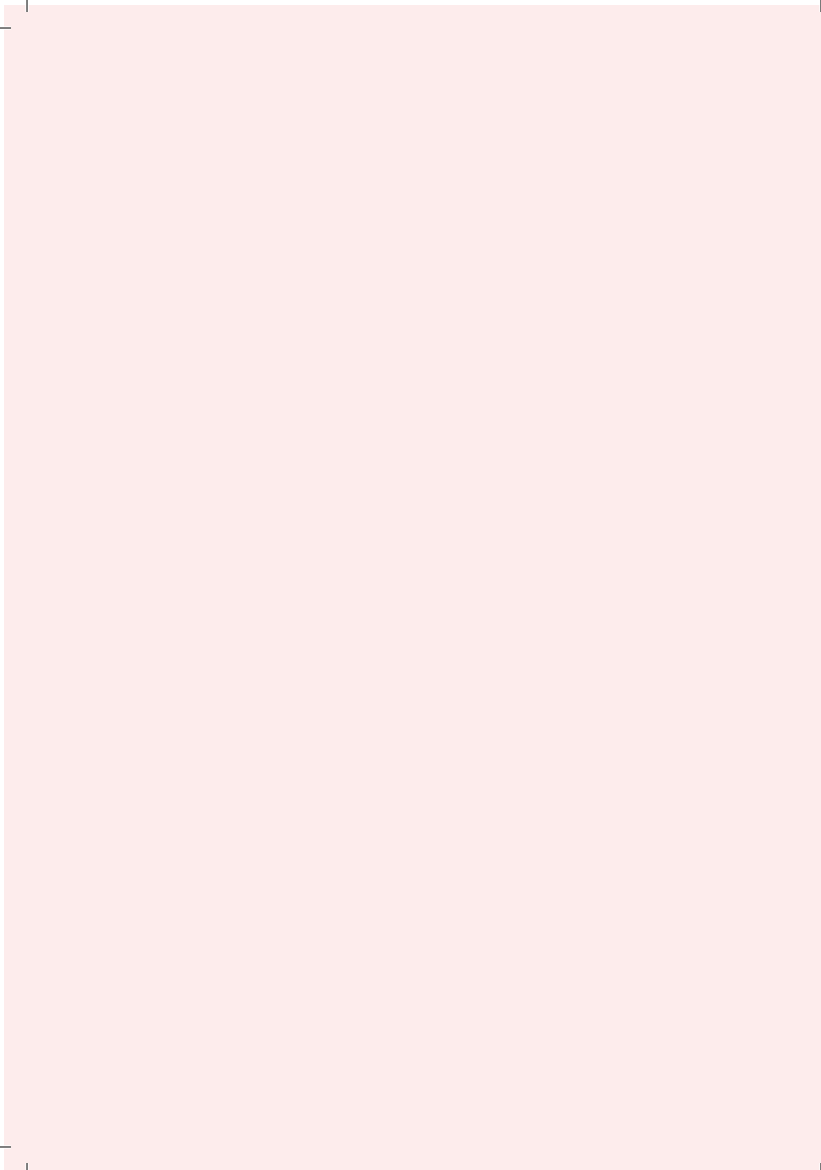


**unsafe  
relationships**

**supporting  
your friends**

**MAYOR OF LONDON**



# Is your friend experiencing violence or abuse?

This booklet is for young people worried that their friends may be in an unsafe situation.

This can include an abusive relationship, a possible forced marriage, so-called 'honour' based violence or sexual violence.

# What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence happens between people who are in, or have been in a relationship, or are family members. It includes:

- ◆ **physical abuse** hitting, punching, kicking, using weapons
- ◆ **sexual violence** forcing or pressuring someone to have sex (rape), unwanted sexual activity, touching or groping someone or making them watch pornography
- ◆ **financial abuse** taking money, controlling, not letting someone work

- ◆ **emotional abuse** making someone feel bad or scared, stalking, blackmailing, constantly checking up on someone, threats
- ◆ **social abuse** isolation, controlling who someone can and can't see

# What is forced marriage and 'honour' based violence?

- ♦ **Forced marriage** - is when one or both partners do not consent to the marriage and they are pressured or forced to agree. This can include physical, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.
- ♦ **'Honour' based violence** - is a crime or incident against a person (usually a young woman) carried out to punish them for behaviour that the family or community believe is inappropriate.

# Why does it matter to me?

Some people think it only happens to adults but it can happen at any age.

- ◆ forty per cent of teenagers know girls whose boyfriends pressured them to have sex
- ◆ forty two per cent know girls whose boyfriends have hit them
- ◆ fifty nine per cent said they didn't know how to help their friends

Usually women and girls are the victims and men and boys are the abusers, but it can happen to anyone.

# I'm worried about my friend

You should watch out for the following signs. Remember, these don't necessarily mean your friend is experiencing violence.

- ◆ depression and anxiety
- ◆ cancelling plans at the last minute
- ◆ argumentative or upset
- ◆ fearful or withdrawn
- ◆ unexplained injuries
- ◆ use of drugs and alcohol
- ◆ early sexual activity/risk taking
- ◆ getting upset when receiving texts or calls from a particular person
- ◆ afraid of making partner angry
- ◆ Makes excuses for partner's behaviour

Find out more at:

<http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>



## **Warning signs of a forced marriage or 'honour' based violence can include:**

- ◆ family history of relatives going missing, self-harming or committing suicide
- ◆ relatives making decisions on behalf of the victim
- ◆ your friend may start to truant or have extended absences from school
- ◆ your friend may tell you that they are being kept at home against their will
- ◆ a decline in their school grades
- ◆ your friend may mention death threats
- ◆ your friend may report they are being emotionally blackmailed
- ◆ your friend may suffer from depression, self harm or attempt suicide
- ◆ emotional and/or physical abuse

# What should I do?

- ◆ it can be very hard to discuss abuse and it can also be hard to support someone
- ◆ you must look after yourself as well as them
- ◆ if you want to approach them be sensitive, say 'I am worried about you because...'
- ◆ don't judge them, believe them
- ◆ let them know they're not alone, it's not their fault and you know how tough it is to talk about

- ◆ help them to see what is happening is unacceptable and that they don't have to put up with it
- ◆ decide together what to do to make things safer - this can involve making a safety plan (see next page)
- ◆ make a list of all the good things about your friend to help improve their confidence

# Make a safety plan

Here are some things you can do to be safe when you're out and about.

- ◆ ring the police (999) or a trusted adult
- ◆ think of safe places to go
- ◆ always have phones charged
- ◆ make up a code word they can use to ask for help
- ◆ try not to let them go home on their own, try to know where they are
- ◆ plan when and how to leave
- ◆ if they want to end the relationship, suggest that other people be around

# Who can I talk to?

Find an adult you trust. It can be anyone; a teacher, parent, relative, youth worker, doctor etc.

- ◆ contact a specialist - see the next page
- ◆ inform your friend what you are doing and who you are going to tell
- ◆ even if they ask you not to let anyone know, it's ok to tell an adult you trust

# Where can I get help?

**[www.direct.gov.uk/thisisabuse](http://www.direct.gov.uk/thisisabuse)**

focuses on teenage relationship abuse

**Childline** 0800 1111

**Parentlineplus** 0808 800 2222

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

**Rape Crisis** 0808 802 9999

[www.rapecrisislondon.org](http://www.rapecrisislondon.org)

**Havens** Camberwell: 020 3299 1599

Paddington: 020 3312 1101

Whitechapel: 020 7247 4787

**Men's Advice Line** 0808 801 0327

[www.mensadviceline.org.uk](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk)

For a full range of services in London, visit:

[www.london.gov.uk/knowwheretogo](http://www.london.gov.uk/knowwheretogo)

