

I'm just a kid, what can I do?

Nobody, whatever their age, should be a victim of domestic abuse. There are too many children and young people trapped in frightening situations that they feel they can't escape from.

For young people especially it may not be happening at home – it could be your boyfriend or girlfriend who is abusing you. But if you are in this situation, it's important to remember that no matter who is being violent and abusive, it's not your fault. You can change what is happening and live a different life if you want to - you just need to take the first step and talk to someone.

There are four types of abuse:

- **Neglect** is the most common form of abuse and is when your basic needs like food, clothing and warmth are not met properly.
- **Physical abuse** is when someone physically hurts you - such as slapping, biting, kicking and punching.
- **Emotional abuse** can be a lack of attention and love, or too much spiteful and cruel attention.
- **Sexual abuse** is when someone treats you in a sexual way when you don't want them to.

If you think you are being abused you must tell someone. There are people you can talk to in confidence and they will help you. You can talk to a teacher, your school child protection co-ordinator, a student advisor/counsellor, an adult you trust or your doctor. You can call Childline on 0800 1111 or get further information from the [Childline website](#), or you can call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or visit the [NSPCC website](#). You can also visit [The Hideout](#), an award winning Women's Aid children's website.

If someone you know is being abused it is important to tell someone.

There are also local numbers you can call:

- Youth Counselling Service - 01724 281 824
- Childline - 0800 1111
- Careline - 0208 514 5444
- Domestic Violence Police Officers – 0845 60 60 222
- Scunthorpe Women's Refuge - 01724 289299
- North Lincolnshire Children and Young People Service - 01724 296500
- Roof (accommodation for young people) - 01724 281468
- Housing Advice - 01724 747654
- National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 2000247
- Forced Marriages - 020 7008 0151

In an emergency always dial 999.

Domestic abuse is very serious and very scary, but perhaps most frightening of all it is very common. If you are in trouble, or maybe your parents are fighting, seek help and advice as soon as possible. There are lots of people who can help children and young people in your situation:

- *Police* - if you are frightened always call the police. The Domestic Violence Liaison Officers are there to help and can be contacted through the police on 0845 60 60 222. They will listen to you and advise you on what to do. Remember though, if you are really scared you should always dial 999.
- *Scunthorpe Women's Refuge* - you don't have to go into the refuge to get help and advice. Call them on 01724 289299.
- If your mum and dad are fighting it will affect you in different ways - you can get support from a trusted adult, a teacher, the child protection co-ordinator at your school or the *Youth Counselling Service* on 01724 281824.
- There's also the *social work duty team* who are there to help on 01724 296500 or 296550.

Getting help

It is not easy to seek help. You may feel frightened, ashamed, confused and guilty. But remember:

- You are not to blame
- You are not alone
- You have the right to live free from abuse and from the fear of abuse
- You can get help, whether you want to leave home or not

The first step towards getting help is recognising and acknowledging what is happening. The following questions may help you decide what to do. Remember that it is your choice at all times.

- Have you ever been shoved, slapped, punched, kicked or hit?
- Have you ever been called names, humiliated and made to feel worthless?
- Have you believed them when they promised not to do it again, but they did?
- Have you ever believed that you deserve to be beaten?
- Have your friendships and your relationship with your family changed?
- Do you feel isolated from them?
- Do you feel ashamed that you stay in an abusive relationship?
- Are you frightened of upsetting someone and live your life walking on eggshells?
- Are you told that you are watched and followed?
- Are your telephone calls checked?
- Do you have to account for every penny or is your money restricted?
- Do you have to account for your time and actions when you have been alone?
- Is your partner jealous? Are you accused of turning people against them?
- Have you ever been forced to do something against your will? This may be sexual acts or illegal acts.

These questions and others are difficult to answer and face up to. But there are many agencies that can help you answer them and provide the confidential, non-judgemental support and advice that you need.

In an emergency always dial 999.