

# Responding to Domestic Abuse

## Warwickshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Team



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# Refuge: Who We Are



## Global

Opened the **world's first refuge** in 1971

Service pioneer

**Advises internationally** on strategies to tackle violence



## National

**National domestic violence charity**

**Largest single provider** of domestic violence services and violence against women and girls services



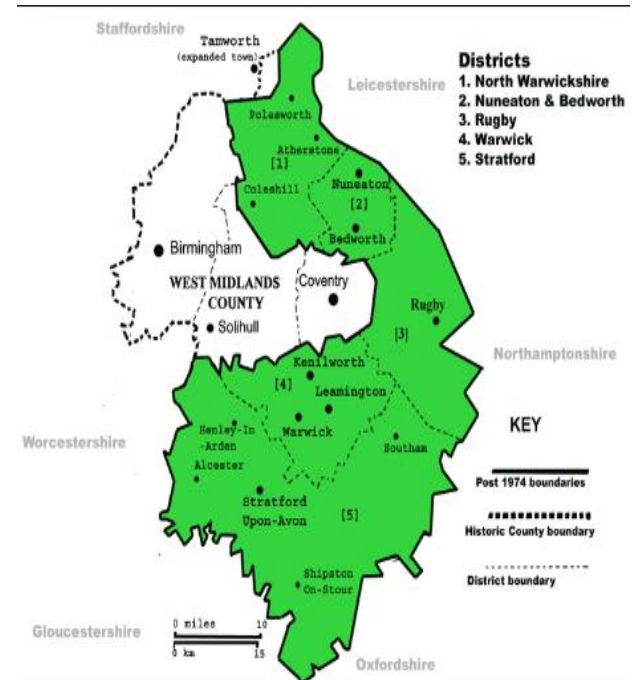
## Local

Supporting **6,000 women and children** on any given day

**Two thirds of the residents** in our refuges are children

# Warwickshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Service – what we do

- **IDVA** (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates) Managing High-risk survivors
- **Community Outreach** - Offering county-wide drop-in services and group work
- **Health Advocate Educators** –based in medical and clinical locations
- **Safe Accommodation**
- **MARAC**
- **Children and Young Persons** worker
- **EDI** specialist



# Domestic violence and abuse service Warwickshire: Refuges

## Refuge accommodation

- Safe houses for women and children experiencing domestic abuse – confidential locations; non-judgmental support
- Working with women to keep safe/safety plan, alongside providing practical and emotional support
- Trauma informed approach
- Invaluable peer support from other women in refuge
- More than just a roof over a woman's head – support that rebuilds lives



# The facts

**25%**

of women will be abused at some point in their lives

**2**

women killed by a current or former partner each week

**3**

abused women commit suicide every week

**35**

Average number of assaults before a woman seeks help

*Sources: Mooney, 1994; Homicide Statistics, 1998; Walby, 2004; Jaffe, 1982*

# The problem

**90%**

of abuse that happens in households with children is witnessed by children

**62%**

of children in households where domestic violence is happening are also directly harmed

**1/4**

of children living with high-risk abuse are under the age of three

**All** ♀

biggest issue affecting women in their lives

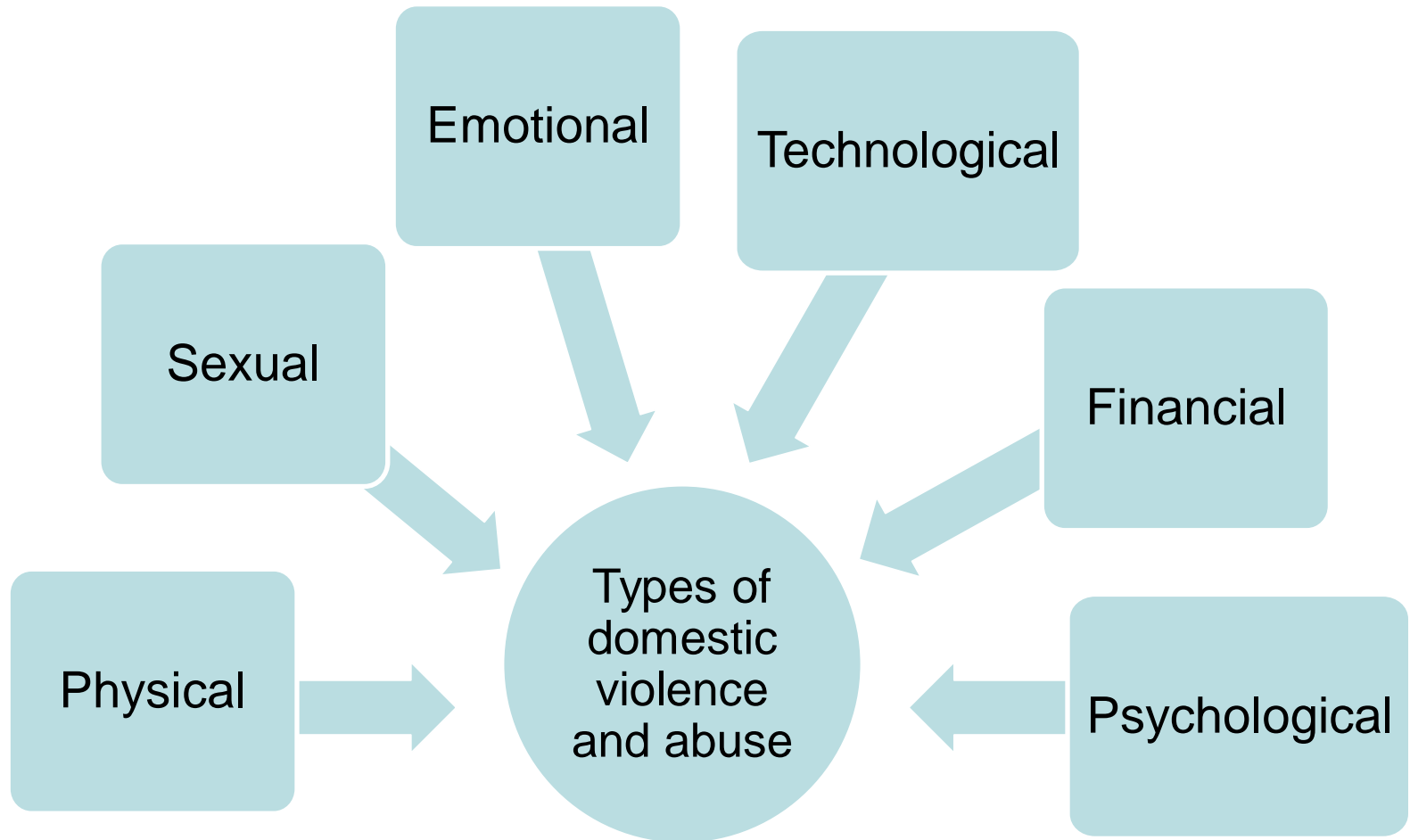
*Sources: Mooney, 1994; Homicide Statistics, 1998; Walby, 2004; Jaffe, 1982*

# About domestic violence

- **Systematic** – **purposeful** – **patterned** behaviour
- Designed to **control** and **abuse** another person
- Can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic
- Majority of domestic violence incidents perpetrated by **men** against **women**
- **1 in 4** women will experience domestic violence at some point in their life\*

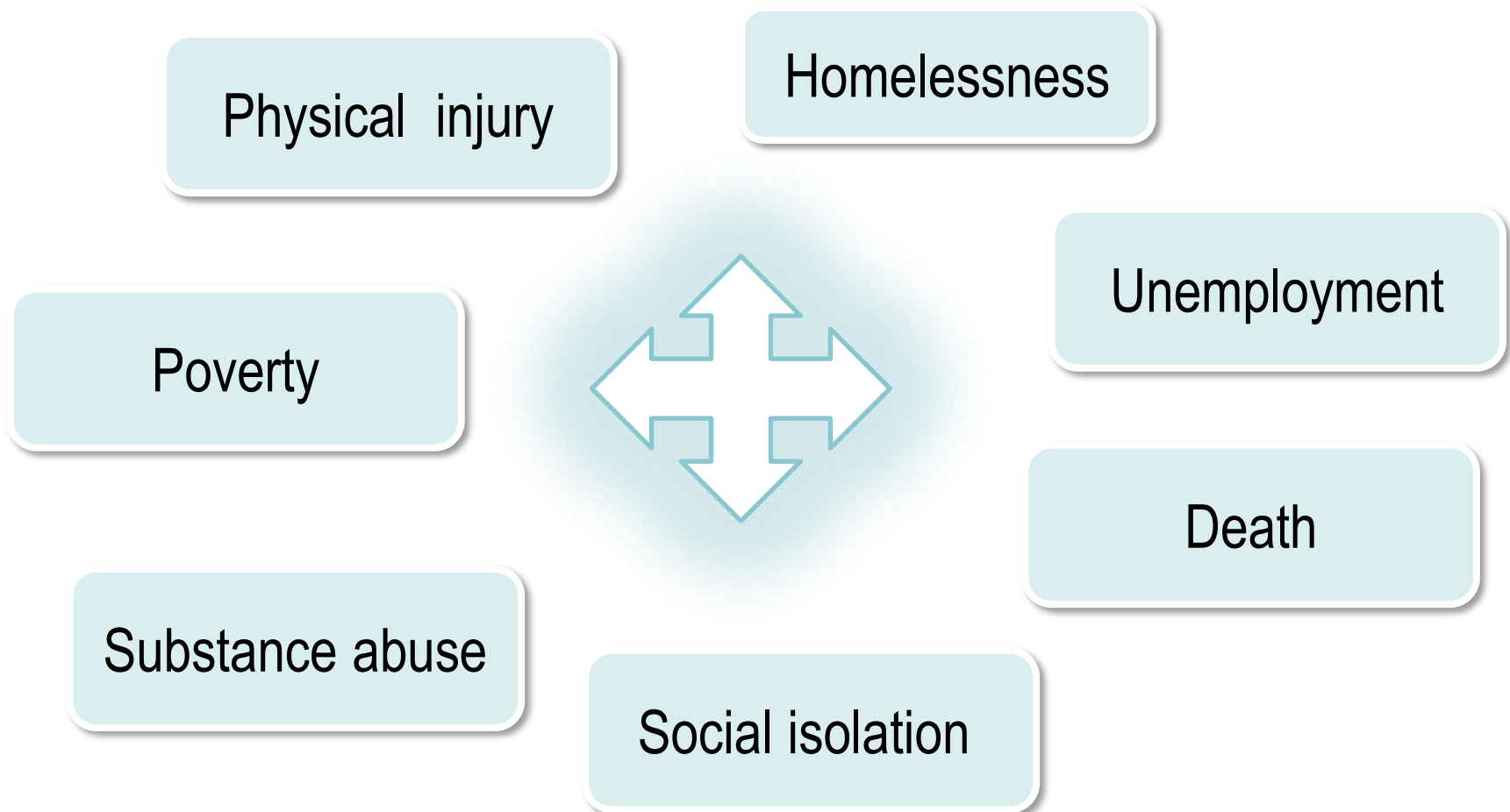
*\*Mooney, 1994*

# What is domestic violence?





# Practical impacts of domestic violence



# Emotional impacts of domestic violence

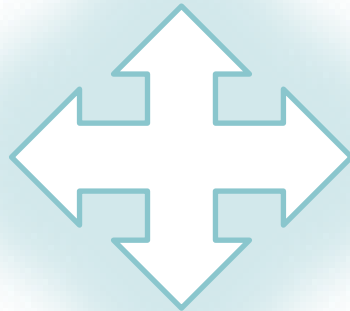
Anxiety

Suicide

Depression

Self-harm

Post-traumatic stress disorder



# Health impacts of domestic violence

## Psychological:

- Fear
- Increased likelihood of misusing drugs, alcohol or prescribed antidepressants
- Depression
- Suicide
- Sleep disturbance
- PTSD
- Anger
- Feeling of dependence
- Loss of hope
- Feelings of isolation
- Low self worth
- Panic or anxiety
- Guilt
- Loss of self confidence

# Health impacts of domestic violence

## Physical:

- Serious injury and harm
- Bruising
- Broken bones
- Burns or stab wounds
- Death
- Gynaecological problems
- Tiredness
- Recurrent STDs
- General poor health
- Poor nutrition
- Chronic pain
- Miscarriage
- Premature birth
- Self-harming behaviour

# Gendered crime

- **1 in 4 women** will experience domestic violence
- Compared to male victims of abuse, women are:
  - 3 times as likely to experience **serious or lethal violence**
  - 3 times more likely to report suffering **physical injury**
  - Twice as likely to report **chronic, ongoing assaults**
- Male to female violence made up **85.4% of reported incidents**; female to male violence accounted for 10.6%
- **89%** of those who experience four or more instances of domestic violence are women
- In a significant majority of cases where a man reports domestic abuse he has also perpetrated violence towards his partner

**Refuge runs a number of services for male victims across the country providing practical and emotional support and can suggest further specialist services**

# Why do survivors stay?



# Why don't survivors tell someone?

- Worried about the stigma surrounding abuse
- Afraid of the consequences
- Some may not recognise they are victims
- Fear of not being believed
- Cultural or religious barriers

**Maybe they have never been asked?**

# What do victims want?



- To be safe
- To be believed, taken seriously and respected
- Timely and proactive intervention
- To have their options explained to them
- To be kept informed



# The role of professionals

## Frontline workers and volunteers have a vital role to play in supporting victims of domestic violence and other forms of gender violence

- Ensure all staff receive expert **training** – to understand complex **risks** and **warning signs** of domestic/gender violence
- Take a **proactive non-judgmental** approach to supporting victims
- Ensure that staff are aware of **specialist services** in local area (refuges, IDVAs, community outreach, refuges etc.)
- Implement **referral protocols**
- Good **communication** with other agencies is essential

## Ensure it is safe to ask:

- Consider the environment – is it conducive to ask? Is it safe to ask?
- Never ask in the presence of another family member, friend or child over two years old
- Create the opportunity to ask the question
- Use an appropriate professional interpreter (never a family member or friend)
- Ask: frame the topic first, then ask the direct question

**Framing – “ask all victims about life at home and their safety ”**

# Your role – the three Rs

## **RECORD**

- You can discuss safeguarding with the MASH/Front Door team or the Domestic Violence Service Warwickshire
- Any referrals made and information given to the victim
- Domestic/gender violence in survivor's casenotes
- Complete the DASH and give access to services letter (if safe to do so)

# Your role

**REASSURE** - the client if they disclose domestic/gender violence and then assess the situation. Give clear messages about domestic/gender violence:

- Domestic/gender violence is very common
- It can happen to anyone – you are not alone
- You are not to blame for what is happening
- You have the right to live free from violence and abuse
- We can offer help and support, here, now, today



## REFER and ACTION

- If the victim discloses domestic violence, offer a referral to a specialist domestic violence service – make referral with consent and/or give the DVSW helpline number 08004081552
- Offer the Freephone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247
- Follow appropriate safeguarding procedures
- Think about the sexual assault referral unit (SARC)

# Children as victims of abuse

- The 2021 Act does not create a new offence of domestic abuse, and frontline responders should continue to consider the full range of existing legislation and safeguards to protect children.
- Section 1 of the Children and Young Person Act 1933 was amended in 2015, to include causing a child emotional or psychological suffering, including through exposure to domestic abuse.
- Additionally, for the purposes of section 31 the Children Act 1989 ‘harm’ includes any impairment of the child’s health or development as a result of seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. ‘Development’ means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; ‘ill treatment’ includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical, such as domestic abuse that involves coercive control or emotional or psychological abuse.

# Domestic homicide

Every week in England and Wales, **two women** killed by current or former partner



Leaving is the most **dangerous** time: abuser resorts to drastic measures to exert control

**75%** of domestic homicides happen at point of separation

# Warwickshire DVA Stats

**Between 01.04.2022- 31.03.2023  
WDVAS received 2969 referrals.**

**1300 children identified as living in  
abusive households or having an  
abusive parent**

**Average length of abusive  
relationship – 7.5 years**

**Survivors disclosed –  
Threats to kill 310  
Coercion and Control 530  
Stalking and Harassment 290  
Non fatal strangulation 337**



**Types of abuse disclosed –  
Physical 405  
Sexual 164  
Psychological 543  
Economic 238**



# Any questions?



# Contacts



DVSW: Domestic Violence and Abuse Service Warwickshire, Refuge

Tel: **0800 408 1552**

Monday to Friday 8:30am -8:30pm.

**Email Referrals:** [DVSW@refuge.org.uk](mailto:DVSW@refuge.org.uk)

**Secure Email Referral:** [DVSW.referrals@refuge.cjsm.net](mailto:DVSW.referrals@refuge.cjsm.net)

**National DV Helpline 24hr – 0808 2000 247**

## MARAC Referrals

[warwickshire.maracreferrals@refuge.cjsm.net](mailto:warwickshire.maracreferrals@refuge.cjsm.net)

[warwickshiremaracreferrals@refuge.org.uk](mailto:warwickshiremaracreferrals@refuge.org.uk)

**IMMEDIATE RISK OF SERIOUS HARM CALL 999**