PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear that self-defence is legal and that if he puts his partner or children in danger, the law will protect her if she needs to use force to defend self/children • Be clear that the violence is likely to get worse and cause danger to himself, partner, children • Recognise that the perpetrator may be very resistant to hearing that they are a perpetrator • Encourage them to think about how their partner feels
<p>High Risk Perpetrator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified as high risk of continuing and escalating violence, using recognised risk assessment tool • Partner (and children) facing significant amounts of violence and danger and/or extreme coercive control 	<p>As above PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MARAC referral • Consider reporting direct to police and if relevant probation officer
<p>Unhappy relationship but no abuse at this point</p> <p>No evidence of physical or sexual violence, no evidence of verbal abuse causing fear or control though arguments may be unpleasant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware that this may be the preliminary stages of a relationship prior to abuse and alert to the possibility that you may have missed significant information or implications, such as controlling behaviour – make sure you check both whether he feels afraid of his partner being violent or abusive, or whether he thinks his partner is afraid of him • Explain the purpose of this service is for men who are experiencing abuse and that you cannot support him but can put them in touch with someone else who can, if that's appropriate (bear in mind it may not always be appropriate) • Refer to Relate or other counselling or couples work • Refer to Citizen's Advice for financial information • Refer to lawyer if separation indicated

LEGAL RIGHTS

We have provided clear information about legal rights for victims on our website. Please see www.mensadviceline.org.uk for more information.

6. Case studies in more detail

In this chapter we explore the case studies described above in more detail, showing how you could work through the process of identifying what is going on, assessing client needs in more detail and responding. We have added some more case studies to provide more detail, particularly for the first section on male victims, as they are likely to be the majority of men presenting at your service.

Main category of client – VICTIMS of domestic abuse

We have given several examples of male victims as this is the majority of the work you will be doing.

Daf

Daf is 73 years old and has been married to his wife Megan (aged 60) for 27 years. Last night she attacked him with a glass and he ended up in hospital. He says Megan has always had a fierce temper and that this has been getting worse for the past few years. Until recently the abuse was mostly verbal but there have been several incidents recently where he has been punched and kicked. Now he is worried that this will be the start of an increase in violence. He doesn't want the police involved as he doesn't want to get her in trouble or to end the relationship. He wants some advice.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/ risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daf's age may mean he is less able to protect himself. • Megan has increased her use of violence and the severity. • She has used a weapon in the most recent incident. • Daf does not want to end the relationship and is unwilling to call the police. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Daf think Megan might do? Does he think she is likely to hurt him again? • Is Megan showing any signs of wanting to change her behaviour? Does she realise she is behaving violently and illegally? • Does Daf feel to blame for Megan's violence? • Is Megan stronger than Daf? How is he protecting himself? Has he ever felt he needed to use violence to protect himself? • Does he feel controlled by or fearful of Megan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure Daf that there are people who can help and that he is right to ask for help. Encourage Daf to understand the full range of services the police can provide and that they are the only agency with the power to remove Megan if he is at risk. Explain to him that this doesn't have to mean the end of the relationship. • Talk through other options such as using the civil courts or going to stay with another family member for a while. Help him to understand that he isn't responsible for Megan's violence and that she is the one who will have to decide to stop. • Help him to explore his choices for the future, such as temporary separation, taking some action to show Megan that she can't use violence, considering a permanent separation, living separately but continuing to have a relationship. • Tell Daf about the Elders' Team in the local authority who can assess his needs and help.

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Roberto

Roberto was with Justin for three years. Justin was an alcoholic and they both used drugs together. The couple lived in Justin's housing association flat. Roberto loved Justin but was also scared, because he was aggressive. Justin pushed everyone away from him and he used violent behaviour and threats to keep Roberto away from everyone. Roberto is Italian and doesn't have any family in this country. When Justin wanted to detox, Roberto supported him and Justin was so grateful that he asked Roberto to marry him. However, Roberto found out he was seeing someone else and the relationship broke down. However, Justin then proceeded to threaten Roberto, saying he would kill him if he ever started another relationship. Roberto called the police but thinks that they didn't believe him. He feels completely devastated, scared of the future and has been having suicidal thoughts. He is sleeping on a friend's sofa at the moment but this is only temporary. He needs some support and help.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roberto's lack of family in this country and the fact his friends have all been pushed away by Justin leave him isolated. His suicidal feelings make him a risk to himself. His past experiences with the police make him unlikely to seek further help from them. Justin's threats to kill him may be real and, coupled with past behaviour towards Roberto's friends, indicate extreme possessiveness. Past use of drugs may also re-occur on either side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was Justin physically violent to Roberto? Did he ever injure him? Does he feel scared of Justin now? When was Justin last in contact with Roberto? How was that contact? Has Roberto re-established contact with any of his friends since he and Justin split up? Is Roberto in contact with his family? Is he out to his family? Has he attempted to claim benefits? Has he attempted suicide in the past? Where does Justin live in relation to Roberto – is it far, does he know where Roberto is living? Is Roberto still in contact with Justin? Has Roberto ever had any medical treatment for his injuries? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassure Roberto he has done the right thing to make contact and that he doesn't deserve to live in fear, that Justin does not have the right to do this and there are things which can be done to help keep Roberto safe. Let him know that as a citizen of the European Union he is entitled to some benefits. Ask if Roberto can make contact with friends or family as this might help his isolation. Refer Roberto to a specialist support group for gay men if one is available locally. Suggest Citizen's Advice Bureau for help with benefits. Tell him about what the police can do – ideally you should have a trusted contact in the local police who you know is likely to be understanding of GBT men Suggest he writes down past incidents, particularly if he has had medical treatment. Discuss a safety plan for how to deal with future threats and how to keep away from Justin. Explain housing rights and options. Refer him to Stonewall Housing for housing advice if he is in London and wants to move within London. Make sure he knows about the Samaritans if he is suicidal or might become so.

Peter

Peter was being abused by his ex-partner Katie for two years. He talks about self-harm and attempted suicide which appears to be as a result of the combination of the abuse and his mild learning disability. He felt he couldn't hit back because she is a woman. When Katie and their two sons moved out of his house six months ago, he was relieved, but she continued to harass and threaten him. He wants to move out of the area as they live close by, with Katie's new boyfriend who Peter thinks is violent. He wants to sort out regular contact with the children and he is worried that Katie's new boyfriend might be scaring them. He has some support from family but they don't know about the abuse. He says he wants housing advice.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/ risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter has attempted suicide and self-harmed in the past; • There is an additional risk from the new boyfriend including possible risk to children; • Peter is has a mild learning disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Peter or the children ever been injured by Katie? • Has Peter ever reported the violence to the police? • Does Peter currently feel afraid of Katie? • Is Peter still feeling suicidal? • What is it that makes Peter think the new boyfriend is violent? Has Katie's new boyfriend used or threatened violence against Peter or the children? • Are there particular areas where Peter will feel especially safe living, or places where Katie's family or friends might live or she might go, where he will feel unsafe? Has Peter tried applying for housing already? Does Peter want the children to live with him? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the assessment forms in chapter 4. • Reassure Peter that he is right to ask for help and that he doesn't deserve to be abused or threatened. • Contact children's services to discuss the possibility that there are children at risk of immediate harm • Refer Peter to a good solicitor for advice about child contact or residence. • Give him clear advice about his rights to public housing and his options to sort this out privately.

Victim who has used violent resistance

Aftab

Aftab says he left hospital this morning after being stabbed in the chest by his partner; he says he was lucky it wasn't too deep but could have been a lot of worse. Aftab says that over the years arguments gradually escalated and she's hit and slapped him several times. He's been walking on eggshells in case he said or did the wrong thing and often Judy would get angry with him if he didn't do something she expected him to. Today, for the first time, Aftab retaliated by slapping Judy several times after she hit and slapped him. He says that he is ashamed, he was taught that it was wrong to hit women but says he did intend to hurt and stop her from hurting him. He is worried that he might do it again. It wasn't the first time she grabbed a knife but the first time she used it so now Aftab is afraid for himself and his son as well as afraid of what he might do to her. Aftab says that Judy has a lot of past stress from her childhood and maybe that's why she behaves like that. Aftab and Judy have a 3 year-old boy who Aftab looks after full time. Aftab doesn't know where to turn or what his options are.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalating violence, severe injuries, use of knives Credible evidence of fear Child exposed to an escalating violent situation Aftab underestimating the severity of the situation and making excuses for Judy Aftab made the choice to respond with violence and this put him at more risk as Judy responded with stabbing him Aftab is anxious, possibly depressed They still live together Need to check more what is going on – is Aftab as violent as Judy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is Aftab afraid, controlled, injured? Does he feel that Judy is ever afraid of him? Does Aftab want the relationship to continue? How does Aftab feel about his situation? What would he like to happen? Has Aftab involved the police about the recent incident? If not, would he? Does Aftab have somewhere else to stay? Where is the child? Is he safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the identification form in chapter 3 and the assessment forms in chapter 4. Explain to Aftab what will happen if he presses charges against Judy and what the law can do for him Find a legal advice centre or helpline for Aftab, particularly in relation to his son and getting residence Explore strategies with Aftab about staying out of harm's way – develop a safety plan with him Talk to Aftab about referring him to a MARAC Explore the need for refuge space or a B&B

Perpetrator (presenting as a victim)

Terry

Terry says that he has been unfairly arrested by the police when he pushed his girlfriend Nicky away from him during an argument. He says that she is verbally abusive to him and that she is always winding him up to see how far she can push him. He says that he has only pushed her away 'once or twice' and that he doesn't understand why the police have arrested him. When asked if Nicky has used violence against him he laughs and says no, she's just verbally a wind-up, but it's not his fault he has to lash out. He wants to know how he can get legal help as he feels he is the victim in the situation.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terry sees himself as a victim but he may be the perpetrator. This would place his partner at increased risk, if other agencies start to believe him. Terry's frustration with the situation may increase this risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has there been any violence in the past? What happened in those incidents where he pushed Nicky away? Was she injured? Was he? Has she tried to leave him? Who called the police? Have the police charged him? Did the police also arrest Nicky? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the information gained from the answers to the questions above to gain a clearer idea of what is going on – use the identification form in chapter 3. Explain that if he wants legal help he is entitled to have a solicitor and if he can't afford to pay the solicitor, he can apply for Legal Aid. Ask him to consider if Nicky is in fact the one being hurt and that no matter how annoying he finds her, he isn't allowed legally to hurt her, including pushing her away.

Learning point: Perpetrators often use the language of 'victim' as they feel hard done by and aggrieved. Domestic violence services have always assessed the needs and circumstances of clients in order to provide the most appropriate service. This means listening to what they say, gathering relevant information and making a proper assessment of the situation, using professional expertise and assessment tools, with men and with women.

Perpetrator (presenting as victim) whose victim has used violent resistance

Olufeme

Olufeme describes being 'wrongly arrested' by the police. He has a long list of complaints about the police. He says that he has been banned from his home town by the terms of a legal order. When asked by the worker how this order came about (as this is quite difficult to get) Olufeme says that he did hit his girlfriend Ayo but that she was 'disrespecting him' and that he also has marks from Ayo's 'abusive behaviour' (his words) but adds that he was able to 'deal with her'. When asked what this means, Olufeme says 'She deserves what she gets, she's argumentative and she knows what I am like – the police should have seen this, but they are all against men and believed her, just because she was crying and on the floor when they came'. When asked for more information about how he has been marked he shows the worker scratches on his arms and says he has bruises on his thighs. Eventually he explains that when the police arrived Ayo was on the floor because Olufeme had been repeatedly kicking her. She had tried to push him off her, once kicking for his genital area, hence the bruises to his thighs. He describes this as him being abused.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olufeme is not accepting responsibility for the impact of his violence • Ayo's use of violence is likely to increase risk to herself and to Olufeme if she increases the level of violence • If Ayo continues to use violence she may be identified as the perpetrator and not get appropriate help or safety planning • However, the terms of the order are very strong – if such an order has been granted (and it is important to check) then the courts and police must have had good evidence of the level of risk from Olufeme to Ayo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Olufeme fearful of Ayo? Does he feel controlled by her? Has he ever had to have medical treatment? • Does Olufeme think that Ayo is fearful of him? Does he think that she feels controlled by him? Does he usually get his own way in the end? • Who finishes arguments? How? • Has Ayo ever had to have medical treatment? • What are the exact terms of the legal order? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear that if an order has been made to Olufeme, it is his responsibility to comply with it, no matter how unfair he thinks it is. He is entitled to seek legal advice and find out if he has the right to return to court. But if he does not comply with the order he will have committed a criminal offence and could be taken to court again. • Use the questions to identify more what is going on and to explore the situation with Olufeme – this may help him to see the situation differently (or it may not). The identification process form in chapter 3 will be helpful here. • Find out what Olufeme wants from you – it may be that there is nothing you can provide him with.

(Possible) mutual violence

Whilst we have given this case study under this heading, we must stress that until you have done more assessment about who is doing what to whom and with what consequences you cannot be sure whether or not this is mutual violence, or one of the other categories of client described above. The focus must be on finding out more, prioritising safety for the child and both adults whilst keeping an open mind about what is going on.

Dave and Julie

Dave and Julie have been together for five years, married for three and they have a four year old daughter. Dave tells us that Julie has an alcohol problem which is also present in many of her family of origin. He says that she has hit him and bit him, including in front of other people. However, he also tells you that he has hit her, causing bruises. He says he has been arrested several times and had to spend a night in the police cells on one occasion when he assaulted her in the street. He was cautioned but not charged. He resents the fact he has been in trouble with the police and blames her. He says that Julie is not a fit mother and wants to separate from her and have custody of their daughter as he thinks she will not be safe living with Julie, plus his extended family have always been very involved in her care. He says they both want to separate but they are still living in the same house as they can't sell it. There is violence from each of them regularly. He doesn't say if this has happened in front of their daughter.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don't know if there is a perpetrator and victim or if this is mutual violence – and we need to find out as much as possible about who is doing what to whom and with what consequences • Julie's use of alcohol is likely to increase the risk of violence and of serious violence. • There may be violence in front of or involving the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Dave afraid of Julie? Does he think Julie is afraid of him? Has either of them been injured or needed medical treatment because of the other's violence? • Has there ever been any violence in front of Julie and Dave's daughter, or when she has been in the house? • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your key task as a professional is to assess and to find out as much as possible about who is doing what to whom and with what consequences • Dave needs to be aware that no matter how much he feels provoked, he must not use violence. Safety planning can help in the short term and during the process of separation and beyond.

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Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julie and Dave are trying to separate, which increases risk. • The fact that they can't sell their house means that they are still living together and the violence is likely to continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are children's services planning to do? (you should try to talk to the social worker involved, with Dave's permission) • Does Julie acknowledge her drinking problem? Is she having any help for this? • What does Dave think he can do to avoid using violence? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave or Julie could move out of the family home into temporary accommodation whilst their house is sold. They could let out their house in the meantime. • Dave will need legal advice about a residence order for their daughter. It may be that they do not agree about where their daughter should live after separation. Dave needs to understand that this is a process that will take time and, understandably, he will be very frustrated around this.

Unhappy relationship - no abuse

Graham

Graham divorced his wife on grounds of unreasonable behaviour. He said she was keeping secrets about her finances and although he gave her the chance to change her ways she didn't do so. They still live together in the same property with their 6 year-old boy. Graham tells you the divorce made him ill, he was signed off work and eventually lost his job. He now lives off benefits and pays most of the bills despite the fact that his ex-wife has a job. He complains that not only does she refuse to pay her share of the bills but she also spends a lot of money every month buying cigarettes. Graham says he wants her out of the house, which they're trying to sell before they go their separate ways, and has even thought about changing the locks so she can't get back in and he can live there with his son. Graham is looking for advice about this and he also wants to know how he can get residence of his son.

Identify	Assess	Respond
Vulnerabilities/risks	Questions to ask	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graham is fed up with the situation and may make bad decisions, such as locking his ex-wife out of the house Graham seems to be aggrieved and this is affecting his health and well-being There is indication that Graham is using controlling behaviours (expecting his ex-wife to change the way she managed her finances, disapproving of her smoking now, considering to lock her out of the house) and is expressing ownership of the house and his son - this should be explored further. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has there been any violence or abuse? Are there any arguments witnessed by the boy? How does Graham think his son has been affected by all this? Does Graham's ex-wife contribute to the house and to their son's upbringing in other ways? Does Graham think he could cope if he had residence of his son? What does his son want? Has he spoken to anyone else about this? eg school teachers, other family members, friends etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graham needs to access legal advice about pursuing residence of the boy and about the financial situation (his wife not paying bills) Graham might benefit from talking to a counsellor or his GP – he needs to take care of his health and well-being Explore strategies with Graham so his bad relations with his ex-wife are not played out through their child You will need to be clear with Graham what the limits of your service are for him – if you are specifically funded to work with male victims he may not be entitled to much of your time as you will have to prioritise men at risk – however, his situation could still be risky so keep an open mind and do make sure he knows about safety options even if you don't think he is a victim – you may be wrong

7. Research

7.1 Information from UK national research about the incidence, scale and effects of domestic violence on men

The main source of information about violence from a partner or ex-partner to men and women in England and Wales are the Home Office British Crime Surveys and homicide statistics. Since 1998 there have been specific sections on violence from partners and ex-partners. The most recent at the time of writing is the report 'Homicide, Firearms Offences and Intimate Violence (Smith, Osborne, Lau and Britton, 2012) using data from the 2010-2011 British Crime Survey (BCS). The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey provides data about partner abuse in Scotland. There is currently no data from Northern Ireland which is equivalent to these two surveys. This chapter includes data from the England and Wales survey and from the Scotland survey. Each reference will show clearly which survey it originates from.

Both sets of data include physical, sexual and some non-physical abuse in their definitions of abuse. Some data is presented in the reports excluding sexual assault – we have only included the figures which include sexual assault, but this may mean you see figures which are different from ones you have seen before as some organisations use the figures excluding sexual assault in their information. The BCS also uses the term 'domestic abuse', which includes abuse from other adult family members as well as partners. The use of different definitions can often mislead policy makers and practitioners about the levels of partner abuse – data using both definitions is included here to demonstrate this. The Scottish Survey data is specifically about partner abuse. We have included some of the data for 'domestic abuse' and some for the more specific 'partner abuse'.

For 2010-2011:

England and Wales

- 17% of men and 30% of women in England and Wales reported experiencing one or more incidents of any domestic abuse (which includes abuse from partners and also abuse from any other adult family member as well as partner or ex-partner) since the age of 16 (Smith et al, 2012).
- 14% of men and 26% of women in England and Wales reported experiencing one or more incidents of abuse from a partner or ex-partner (not including other family members) since the age of 16 (Smith et al, 2012).
- There was no statistically significant difference in the level of domestic abuse between the 2008/09 and 2009/10 BCS (Smith et al, 2012).

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- Levels of domestic abuse experienced in the previous year have generally declined for both men and women since 2004/05 when the module was first included in the BCS on a comparable basis (Smith et al, 2012).
- An estimated 784,000 men in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse in the last year, which includes abuse from family members as well as partners or ex-partners, (compared to 1,191,000 women) (Smith et al, 2012).
- An estimated 603,000 men experienced one or more incidents of partner abuse in England and Wales in the last year (compared to 938,000 women) (Smith et al, 2012).
- An estimated 2.3 million men and 4.3 million women in England and Wales have ever experienced one or more incidents of partner abuse since the age of 16 (Smith et al, 2012)
- There was little variation between risks for married and unmarried men, with no statistically significant risk associated with separation for men (Smith et al, 2012).
- Disabled and mentally ill men were at greater risk than non disabled men (Smith et al, 2012).

Scotland

- 14% of women in Scotland who had a partner since the age of 16 experienced physical partner abuse since that age compared with 10% of men (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012)
- There was no change in the levels of partner abuse reported to the 2010-2011 survey from the previous year
- Young people aged 16 - 24 were at the greatest risk of partner abuse in the last year.
- There was no difference between the levels of partner abuse in the last year reported by men or women.

Type of abuse

England and Wales

- 37% of male victims in England and Wales (approximately 170,200 men) experienced some kind of physical assault (compared to approximately 307,200 women). 5% of them experienced threats (Smith et al, 2012). The England and Wales survey did not provide detail of the nature of this abuse.

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- Women are the majority of victims of sexual assault, threats, physical violence and chronic long term violence (Smith et al, 2012).

Scotland

- The main forms of physical abuse to men and to women reported to the Scottish Survey included a partner throwing something at them (8% of adults who had a partner since that age experienced this); kicking, biting or hitting them (6%) or pushing or holding them down (6%) (Scottish Crime Survey).

Perpetrators

The BCS does not present data on perpetrators. However, the Scottish Survey says that:

- In 61% of cases where partner abuse was experienced since the age of 16, the gender of the abusive partner was male compared with 37% where the gender of the abusive partner was female (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012);
- Among those who had experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months, in the most recent / only incident, 54% of offenders were male and 39% female (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012).
- The majority (69%) of adults who had experienced either psychological or physical partner abuse had just one abusive partner in that time (this data was not disaggregated by gender). 24% had more than one abusive partner since that age. The remainder said they did not know or could not remember how many abusive partners they had (2%) or did not wish to answer (5%) (Scottish Crime Survey, 2012).

Intimate partner homicide

The risk of being a victim of homicide in England and Wales remains low and has been falling for the last decade. There were a total of 435 male homicide victims and 201 female homicide victims in this year, making total of 11.5 victims per million of the population (Smith et al, 2012).

Most male and female victims were killed by someone they knew (78% of female victims and 54% of male victims). However, female victims were more likely to be killed by a partner or ex-partner, male victims by a friend or acquaintance (Smith et al, 2012).

5% of male victims of homicide were killed by a partner or ex-partner (21 men), compared to 53% of female victims of homicide (93 women) (Smith et al, 2012).

The BCS is not able to identify which of these victims were killed by someone who had been using ongoing domestic abuse and which by someone whom they had been abusing in self-defence (Smith et al, 2012).

Incidence and impact

Questions about incidence (amount of abuse) were not explored in the most recent British Crime Surveys. For details of the incidence and impact of abuse in England and Wales, the British Crime Survey for 2004-5 is the last time this information was provided. However, the most recent Scottish Survey contains similar questions about impact to those included in the 2004-5 BCS (Walby and Allan, 2005).

Respect staff have responded each year to consultations by the Home Office on what should be included in the data on intimate violence with strong requests for the section on incidence and impact to be included once more, and for data to be presented more clearly. Other domestic violence organisations and researchers have made the same request.

From the 2010-2011 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey:

- 65% of women who had experienced partner abuse (psychological or physical) in the last 12 months reported at least one psychological impact of the most recent or only incident of abuse compared with 45% of men.
- Women who had experienced partner abuse in the last twelve months were more likely than men to report impacts, summarised as follows:
- Psychological or emotional problems such as difficulty sleeping, nightmares, depression or low self-esteem (42% women; 28% men);
- Stopping trusting people or having difficulty with other relationships (26% women; 14% men);
- Fear, anxiety and panic attacks (28% women; 10% of men);
- Isolation from family and friends (21% women; 10% men).
- Men (45%) were more likely than women (27%) to say they experienced none of the listed psychological effects.

From the data for the 2004-5 BCS on intimate violence in England and Wales (Walby and Allan, 2005):

- 50% of male victims of violence from a partner had experienced the violence for less than one month in total, (compared with 32% of female victims). For long term abuse, 23% of the male victims experienced abuse for between one and six years, compared with 39% of the female victims.
- The majority of long term victims of repeat victimisation from a partner or ex-partner are female.

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- 48% of male victims and 58% of female victims had experienced injuries or emotional effects as a result of the abuse. 16% of male victims and 21% of female victims reported having experienced minor bruising or a black eye.
- 14% of male victims and 33% of female victims had experienced mental or emotional problems as a result of the abuse, 9% of male victims and 15% of female victims stopped trusting people or had difficulty in other relationships.
- 24% of male victims said that they had remained with their abusive partner (compared with 11% of women).
- 9% of male victims said that the abuse only **STARTED** at the end of the relationship (compared with 5% of female victims).

7.2 Information from other research on gender and domestic violence

The UK Crime Surveys are currently the only national data sets we have for measuring the extent and scale of domestic and intimate partner violence. However, other less large-scale research helps us to understand more about the detail. This section explores the detail of the differences between men's and women's experiences and use of abuse, in order to inform how services develop appropriately to meet those different needs.

Men and women tend to use and/or experience violence and describe it in different ways (Hester, 2009). This has implications for services helping male victims, some of which are further explored in the section below on analysis of the calls to the Men's Advice Line for male victims.

When women use violence in intimate relationships it is often, though not always, in self defence or defence of a child or as a form of resistance (Kimmel, 2002; Dasgupta, 2001; DeKeseredy and Schwarz, various; Healey et al, 1998). However, it is also clear that some women systematically and intentionally perpetrate domestic violence against their male partners (Hester, 2009).

Some researchers strongly assert that men and women abuse in equal numbers (Dixon and Graham-Kevan, 2012; Dutton, 2007; Archer, 2000) Others identify different categories of domestic violence such as so-called 'situational couple violence' and 'intimate partner violence', and that the latter is strongly gendered whilst the former is not so clearly gendered (Johnson, 2005). Dutton also argues that mental health and childhood trauma are stronger predictors of perpetration of domestic violence than gender (Dutton, 2007).

However, national studies such as the England and Wales Crime Survey and the Scottish Crime Survey show differences in experiences of homicide, sexual assault, post-separation abuse and rates of ongoing violence between men and women (see above). This strongly suggests that whilst gender does not explain everything, it still affects the amount and the nature of the services provided for men and for women.

The connections between gender and domestic abuse also include the gender of the perpetrator, often assumed to be female if the victim is male. The 'Day to Count' national snapshot of reported domestic violence on one day found that disproportionate numbers of men reporting domestic violence had been abused by a male partner or ex-partner (Stanko, 2002).

Given that the majority of perpetrators are male and that perpetrators are often prone to manipulation or minimisation of the violence they have used, practitioners are rightly concerned that they may be approached by men who present as victims but are in fact perpetrators. Evidence from current male victims' services confirms that this happens. A significant number of men calling the Men's Advice Line who initially identify as victims change their own identification by the end of the call or provide information about the violence in their relationships which strongly suggests that they are either not a victim

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or in fact are the perpetrator (see elsewhere in this toolkit). This signifies a more complex situation than that initially presented. Clearly practitioners want to be able to prioritise their time helping genuine male victims. They are also concerned that they don't make situations more dangerous for the partners of men who present as victims but are actually perpetrators.

Given the emphasis in the last few decades on protection for women, it is important for male victims to know that they too can ask for and receive help and protection. Men calling the Men's Advice Line are often concerned that if they call the police they won't be taken seriously or that their female partner is less likely to be arrested than they are. Indeed, some state that they have had that experience. However, research on police arrests and use of violence by men and women in the North East of England showed the opposite: women who use violence are more likely than men who use violence to be arrested by the police (Hester, 2009). Practitioners can reassure male victims that they can ask the police for help and should be given protection when they do.

The Hester research in the North East further shows that women are also likely to be arrested when they use violence as a means of defence or resistance and that when women do use violence, they are also more likely than men to use a weapon, such as a household implement, if they are physically violent. Again, this will include women using violence as self-defence as well as violence as a perpetrator: however, in both cases, this will increase the risk of harm to their partner and to themselves. Safety planning with both victim and perpetrator are important for the protection of both adults and of their children. This is part of why the Men's Advice Line continues to give safety planning advice to all callers involved in violent relationships, whether they are clearly victim or not.

Male victimisation also includes abuse in same-sex relationships which can include behaviour specific to this client group. Male victims of domestic violence from a male partner often experience specific forms of abuse such as threats to reveal sexuality to family or colleagues (Sookias, 2008). Anecdotal evidence from calls on the Men's Advice Line shows that gay men often experience higher levels of physical and sexual violence than heterosexual men. Monitoring data from the Men's Advice Line demonstrates higher levels of sexual violence against gay men from a male perpetrator than against heterosexual men from a female perpetrator (see the relevant section in the Toolkit with analysis of sexual abuse experiences reported by men to the Men's Advice Line). Further more detailed specific research on this topic would help to inform risk assessment and management with male victims.

Gender of course does not explain everything and nor is it the only risk factor for domestic abuse. Acknowledging the connections between gender and partner abuse does not mean ignoring other factors, such as mental health or stress (Debonnaire and Todd, 2012). Work with individual victims to support and protect them will usually focus on safety planning, legal and practical help more than on understanding the impact of gender. However, long term work with victims and perpetrators is likely to include exploration of how gender roles affect expectations of behaviour in relationships, partly because men and women bring up these topics themselves (Debonnaire and Todd, 2012).

Conclusions

Men and women can both be victims of domestic violence and abuse. There are differences in the scale, incidence and effects of domestic violence related to whether the victim is a man or a woman. Women are more likely than men to experience domestic violence in general, to experience sexual assault and threats in particular, to experience domestic violence in the long term and to be injured or killed by their partner or ex-partner. However, there are male victims who are abused by either a male or a female partner. They need and are entitled to protection under the law, with practical and emotional help when needed. This is why Respect runs the Men's Advice Line and it is probably why your organisation is also helping male victims. However, the differences as well as the similarities are important for us to consider if we are going to help men effectively.

In some couples, both parties are using violence. However, it is often the case that one is using violence to defend themselves or the children, or as a means of resistance. In any case, there are risks for both adults and for children witnessing the violence. The appropriate responses will be more effective if the practitioners understand who is doing what to whom and with what consequences. For example, responding to a victim who has used violence in self defence will not be the same as responding to someone who is the perpetrator. It is therefore very important, when both parties are using violence, to assess clearly who is the perpetrator and who is the victim using violent resistance, self defence or some other form of violence, in the interests of all adults and children involved.

There is still debate and sometimes controversy about how gender and intimate partner violence and domestic violence are linked. We have tried to represent a summary of this and have provided a short list of further reading in Chapter 8 which includes research from different viewpoints. Our experience on the Men's Advice Line and our reading of the current research is that gender and domestic/intimate partner violence are linked and that it is important to consider how gender affects experiences of abuse. However, we must stress that gender is not the only factor nor is it the only determinant of risk.

In all cases, for male and female victims, listening to what they say and exploring with them what they need is critical. We can then provide really effective help for all victims.

Bibliography – is contained in chapter 8

7.3 Analysis of monitoring of calls to the Men's Advice Line in 2010 and 2011

Introduction

The provision of specialist work with male victims of domestic violence is relatively new in the UK. One of the key sources of information about the experiences of male victims, the ways in which men describe and make sense of their experiences, the needs they have and the process by which workers identify these needs is the Men's Advice Line. This service, run by Respect, provides a telephone advice and support service for male victims of domestic violence. It also provides training, advice and support for projects and professionals working with male victims across the UK and beyond.

In order to provide a rigorous basis for the approaches outlined in the toolkit for work with male victims, the helpline staff and the Respect Research Manager developed an online database to record details of calls in real-time, during the call. We did this by carrying out a preliminary monitoring exercise for three months in 2009, the results of which were published in the first edition of the Male Victims' Toolkit. From this preliminary monitoring we developed an online database for recording details of calls in real time. This allows Helpline workers to identify commonly asked questions and responses and to develop a system for recording them which worked with the flow of most calls, allowing helpline workers to click on responses as they applied, during the call or immediately afterwards.

The results of this monitoring provide a helpful picture of who approaches services for male victims, the types of problems they present with and the ways professionals can start to help clients, even in a fairly short initial intervention. Whilst many projects will go on to work with male victims beyond the first initial phone call or meeting, the information gathered in this first session is usually extremely helpful for guiding the professional beyond this session.

The monitoring analysis presented in this second edition of the toolkit uses the results of the over 5,000 calls taken during 2010 and 2011.

Aims of the monitoring

1. To record how callers identify themselves at the start of the call to the Men's Advice Line (as victims, professionals, friends and family, perpetrators, etc)
2. To identify the specific forms of help, advice, referral etc requested and provided
3. To analyse the gender, age, ethnicity of callers
4. To identify any shift in callers' own analysis of their situation as a result of the call
5. To identify what conclusions helpline workers came to about the caller and how they came to that conclusion
6. To identify the extent to which callers and workers agreed about the nature of their situation, by the end of the call

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- To explore some of the possible explanations for changes in identification and the differences between caller and worker identification of the situation by the end of the call

Findings from the monitoring exercise

Men identifying as victims of domestic violence

KEY FINDING: 60% of the callers to the Men's Advice Line are from men initially identifying as victims of domestic violence, 20% from professionals working with them and the remainder are people in a range of related situations, crisis and need.

The majority of the callers identifying as victims are male (2,903 in this two year period). Very few men initially identify themselves as in a mutually violent relationship. A small number identify as perpetrators of domestic violence.

The following table shows how the callers to the Men's Advice Line presented initially, by gender.

CALLS 2010-2011	Gender				Grand Total
	-	Female	Male	Not known	
-	36	4	77	0	117
Victim of dv	71	75	2,903	0	3,049
Family/friend of perpetrator	4	14	10	0	28
Family/friend of victim	32	293	100	0	425
Mutual violence	1	1	33	0	35
NA-Call back	5	3	46	0	54
Not abuse related	4	5	142	0	151
Perpetrator	6	4	149	0	159
Professional	144	666	206	0	1,016
Student re dv	3	13	4	0	20
OTHER	23	36	100	1	160
Grand Total	329	1,114	3,770	1	5,214

Sexuality of male victims calling the Men’s Advice Line

The majority of men identifying as victims are heterosexual (2,172). 131 in this time period identified as gay, 8 as bisexual, out of a total of 2,311 male victims who gave information about sexuality.

Country	Sexuality					Grand Total
	-	Hetero	Gay	Bisexual	Declined to answer	
-	57	90	7	0	0	154
England	462	1,874	112	6	1	2,455
Northern Ireland	3	10	1	0	0	14
OTHER	2	6	0	0	0	8
Scotland	44	143	3	1	0	191
Wales	23	49	8	1	0	81
Grand Total	591	2,172	131	8	1	2,903

This means that of the men who gave information about sexuality, 94% of them identified as heterosexual and the rest as gay or bisexual.

Age of male victims calling the Men’s Advice Line

Helpline workers asked about age of male victims in all but 306 of the 2,903 calls from male victims to the Men’s Advice Line in this two year period. A very few (14) were under 18. Helpline workers will support young callers at risk of violence to call a more suitable service, such as ChildLine or the local authority social services. A few (130) are over 60. As shown in the table below, male victims calling the Men’s Advice Line are mostly in their 30s and 40s – nearly 1800 men who identified as victims (60% of victims) were 31 – 50.

Age	Number of callers
-	243
under 18	14
18 - 21	30
22 - 30	391
31 - 40	931
41 - 50	854
51 - 60	310
61 - 70	100
over 70	30
Grand Total	2903

Ethnicity

Helpline workers attempt to record ethnicity for all callers who identify themselves as a victim, perpetrator or in an unhappy relationship. They use a pre-set list of the categories used by the UK Census (Main categories and sub-categories). In a few cases the dynamics of the call mean that they are unable to ask. The results are shown below.

KEY FINDING: Nearly 60% of the callers identified themselves as white, over 25% are from an ethnic minority and the rest are not known.

Ethnicity of men calling as victims of domestic violence, 2010-11		
Ethnicity	No of callers	% of male victims
White	1807	62%
Asian	389	13%
Black	376	13%
Mixed race	34	1%
Other	64	2%
Not given	233	8%
TOTAL	2903	

How did helpline workers identify callers by the end of the call?

By the end of the call, based on the evidence provided by the man during the call (see below for more information about how this is gathered), helpline staff identified which of the categories of clients they believed the man belonged to, based on what he had said during the call. If this felt appropriate and likely to be helpful to the caller, they reflected this back to him. In some cases this would not be appropriate or might be unsafe for the callers’ partners. However, in almost all cases, the helpline workers recorded the conclusions they came to about his identification.

Of the **2,903 men who initially appeared to identify themselves as victims** of domestic violence, the helpline workers thought:

Worker final dv category identification of men initially identifying as victims		% of men initially identifying as victims
-	36	1%
Victim	1,247	43%
Victim who has used violent resistance	231	8%
Perpetrator	298	10%

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Worker final dv category identification of men initially identifying as victims		% of men initially identifying as victims
Perpetrator whose victim used violent resistance	180	6%
Mutual violence	42	1.4%
Professional	1	0.03%
Friends and family	1	0.03%
Unhappy relationship no abuse	374	13%
Not sure	369	13%
OTHER	124	4%
Grand Total	2,903	

This means that in about half of the cases where the man initially appeared to identify as a victim of domestic violence, the worker agreed, based on the evidence the man gave in the phone call, that he was a victim (see below). For the rest, a very few had been wrongly identified initially as victims when they were actually a professional or a friend or family member of a victim. Most of the rest, from the things they said during the call, did not appear to be victims but were instead either in a non-abusive but unhappy relationship, or were the perpetrator in the relationship. In some of the latter cases, the caller was a perpetrator whose victim had used some form of violent resistance.

Evidence for worker conclusion

Workers make conclusions about the caller based on:

- Injury – to self, to others
- Experience of physical assault
- Fear and feelings of control
- Descriptions of emotional abuse
- Use of physical assault on partner
- Descriptions of partner feeling in fear or controlled
- Descriptions of recent incidents

In about half of the calls from men identifying as victims the men described experiencing physical assault, often assaults which could have or did result in injury to them.

In over 200 of the calls the men had been bitten by their partner. In ten calls the men had experienced burns. In over 50 calls the men had experienced their partner's hands around their throats.

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In almost all the calls reporting physical violence the men described being hit, kicked or punched.

Helpline workers recorded men as victims if they appear to have experienced fear, control, injury, physical assault and identifiable emotional or sexual abuse.

However, in about half of the calls from men identifying as victims they had experienced no physical or sexual assault and did not describe being in fear or feeling controlled. There were no obvious risk factors and questioning the caller sometimes resulted in the caller describing incidents in which their partner was injured by them.

Many of these many described what they identified as emotional abuse, but did not appear to be part of the constellation of abusive behaviours used in the Helpline's model of work and understanding of domestic violence. Neither did these men appear to be afraid of or feel controlled by their partner. Sometimes they describe arguments and unhappiness in the relationship which, whilst not pleasant, do not appear to be abusive, controlling or violent, or part of an overall pattern of coercive control.

Example:

Mark emailed the Men's Advice Line saying 'I think that I am being verbally and emotionally abused by my partner'. He then provided a lengthy description of incidents which he identified as abusive. These included partner criticising him for not getting a job, not wanting to be in the same room as him, wanting to spend more time with her friends than with him, arguments about his lack of employment. He describes being 'moaned at' and criticised for the ways he does things. His partner tells him she doesn't love him. From the lengthy and very detailed description Mark gives, it does appear that the relationship is unhappy and not working well. It does not appear that the things his partner says are stopping Mark from doing anything he wants to do, or making him do things his partner does want him to do – in fact, his description includes many incidents in which he doesn't do what she wants and she criticises him for this. There are no allegations of any violence, he does not appear in any way fearful and he does not seem to be controlled.

This may be unpleasant or difficult to live with, but the evidence from Mark's lengthy statement does not show that this relationship is abusive.

Whilst it is important to listen to what clients say respectfully and in a believing manner, this does not mean that they are always correct in identifying a relationship as abusive. A useful parallel may be to think of a person who goes to the doctor with a list of symptoms, a self-diagnosis of the cause and a specific request for a certain treatment they have read about on the internet. The doctor,

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with expertise and experience, can listen respectfully to the patient but also use their expertise to make a more correct diagnosis or recommend specific tests to explore the condition further. The doctor has to prioritise treating all their patients appropriately and not use up valuable time on patients who do not need treatment, or recommend treatment which is not appropriate, simply because the patient has asked for them.

Domestic violence practitioners have specialist knowledge, training and experience. They can believe and show they believe that the person they are trying to help has their own perceptions of the situation and respectfully carry out an assessment and come to a professional, evidence-based conclusion about the situation and the person's needs.

How did callers identify themselves by the end of the call and how had this changed from initial identification as a victim?

2,903 men initially identified themselves as male victims. As shown above, the workers on the helpline often identified them in another category by the end of the phone call. In some, but not all, of these cases, the men themselves shifted how they identified themselves by the end of the phone call. The majority of callers initially identifying as victims remained with this identification by the end of the call (2,464, 85% of those initially identifying as victims). However, 15% (439 men) had shifted: some to identifying their relationship as unhappy but not abusive (201 men, about 100 each year), some to identifying themselves as the perpetrator (90 men, 45 each year) and some to identifying as in a mutually violent relationship (36 men, about 18 each year). The rest had no clear identification.

Shifts in callers' perceptions of their own situation by the end of the call: men initially presenting as victims		
Caller final identification	Grand total	% of men initially identifying as victims
-	43	1.5%
Friend/family of victim	1	0.05%
Mutual violence	36	1%
OTHER	67	2%
Perpetrator	90	3%
Professional	1	0.05%
Unhappy relationship	201	7%
Victim	2,464	85%
Grand Total	2,903	100

How and why do some men change their own identification as a victim?

Project workers working with male victims of domestic violence have a range of techniques for encouraging men to consider their situation. These include:

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- Reflection what the man has just said
- Commenting that the description of an incident sounded like it would be frightening for his partner and asking him what he thinks about that
- Using the phrase 'some people might think that...' in order to provide a further comment and again asking him what he thinks
- Asking how he thinks his partner felt about the situation
- Asking how he thinks his partner would describe the situation

Helpline staff work with the assumption that a man asking for help as a domestic violence victim is a victim unless his story indicates otherwise. They don't expect or require callers to prove their victim status as a pre condition to providing them with advice and information. They start with a default assumption that someone who says they are a victim is a victim. Workers use a questioning rather than challenging tone and approach in most situations. They only ask or comment in these ways if they feel that the evidence the man has described so far warrant this. During an evaluation of customer satisfaction of callers to the Men's Advice Line in 2008, men commented that they felt believed and supported.

In response to some of these reflections or comments, some men appear to make connections which help them to identify some of the negative effects of their own behaviour. In other cases the men will resist this. It is possible that this resistance is temporary and that having been given things to think about, as well as advice about how to protect themselves from violence, they will consider the effects of their own violence. However, helpline staff provide information about safety planning and other relevant advice to all men who ask for this or appear to need this.

Why the differences?

There are various possible explanations for the discrepancies between how the caller initially presented and the conclusion the worker came to by the end of the call and those in which the caller themselves changed their own identification as victim or otherwise by the end of the call. These include:

- Caller identifying behaviours as abusive which the Men's Advice Line policy would not identify as abusive – these are likely to indicate an unhappy relationship with no abuse
- Caller had been presenting as a victim when they were not – more likely to be a perpetrator, including those perpetrators whose victim has used violent resistance
- Worker misunderstanding what the caller was saying
- Lack of sufficient evidence to reach a likely conclusion

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- Internally confused evidence – which can often happen when a victim is still in shock or very upset about what has happened.

Some calls and emails to the helpline include descriptions of behaviour which the caller identified as abusive but which the helpline model of work and common definitions of domestic violence would not identify as abusive. These include, for example, a failure to make dinner and an insistence on a particular type of fruit juice. These are very similar to reasons given by some male perpetrators for their use of violence and abuse. They indicate the same strength of sense of entitlement to expect certain forms of behaviour from their partner and the same sense of outrage that these expected needs were not met.

These men perceive themselves to be abused and are therefore identified as such on the record of initial monitoring and possibly sometimes in the official monitoring of the call, but the evidence from the caller's own descriptions strongly indicates that they are not victims or that there is no domestic violence, but an unhappy relationship that's breaking down. This would account for some of the differences.

It is worth considering whether or not callers appeared to change their minds only because they felt it was what the helpline worker wanted or because they felt pressured into this. The 2008 evaluation also strongly suggests that helpline staff do not pressure callers. Early in 2008, a random sample of men who called the helpline were interviewed about their experiences. Almost all said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the response they received and that they felt better as a direct result of the call to the line. Some who were called agreed that the worker's final conclusion that they were not a victim was correct.

It is also possible that some of the men who were finally identified as male victims had deliberately withheld information or lied about incidents such that there were finally identified as victims when they were in fact perpetrators. However, the helpline workers aim to reach their conclusions about appropriate responses based on what the man is telling them.

KEY FINDING: Workers ask questions to find out more in order to help all callers appropriately.

Requests and suggestions for further help for callers

Workers responded to requests for information and offered specific information which they thought might be relevant for the caller. In a few cases, information requested could not be provided because it was not available. Staff always try to provide information that callers ask for. The totals below do not add up to 2,903 as many callers are provided with information about more than one service.

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Type of referral given	Number	% male victims (2,903)
Legal	937	32.28
Counselling	546	18.81
Police	512	17.64
Housing	357	12.30
GP	276	9.51
Parenting support	171	5.89
DVPP/RPL	159	5.48
Social Services	111	3.82
Local Male DV service/ IDVA	55	1.89
LGBT	45	1.55
Debt	32	1.10
Drug and alcohol	22	0.76
Refuge	16	0.55

Legal advice, housing and counselling were the most commonly requested forms of help. However, it is worth noticing that more of these men, who initially identified as victims, wanted information about perpetrator programmes by the end of the call than wanted information about men's refuges. This could be for all sorts of reasons, including that there are so few men's refuges that the travelling distance this therefore requires puts many men off. However, it could also be that men just very rarely want this type of specialist support. It could also be that male victims do not perceive themselves to be at great risk. Further research would help us to understand these apparent differences between the needs of male and female victims. **However, even at this early stage with tentative evidence it is worth noticing that we serve male victims better and more effectively if we do not assume that their needs will be identical to female victims.**

Staff identified and provided further advice beyond that requested, when the evidence demonstrated that this could be useful for the caller.

Part of the work of the staff responding to male victims is to be able to identify services and help they might benefit from but which they have not requested. Victims of domestic violence often do not know what is available. It is clearly important that the staff responding to them have good knowledge of the range of available forms of help and protection.

It is important to note that helpline staff, mindful that they could not be sure of the full situation, provide information to men about protection and safety from domestic violence to callers even when they suspect that they may also be using violence. However, this is provided in the course of a call in which they also ask callers questions to help them to consider their situation in new ways, which in some cases, as identified above, results in the caller themselves recognising they too or they alone are using abuse and violence.

Conclusions

All callers and clients deserve and should receive respect and an effective response. In a project funded to support male victims, it is important to prioritise genuine victims and also to help others to get appropriate help. This includes helping men in unhappy but non abusive relationships to have information about legal help, for example. It also includes helping men who are perpetrators to recognise their own behaviour, motivate them to want to change this and consider the help available for them to change.

Interventions start with the first call or conversation – even by asking questions to find out more, the situation is starting to shift in some ways. The response the man gets on the first call is critical for motivating him to feel that there is hope and help available.

The majority of men approaching the Men's Advice Line identify as male victims and are still identifying as male victims by the end of the call and are provided with appropriate help for how to seek protection and legal support for domestic violence.

Legal, housing and counselling services are the most commonly provided types of referral. Very few men want refuge space, a few more want information about perpetrator programmes.

A significant minority of men who initially identify as victims change their own opinion of their situation by the end of the conversation, through the use of carefully chosen questions and reflection by the helpline staff, which provide men with the opportunity to reflect on their relationship and their own understanding of abuse as it applies to their relationship.

There are specific questions which staff can ask about which will provide them with a great deal of information from the man about his situation. Other agencies working with men over a longer time or receiving information from a referring or other agency could explore the evidence in more detail.

During the course of a relatively short conversation, men provide a great deal of information in response to the questions put to them, which help staff to make an initial assessment of who is doing what to whom and with what consequences. This helps to guide their response. This will include providing information about legal and other rights and support services. It will also help to inform them about when it is appropriate to ask a man to consider some of the effects of his behaviour on his partner or to challenge him more directly.

Helpline staff provide information about protection and legalities when requested even if by a man whose descriptions do not appear to be of an abusive relationship and they proactively provide this information in many cases when not explicitly asked. This is important as the information is publicly available elsewhere and workers cannot be sure that their own analysis of the situation is correct. Victims may not always be obvious and need correct information.

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Staff responding to male victims need to be familiar with the range of legal rights and support services available and be able to describe these and to use a range of sources of information to help them keep this information up to date.

If staff have a longer time to talk with the man and to work with him over more than one session, they will be able to use longer and more detailed assessment processes and provide more specifically relevant information or support. The longer assessment tools developed by the Respect Male Victims' Development Worker and piloted in two London boroughs are useful for this process.

KEY FINDING: From our helpline data from nearly 3000 male victims it seems that men do not have the same needs as female victims. It would not be helpful for male victims simply to replicate the services or ways of helping female victims – projects working with male victims need to continue to monitor male victims' needs and ways of presenting for help, in order to help them best and to make best use of our resources.

7.4 Reports of sexual abuse experiences on the Men’s Advice Line from heterosexual and gay men

Qualitative and quantitative differences as reported to the Men’s Advice Line in 2010 and 2011

This report is looking at behaviours as reported by male callers to Men’s Advice Line staff. The comparisons below are limited to the behaviours reported and the report is not aiming to examine impact of these behaviours on the callers.

Men’s Advice Line staff understand the reluctance and embarrassment of men to report experiencing sexual abuse. We also know that in some cases men are unaware that some of their experiences can be classified as sexual abuse. It is very likely that men under-report sexual abuse experiences. The data presented below should be read with this provision in mind and it is likely that more men, gay and heterosexual, experience sexual abuse by their current or ex-partners.

Sexuality of men calling the Men’s Advice Line

In 2010 and 2011 the Men’s Advice Line spoke to 2,903 men who described themselves as domestic violence victims from a current or ex-partner. Most were asked for their own identification of their sexuality and this is recorded in the database. The figures for callers identifying as male victims, calling in 2010 and 2011, broken down by country of residence and sexuality, are as follows:

Country	-	Hetero	Gay	Bisexual	Declined to answer	
-	57	90	7	0	0	154
England	462	1,874	112	6	1	2,455
Northern Ireland	3	10	1	0	0	14
OTHER	2	6	0	0	0	8
Scotland	44	143	3	1	0	191
Wales	23	49	8	1	0	81
Grand Total	591	2,172	131	8	1	2,903

Definitions

The Men’s Advice Line database offers helpline workers the option of recording various types of sexually abusive behaviours. Rape is included in this list – and helpline workers interpret this as sex which is forced, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator. Legally, the act of forced penetrative sex is only defined as rape when the perpetrator is male or, if female, if they are using the penis of another man to penetrate the victim.

Other forced sexual activity is legally defined as sexual assault if there is force, violence or threats involved.

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One-off incidents of non physical sexually abusive behaviour are not illegal – such as verbal abuse of sexual performance, sulking if partner does not want to have sex, making partner feel bad or inadequate for not wanting sex. However, if persistent, this could become harassment, which is a crime.

We have analysed the findings for men defining as heterosexual and men defining as gay, on the assumption that the perpetrator in each of these cases was their partner or ex-partner.

We have also analysed the experiences men describe under two broad headings.

'sexual abuse of a physical nature' includes: rape, being hurt during sex, forced to have sex with other people; inappropriate/unwanted touching, not informed of a sexually transmitted infection and having unsafe sex without consent.

'sexual abuse of a non-physical nature' includes: being mocked for sexual performance; pressure to have sex; sulking if partner doesn't want to have sex; made to watch porn.

We are aware that there are opportunities here for error or misunderstanding in our recording of the various forms of sexually abusive behaviours as well as under-counting due to men not wanting to talk about sexual abuse or not recognising sexual abuse.

KEY FINDINGS

Almost 1 in 3 gay men (29.3%) and 1 in 25 heterosexual men (4%) who called the Men's Advice Line reported having experienced some type of sexual abuse

34% of gay men who reported having experienced some type of sexual abuse told us they had been raped by their male (ex) partner; that's 17% of all gay men calling the helpline

Information extracted from the Men's Advice Line database shows that gay male victims tend to report sexual abuse experiences more often than heterosexual men. They also report experiencing rape more often than heterosexual men.

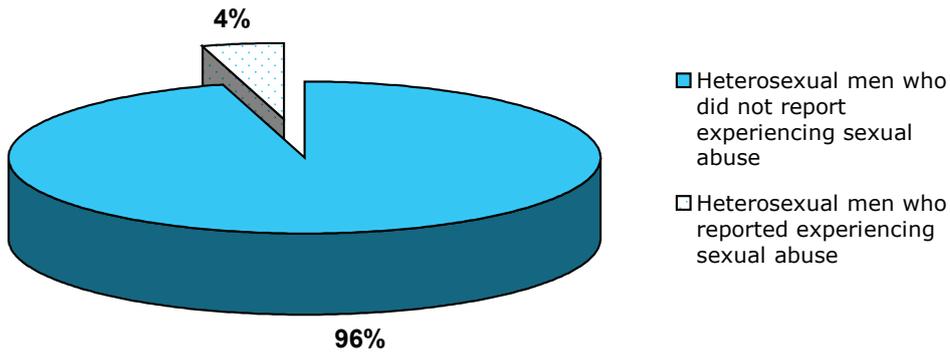
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Sexual abuse

Heterosexual men

91 out of 2,172 heterosexual men reported some sexually abusive experiences.

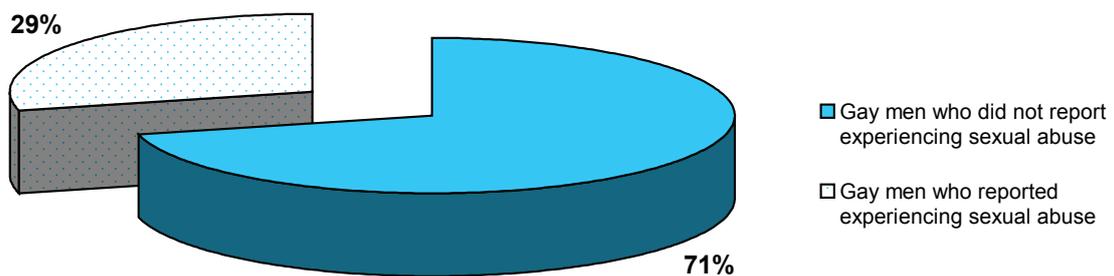
Heterosexual men and sexual abuse



Gay men

38 out of 131 gay men who called the helpline reported some form of sexual abuse.

Gay men and sexual abuse



Gay men are more likely than heterosexual men to report experiencing sexual abuse when they call the Men's Advice Line. It is very likely that gay men experience sexual abuse more frequently than heterosexual men but the limitations of Men's Advice Line data (one-off telephone contact with callers, information given is not verifiable etc) mean that we cannot generalise to the wider population of male victims. However, this trend is significant.

Male victims and forced sex

Heterosexual men

Out of the 91 heterosexual men who reported experiencing sexual abuse 9 told us they had been experienced forced sex: 10% of heterosexual men reporting sexual abuse (or 0.4% of all heterosexual men who called us in 2010-2011).

Gay men

Out of the 38 gay men who reported experiencing sexual abuse 13 told us they had been raped: 34% of all gay male callers who reported sexual abuse (or 17% of all gay men who called us in 2010-2011).

From what the callers tell the Helpline workers, when heterosexual men talk about rape they mean being verbally and emotionally coerced to having sex until they give in and perform the sexual act; rather than being physically forced (pinned down, held down; threatened) to have sex. Helpline workers record acts as rape on the caller database if the caller says they were forced to have sex, even where this is without force or where the abuser was female (and therefore not legally rape).

In contrast, gay men describe the use of physical coercion as part of the act of rape that follows and they are the object of penetrative sex without consent.

Physical versus non-physical types of sexual abuse

There are significant differences between heterosexual and gay men in terms of how they experience sexual abuse: heterosexual men are more likely to experience sexual abuse in non-physical ways, whereas gay men are more likely to experience physical sexually abusive behaviours.

Heterosexual men

91 heterosexual men reported experiencing sexual abuse:

22 out of 91 heterosexual men reported sexual abuse of a physical nature (24%), including: rape, coerced sex, being hurt during sex, inappropriate/unwanted touching, not informed of a sexually transmitted infection, having unsafe sex without consent etc.

69 heterosexual men out of 91 reported experiencing sexual abuse of a non-physical nature only (76% of heterosexual men reporting any sexual abuse), including: being mocked for their sexual performance, pressure to have sex (verbal and emotional pressure, not physical), unwanted sexual demands, partner sulking if she didn't get sex etc.

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Gay men

32 out of 38 gay men reported sexual abuse of a physical nature (84%) including rape, being hurt during sex, inappropriate/unwanted touching, not informed of a sexually transmitted infection, having unsafe sex without consent, being forced to have sex with other people.

6 out of 38 gay men reported sexual abuse of a non-physical nature (16%) including being mocked for their sexual performance, pressure to have sex (verbal and emotional pressure, not physical), unwanted sexual demands, partner sulking if he didn't get sex etc.

Conclusions on sexual abuse experienced by male victims calling the helpline

Sexual abuse appears, from our data, to be much more strongly associated with men being abused by another man than men being abused by a woman. This applies particularly to rape and other sexual assault involving physical violence or force.

Heterosexual men describe sexual abuse which appears to be more emotional or psychological in nature.

It may be that men aren't telling us about sexually abusive experiences. However it may also be that there are significant differences between gay and heterosexual victims.

As we currently do not record the gender of the perpetrator but do record self identified sexuality, there is a small group of callers for which we don't have clear data, men identifying as bisexual. We are considering amending the helpline database in order to explore bisexual men's experiences more clearly and also to ensure that we are capturing clearly information from men who identify as heterosexual but have sex with other men.

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NOTE: web links are given where possible. For further information about obtaining copies of the list research, Respect members may contact the Respect Research manager Thangam.debbonaire@respect.uk.net

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