

# 7-Minute Briefing: Routine Safe Enquiry

## 1. What is domestic abuse?

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. It is not limited to people who live together. Domestic abuse is a crime, including coercive control. Children are also victims if they see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse.

Anyone can be a victim, but women, including older women, and people with physical disabilities, mental ill health, substance dependence, and/or learning disabilities are at particularly high risk.

## 7. Support

Offer support then and there to call for specialist help - if the victim is safe right now and with you, this is a good opportunity to get specialist help. Do not wait to refer after they has gone. By then, the opportunity for them to get specialist support may be missed. Ask what the victim wants and what the barriers are to safety in their view

For support on risk assessment and safety planning contact **Solace on 0203 198 4659**

One stop Shop in Bexley every Wednesday 12.30 -3pm at Central Library Bexleyheath.

## 6. Respond

When you ask the questions, you may receive disclosures of abuse. Many professionals are concerned about how to respond. If you suspect an immediate risk to their safety call 999 -you do not need consent for this. For ANY disclosure of abuse, you MUST complete the DASH risk assessment which is a standardised and evidence-based tool used nationally.

Training to use the DASH is available [here](#)

## 2. Routine Safe Enquiry

Every professional should be using 'Routine Safe Enquiry' asking service users about their experience of domestic abuse, regardless of whether there are any signs of abuse, or whether abuse is suspected. Lanyard cards with routine enquiry are available in Bexley to support you.

If you receive a positive response to any form of domestic abuse, you MUST complete a DASH risk assessment Toolkit.

If you have concerns and are unable to safely complete the DASH, please speak to your safeguarding lead or contact

Solace [bexley.community@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:bexley.community@solacewomensaid.org)

**10.4 million adults (aged 16+) in England and Wales have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16.**

## 3. Assess the risk

The DASH is a multi-agency tool used by most agencies with a focus on keeping victims and their children safe and ensuring perpetrators are proactively identified and managed. The DASH is pioneering and innovative, turning a reactive 'it's just a domestic' into a proactive 'you must ask' questions approach. Half the questions focus on coercive control and there is a focus on stalking and so-called honour-based abuse because these are the cases where women and children are more likely to be harmed and killed by abusers.

## 4. Ask

Proactive routine questions about domestic abuse, in the course of your work, will increase the chances of victims speaking out and accessing help. Bear in mind that many victims may not yet identify their experience as domestic abuse so ask exploratory questions without jargon or assumptions. Ask in private.

## 5. Questions



### Domestic abuse - Safe enquiry

- S**PACE Can you go where you want, visit family/friends, without consequences?
- T**IME Does your partner give you time limits when you go out, are you always having to check in?
- A**CTION Are you able to choose what you do? Wear the clothes you want and eat what you like?
- R**ESOURCES Do you have control over your money?  
Do you have unchecked access to a phone, car?
- E**MOTIONS Does your partner control how you feel?