

# FACT SHEET THIRTY SEVEN

## ALCOHOL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*“Research shows that alcohol is involved in between 40-70% of domestic violence cases.”*

### What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is controlling behaviour and includes all kinds of physical, sexual and emotional abuse within all kinds of intimate relationships. The perpetrators of domestic violence or abuse are usually men and the victims or survivors are usually women and children that they know. It includes:

- Punching and slapping
- Kicking and hair pulling
- Biting and pinching
- Pushing and shoving
- Being forced to have sex
- Being beaten or cut with other objects
- Disrespect, neglect and emotional blackmail
- Verbal abuse and swearing
- Being prevented from going out or seeing people – being isolated
- Lying, harassment and putting pressure on you through threats

*1:4 women experience domestic violence at some point in their lives and 1:10 will be experiencing domestic violence today*

### **Psychological and Physical effects of Alcohol**

**Anxiety** – alcohol reduces anxiety and lessens the fear of consequences, increasing risk taking and daredevil activities.

**Paranoia** – alcohol can cause paranoia, jealousy and sometimes delusions, especially during withdrawal, which can result in innocent gestures being seen as a threat or an insult.

**Mood swings and Depression** - alcohol has a depressant effect in the long term and can make people more irritable, impatient and intolerant.

**Judgement and Reasoning** – alcohol affects the areas of the brain involved with decision making and drawing conclusions. It also affects how we see and react to environmental cues and interpret situations.

*Sexual drive* – alcohol can affect an individual's sex drive and can cause impotence in males, both of which may lead to frustration and partner blaming.

## **The Wider Effects of Alcohol Misuse**

*Forgetfulness* – alcohol reduces the amount of vitamin B in the body, which plays a vital role in alcohol induced memory loss. Often heavy drinking or binge drinking can cause an individual to forget important things or neglect their duties.

*Time Commitments* – the amount of time the individual dedicates to drinking may leave partners and children feeling neglected, leading to confrontations. Other factors such as guilt or denial may make the situation worse.

*Financial Situation* – drinking can be an expensive pastime, other family members may begin to get angry and resentful if they feel that they have to go without to fund the drinker. Stressful situations may arise when debts are being incurred and bills not being paid.

## **No Excuses**

Memory loss the next day is no excuse, an individual knows exactly what they are doing at the time. Memory loss, associated with the destruction of vitamin B by alcohol, takes place after the drinking session.

Apologies and promises are often broken, in no circumstances does anyone deserve to be hurt.

Domestic violence is a crime. People are more likely to think they can get away with abusing someone they are emotionally involved with, if the attack had been on a stranger it would be classed as ABH or assault.

## **Drugs and Domestic Violence**

Drugs can have a profound effect on a person's behaviour and the way they see and respond to the world around them.

Withdrawal from some drugs can affect mood in a similar way to alcohol withdrawal leaving the individual feeling depressed, tired, restless, irritable and agitated.

## **Effects on Children**

According to the NSPCC of children living with domestic violence:

100% are emotionally abused

48% are psychologically abused

26% are physically abused

13% are accidentally injured

7% are sexually abused

Children living with domestic violence may:

- Express behavioural problems
- Be more likely to truant or have difficulties at school.
- Turn to alcohol or drugs
- Self-harm or attempt suicide.

*Alcohol should never be used, or accepted, as an excuse for violent or abusive behaviour. Not everyone that drinks alcohol is violent or abusive and addressing Alcohol Misuse alone may not be enough in itself to prevent future domestic violence or abuse.*

**If you are worried for yourself or anyone you know please contact someone on one of the numbers below:**

<b>apas</b>	0845 762 6316 (Lo-call)
<b><u>FRANK</u></b> National Drugs Helpline (24hr)	0800 776600
<b><u>Women's Aid</u></b> 24hr Helpline	0808 800 0340/ 0808 800 0341 (Text phone)
<b><u>Childline</u></b>	0800 1111
<b>Domestic Violence Helpline</b> (24hr)	0870 599 5443
<b><u>Victim Support</u></b>	0115 844 5094

**apas** 36 Park Row, Nottingham NG1 6GR (Freepost NG4824)

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