

Help for male survivors of abuse

EVA Services - part of NHS Lanarkshire

HELP FOR MALE SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

This leaflet is for men who have experienced abuse. It gives some information about abuse, and also where to get more information or help, if you want this.

The person who abused you might be a man or a woman. They may be someone you know, an intimate partner or a stranger. The abuse may have happened in your home, in an institution (such as in care), in a familiar environment or elsewhere. It may have been a one-off incident or something that happened over a long period or on different occasions.

Whatever happened and whoever harmed you, you have a right to be safe and to live without abuse.

HELP FROM NHS LANARKSHIRE

Anyone, of any age or background can be abused. Whether you experienced the abuse a long time ago or recently, it may affect your health and general wellbeing. Depending on what happened, it could be important to get a check-up and medical treatment to prevent any long-term health problems (especially if the abuse involved rape or sexual assault). Because such abuse is common, staff in NHS Lanarkshire, particularly those working in mental health, sexual health, addictions and A&E are being trained to ask all patients about abuse, as a matter of routine. If you tell them that someone harmed you, they will respond sensitively and sympathetically.

ABOUT ABUSE

In this leaflet, we use the term ‘abuse’ to mean to various types of harm which you might have experienced such as:

- ◆ Childhood sexual abuse
- ◆ Domestic abuse
- ◆ Rape and sexual assault
- ◆ Prostitution (performing sexual acts for payment)
- ◆ Forced marriage (often young men with learning or other disabilities)

It is hard to know how many men are affected. Most abusers do not admit what they have done; and many men who are victims of abuse do not tell anyone. If you have been abused, you may feel frightened, embarrassed or ashamed or think that you will be judged or not be believed. Like other men we speak to, you may find it hard to admit that you have been a victim. But such abuse is more common than you might think. Evidence from various sources shows that:

- ◆ More than one in ten boys have experienced childhood sexual abuse (90-95% of sexual abuse is perpetrated by men)
- ◆ 3% of men experience sexual assault as adults
- ◆ 15% of cases of forced marriage reported to the Forced Marriage Unit involve men
- ◆ Around one in five incidents of ‘domestic abuse’ reported to Police Scotland last year involved a male victim (gay and heterosexual relationships)

HOW ABUSE MIGHT AFFECT YOU

Abuse has many effects. These can be physical and emotional. They include pain, injury, fear, anger, sadness, shame, embarrassment, mistrust and symptoms of trauma. If you have been abused in a same-sex intimate relationship, you may have been raped, been hurt during sex and been threatened with or experienced other forms of sexual violence. This can lead to injury and sexually-transmitted infections (STIs).

Everyone reacts differently to abuse. You may feel anxious, frightened, exhausted, confused, isolated, depressed or suicidal. These feelings may be made worse by:

- ◆ Trying to hide what is happening from others
- ◆ Believing that you are to blame for the abuse
- ◆ Thinking you are powerless

It is natural to think like this because the person who abused you may have told you that you are to blame. And you may have been powerless because of their control over you.

If you have experienced any form of abuse, however you react is a natural response to harm. Your response and the short and long-term effects can depend on what happened; when it happened; who abused you; and how frequently. If you were sexually abused as a child, being sexually assaulted as an adult can re-awaken memories and feelings about what happened in childhood. So, the effects of a recent sexual assault, for example, can be very distressing and can result in symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares and panic attacks.

How you are affected and how you cope with what happened can depend on your own circumstances; the support you have around you; and whether you got the help you needed at the right time.

Although there is no typical reaction, research shows that men who are abused may:

- ◆ Feel great shame
- ◆ Feel very isolated because of a lack of support
- ◆ Be angry and aggressive
- ◆ Damage things
- ◆ Hurt themselves
- ◆ Be prone to addiction (drugs and alcohol), unsafe sex and/or extreme risk-taking behaviour
- ◆ Be concerned about their sexuality (for example they may think that abuse has ‘made them gay’ or is caused by being gay)
- ◆ Be concerned about how they are viewed by other men/society
- ◆ Get involved in offending behaviour

Men who have experienced abuse have told us that they have reacted in many different ways including withdrawing from friends and family; self-harming; becoming impulsive and taking all sorts of risks. You may recognise some or none of this in the way you react.

GETTING INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE AND/OR GETTING HELP

If the abuser, the abuse and its after effects are making you feel frightened or upset or unwell in any way, it may help to speak to someone who understands. They can help you to be safe and also to find ways of coping with the experience.

It may be hard for you to feel that you can trust anyone, especially if you were abused as a child.

The person who abused you may have threatened to harm or expose you in some way if you tell anyone.

There are some phone numbers and websites at the end of this leaflet. You can speak to the services listed without giving your name; and some offer text, email and web-based support too. Some of the websites have self-help materials which could help you find out more about, and ways to manage, anger, panic attacks, flashbacks or other reactions. Some have accounts by other survivors which you might find helpful to read.

WHAT NHS LANARKSHIRE CAN OFFER YOU

Our staff are trained to respect all patients. It is up to you to decide whether and how much to tell us. And you can go at your own pace. If you tell us that you have been abused we will:

- ◆ Believe what you say
- ◆ Accept and not judge you
- ◆ See you in a safe place
- ◆ Try to provide a female or male worker depending on your choice
- ◆ Find a professional interpreter to assist if necessary
- ◆ Explore options with you
- ◆ Not tell you what to do

We will want to make sure that you are as safe as possible. We will ask you about what is happening and listen to what you say. We can then help you to work out how the abuse is affecting you now and what might help.

We will treat what you say in confidence but we may need to share information if you, a child or another adult is at serious risk of harm.

Remember:

- ◆ Abuse is NOT your fault
- ◆ The person who abused you is responsible
- ◆ There is never an excuse for abuse
- ◆ You deserve to be treated with respect
- ◆ You are not alone
- ◆ There are people who want to help you

MORE INFORMATION

There are services which want to help you, whether the abuse happened recently or a long time ago. The ones listed below can give you free and confidential advice and support. They all have useful information and links on their websites as well as details of text and email support and live chat.

You can also contact EVA Services which is part of NHS Lanarkshire. It can tell you about local and national services for men who have experienced abuse. Tel: 01236 707767 (office hours).

See also: Information and help after rape and sexual assault:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/13141931/0

CONTACTS AND WEBSITES

Archway Glasgow

Sensitive support, physical and forensic examination and counselling for men and women (over 13) who have been raped or sexually assaulted in the past 7 days.

www.sandyford.org/do-you-want-a-service/archway-if-you-have-been-sexually-assaulted-or-raped-in-the-last-7-days.aspx

0141 211 8175 (anytime)

Breathing Space

Free, confidential phone and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety. Targeted at young men and people experiencing emotional distress and their families.

www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

0800 83 85 87 (Monday to Thursday 6pm to 2am; weekend Friday 6pm to Monday 6am)

Broken Rainbow

Helpline for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse.

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk

0800 999 5428/0300 999 5428 (Monday and Thursday 10am to 8pm; Tuesday and Wednesday 10am to 5pm)

DYN Wales

Information for and about men who are experiencing domestic abuse.

www.dynwales.org

Forced Marriage Unit

Help for victims of forced marriage.

www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

fmu@fco.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7008 0151 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Out of hours: 020 7008 1500 (ask for the Global Response Centre)

In Care Survivors Service Scotland

Trauma informed counselling and advocacy support service for adults who suffered childhood abuse in care and their families.

www.incaresurvivors.org.uk

0800 121 6027 (9am to 11am Monday to Friday)

LGBT Youth Scotland: domestic abuse project

Information for young people who experience domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence.

www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/domestic-abuse

0141 552 7425 or 0131 555 40/39

Men's Advice Line

Confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic violence from a partner or ex-partner (or from other family members).

www.mensadvice.org.uk

0808 801 0327 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Police Scotland

www.scotland.police.uk

Phone the police on 101 or on 999 if it is an emergency.

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline

Free and confidential support and information by phone or email for anyone affected by sexual violence, no matter when or how it happened.

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

08088 01 03 02 (daily 6pm to midnight)

Roam

Services for men who have sex with men in public sex environments and for men 'engaged in the sex industry'.

NHS Lothian

www.roam-outreach.com

0131 536 1773/0777 462 8227

Sandyford, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Full sexual health services and links to specialist services for men.

www.sandyford.org

Say Women (Resource Service)

Short/medium term support to young women and men, aged 16-25, who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse and rape.

www.say-women.co.uk

0141 552 5803

Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline

Help and information on options and services.

www.domesticabuse.co.uk

0800 027 1234 (anytime)

Steve Retson Project

Services for men who have sex with men. Also suitable for men who have experienced forms of gender-based violence by a same-sex partner.

www.sandyford.org

Survivor Scotland

Information on childhood sexual abuse.

www.survivorsuk.org

Survivors UK

For male survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

www.survivorscotland.org.uk

0845 122 1201

Terrence Higgins Trust

HIV and sexual health services.

www.tht.org.uk

0141 332 3838

EVA Services

Glenalmond Building, Coathill Hospital, Hospital Street, Coatbridge
Tel: 01236 707767

Email: evaservices@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk



www.patientopinion.org.uk

Text: Shirley Henderson
www.shirleyhenderson.co.uk

Acknowledgement:
Julian Heng, NHS Greater
Glasgow and Clyde

NHS Lanarkshire - for local services
and the latest health news visit
www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk

NHS Lanarkshire General
Enquiry Line: 0300 3030 243

NHS inform - The national health
information service for Scotland.
www.nhsinform.co.uk
Phone: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information
in another language or
format, please contact the
NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry
Line on 0300 3030 243 or e-mail
info2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

Please see confidentiality leaflet
for more information on our
confidentiality policy.

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