

# msm

MUTUAL  
SUPPORT  
MAGAZINE

LOVE  
DOESN'T  
HURT

NEVER  
SAY  
NEVER

CHRISTMAS EDITION

## 5 THINGS TO AVOID

WHEN SUPPORTING  
SOMEONE WHO'S  
STRUGGLING

STALKING IMPACTS  
ON VICTIMS

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF  
I'M WORRIED ABOUT  
A FRIEND'S MENTAL HEALTH?

DVUK YOUTH  
REPRESENTATIVE

LAUREN  
HANTON





BROWSE OUR  
**LOVE**  
DOESN'T HURT  
T-SHIRT COLLECTION



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# LOVE DOESN'T HURT BEANIE HATS



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# MUTUAL SUPPORT MAGAZINE

IS THE ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UK CIC - A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION SET UP TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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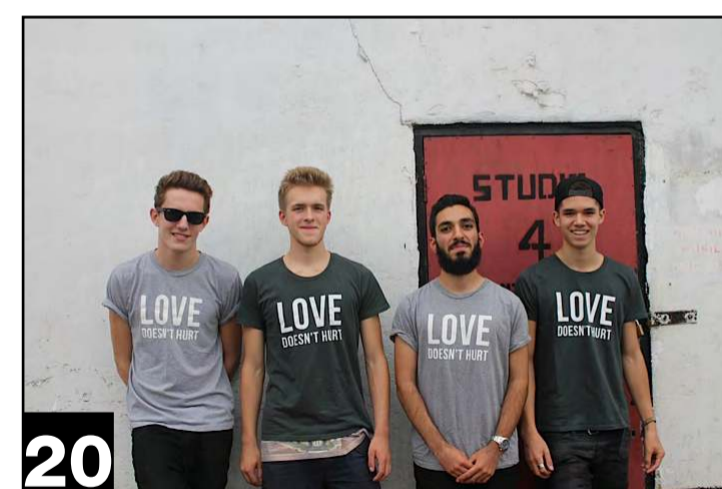
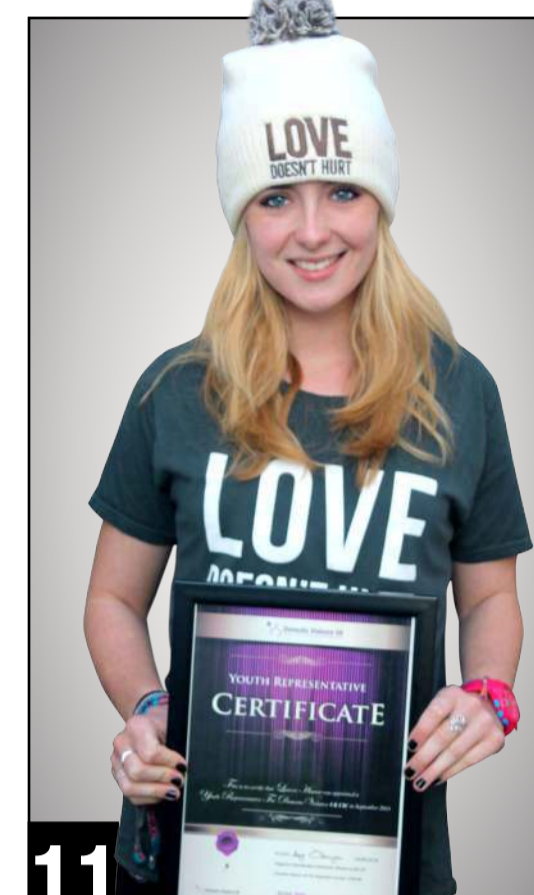


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### Mutual Support Magazine



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# STALKING IMPACTS ON VICTIMS

BY JENNIFER PERRY

## IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Stalking is a brutal and devastating crime. It robs people of their life. The impact on victims is great with many suffering long term effects or PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder). Victims need help to protect themselves, stalking to cease and to recover from the crime.

1. Denial, confusion, self-doubt, frustration, guilt, embarrassment, self-blame
2. Apprehension, fear, anxiety about safety self/others/pets
3. Isolated, helpless, panic attacks, agoraphobia
4. Depression and stress (or symptoms related to those conditions)
5. Poor concentration, memory
6. Suicidal or homicidal thoughts
7. Hyper vigilance, easily frightened, foreboding

8. Changes in personality e.g. withdrawn, angry, irritable, short tempered
9. PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

## IMPACT ON WORK OR SCHOOL

Any time someone goes through a difficult time it can impact their work but stalking creates additional issues that can effect a person's ability to work. The long term implications are significant. It can stop a victim's career progressing or force them out of school or work. The financial consequences can carry on for years or simply never recover.

1. Afraid to go to work or school
2. Stalker attacks the victim's professional reputation making it difficult to carry on their work

3. The stalker activity starts to effect the company's performance
4. Employer becomes concerned about safety of other employees encourage victim to leave
5. Deteriorating school or work performance due to stress and worry
5. Victim is fired or feels they have to leave work due to inability to perform
7. Having to take increased leave either due to stress or legal action
8. Victim's change careers or become unemployed

## IMPACT ON PHYSICAL HEALTH

The emotional impact of stalking soon has a knock on effect to the physical well being of stalking victims.

1. Insomnia, effects from lack of sleep e.g. clumsiness

2. Self medicating with drink or drugs which can impact on health or decisions
3. Stress or panic related problems such as ulcers, palpitations, sweating, shortness of breath, dizziness, headaches, high blood pressure
4. Weight loss or gain
5. Sexual dysfunction
6. Not taking care of appearance

## IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL LIFE

Often an abuser's objective is to isolate the victim. A victim of stalking develops trust and intimacy issues which can have impact on current and future relationships. It can also be difficult for those around the victim to understand what the victims is experience and why they act the way they do.



## JENNIFER PERRY'S PROFILE

Jennifer Perry is an internet safety expert and consumer advocate. She wrote the first UK Internet Safety Guide for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Stalking in 2008. In 2012, she wrote new National Guidelines to Digital Stalking: Technology Risks for Victims on behalf of the Network for Surviving Stalking and Women's Aid.

Website: <http://www.Digital-Trust.Org>

1. Victim's relationship with their children often suffer especially if there has been previous domestic violence and the children are not given their own care and support
2. Victims become insecure, question their judgement about both people and situations
3. They lose their ability to trust others, especially if they do not know who is doing the stalking
4. Problems with physical and emotional intimacy
5. They begin avoiding usual activities and become withdrawn
6. Victims can be come even more isolated because they try to protect others and keep them from worrying
7. Sadly, others avoid the victim because they don't believe the victim, they are unable to cope with the victim's mental state or as a direct consequence of third party victimisation
8. Victims that feel compelled to move, changing their telephone number, name or even their appearance can lose touch with people

## FINANCIAL DAMAGE

The financial impact can be significant on all stalking victims. There can be direct and indirect financial loss caused by this crime. The damage can last for years.

1. Costs for legal advice
2. Loss from fraud or identity theft
3. Loss of wages due to sick leave, leaving job or changing career
4. Expense of increasing home and personal security
5. Having to repair criminal damage done by the abuser
6. Cost of psychological counselling or medical treatment
7. Expense of relocating

# DVUK YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

LAUREN HANTON

**WE WANT TO WELCOME LAUREN HANTON AS OUR FIRST YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UK**

## LAUREN'S PROFILE

Lauren is currently studying for her A Levels in History, Geography and English Literature.

When she's not studying she works as a waitress and runs a blog ([notbeyonce.blogspot.co.uk](http://notbeyonce.blogspot.co.uk)). She completed the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race this year.

Human rights are an issue close to Lauren's heart and she has become increasingly involved in the 'Love Doesn't Hurt' campaign.

Lauren hopes to study History at university before working as a Human Rights campaigner.



# NEVER SAY NEVER

BY SAM BILLINGHAM

**A**s you grow and flourish as a survivor, don't think that every person you meet later on in life is a perpetrator because they aren't. Of course, you will have trust issues but that is because of how you have been treated now because of you as a person.

You need to learn to trust yourself again because you are important and you matter.

You will cope, survive and live without your perpetrator, you certainly did before you met them, the only difference now is, domestic abuse makes you stronger.

Your confidence and self esteem will have been sucked from you but you and you will get this back along with your independence too.

The healing process is the best journey of your life because not only will it make you stronger as a person but also show your perpetrator what you are capable of. It will be your best journey but also a rock one, it won't always be smooth, it will be bumpy but the good days will outweigh the bad because you are in control again, you are in the driving seat and wherever the destination might be is down to you.

Your perpetrator won't know how to cope, deal or react to your rejection but that is not your fault or problem because the complex cycle will not change, no matter how many lies or false promises your perpetrator makes. Your perpetrator won't make your life as a survivor easy but they will make you become a stronger person. They will try and stop you moving forward and throw as many barriers at you, you just need to be strong enough to move them to all you through and reach your aims and goals in your life.

It's important you start your journey by replacing the negativity with positivity, all those

## SAM BILLINGHAM BIO

Sam is a Survivor of domestic abuse, wanting to make a difference to the world

Blog:

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[www.survivorsofdomesticabuse.co.uk](http://www.survivorsofdomesticabuse.co.uk)

**IT'S IMPORTANT YOU START YOUR JOURNEY BY REPLACING THE NEGATIVITY WITH POSITIVITY, ALL THOSE THINGS YOUR PERPETRATOR SAID YOU COULDN'T OR WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO, LOOK IN THE MIRROR, USE YOUR BEST ACCESSORY, YOUR SMILE AND TELL YOURSELF YOU CAN DO IT AND YOU WILL DO IT.**

things your perpetrator said you couldn't or wouldn't be able to do, look in the mirror, use your best accessory, your smile and tell yourself you can do it and you will do it.

The small steps you start with on your journey, will make all the difference at your destination. Start with wearing the clothes you want, speak to who you want, go where you want.

Don't ever think your journey will always be this way, it will change, never say never. You will be in control again and you will reach that light at the end of the tunnel.

# 5 THINGS TO AVOID WHEN SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO'S STRUGGLING



BY PHIL HAIGH

**W**hen someone we care about comes to us for help or in distress we naturally want to help them and to take away the pain in whatever way we can. However, it's highly unlikely that we can just take away the distress that they are feeling and this can leave us feeling powerless and vulnerable ourselves as a result.

In seeking to fix the problem quickly we often need to rid ourselves of our own difficult feelings in the process rather than validating what they are actually saying. In this position it's much easier for us to react to our own feelings, whilst losing sight

of those we wish to help and potentially being insensitive as a result. We might then wonder why they get frustrated with us or seem offended when we set out to help.

Every one of us is capable of putting our foot in it and being unintentionally insensitive, however, as odd as it may sound, being aware of your own feelings can have a major impact on how supportive you are able to be.

If you are able to recognise your own feelings and not react impulsively, it can help you avoid getting lost in your own difficult stuff or accidentally upsetting someone you wish to help.

Here are just 5 examples of ways in which we can be unintentionally insensitive to someone seeking support:

## 1 OH YOU POOR THING, AT LEAST...

**The sympathiser** – Sympathy is well-intentioned and shows that you understand that they are struggling, but instead of creating a mutual connection between you, where they feel understood, it effectively does the opposite. By being sympathetic we recognise there is distress and we want to help, but instead we create distance from the person by dismissing what they are saying.

We are essentially saying 'I know you feel bad but I can't carry that feeling with you.'

This is sometimes made worse by our spinning it round and offering up something positive. Unfortunately this doesn't work, for example if you have ever had a relationship end with someone you still have strong feelings for, and someone tells you that there are plenty more fish in the sea; it can feel as though the strength of your feelings is being dismissed. We can effectively hear 'Get over it' when what we want to hear is recognition of how hard it is, that someone else has experienced this and it's alright to feel this bad.





**SIMILARLY IF SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT HAS BUILT UP THE COURAGE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING WHICH THEY ARE PARTICULARLY EMBARRASSED OR ASHAMED OF, IT CAN BE QUITE A SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM TO HEAR AND AGAIN LEAVE YOU FEELING VULNERABLE YOURSELF.**



## **2** WHAT DID I SAY? YOU CAN'T SAY YOU WEREN'T WARNED...

**The blame game** – Your friend's been messed around and they're feeling really upset and low. What might be the natural reaction? Understandably we're angry about it and we want to vent our feelings.

Anger can be such an uncomfortable feeling that you need to get rid of it as soon as possible. So you might vent at your friend as if you are disappointed in them, especially if they didn't take advice you've pushed upon them and you feel vindicated.

Or you might vent about the person who has wronged them. The problem being that this takes you away from actually acknowledging what they are saying to you, that they are hurting and need to be heard and understood.

## **3** BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND, YOU ALWAYS SEEM SO CONFIDENT TO ME?

**The pedestal fall** – Perhaps you have one of those friends that you look up to and admire for their tenacity and enthusiasm; or maybe you know someone who is always there to listen and you've learnt to rely on them. The sudden realisation that they are just as vulnerable as the rest of us can shake you up and leave you feeling vulnerable yourself.

You may be left wondering, if they're struggling, what chance have the rest of us? As a result you may feel let down by their sudden vulnerability and overwhelmed with your own, which can come across as you being disappointed in them rather than supportive.

## **4** OH GOD, THAT'S HORRIBLE, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN COPE WITH THAT

**The shame role reversal** – Similarly if someone you care about has built up the courage to tell you something which they are particularly embarrassed or ashamed of, it can be quite a shock to the system to hear and again leave you feeling vulnerable yourself. You may even experience feelings of shame through your own empathy; imagining what it might be like to be in their shoes, which can lead to an over reaction.

Your own outburst of horror can lead to a role reversal where the person seeking support feels more shame because of your reaction and may now feel the need to make you feel better, effectively reversing the situation.

## **5** YEAH THAT'S NOT GOOD, BUT WAIT TILL YOU HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO ME...

**One-upmanship** – There is a subtle but very important difference between connecting with someone and helping to normalise their feelings or dismissing their feelings with some of your own. If you find yourself 'one-upping' someone who is telling you they are finding things hard, consider for a moment what's happening in your conversation.

Your eagerness to share your own experience can over ride your willingness to listen and its likely you are talking about a past experience whereas they are in the midst of theirs. It would be better to acknowledge that you know how hard it can be rather than to suggest it was harder for you.

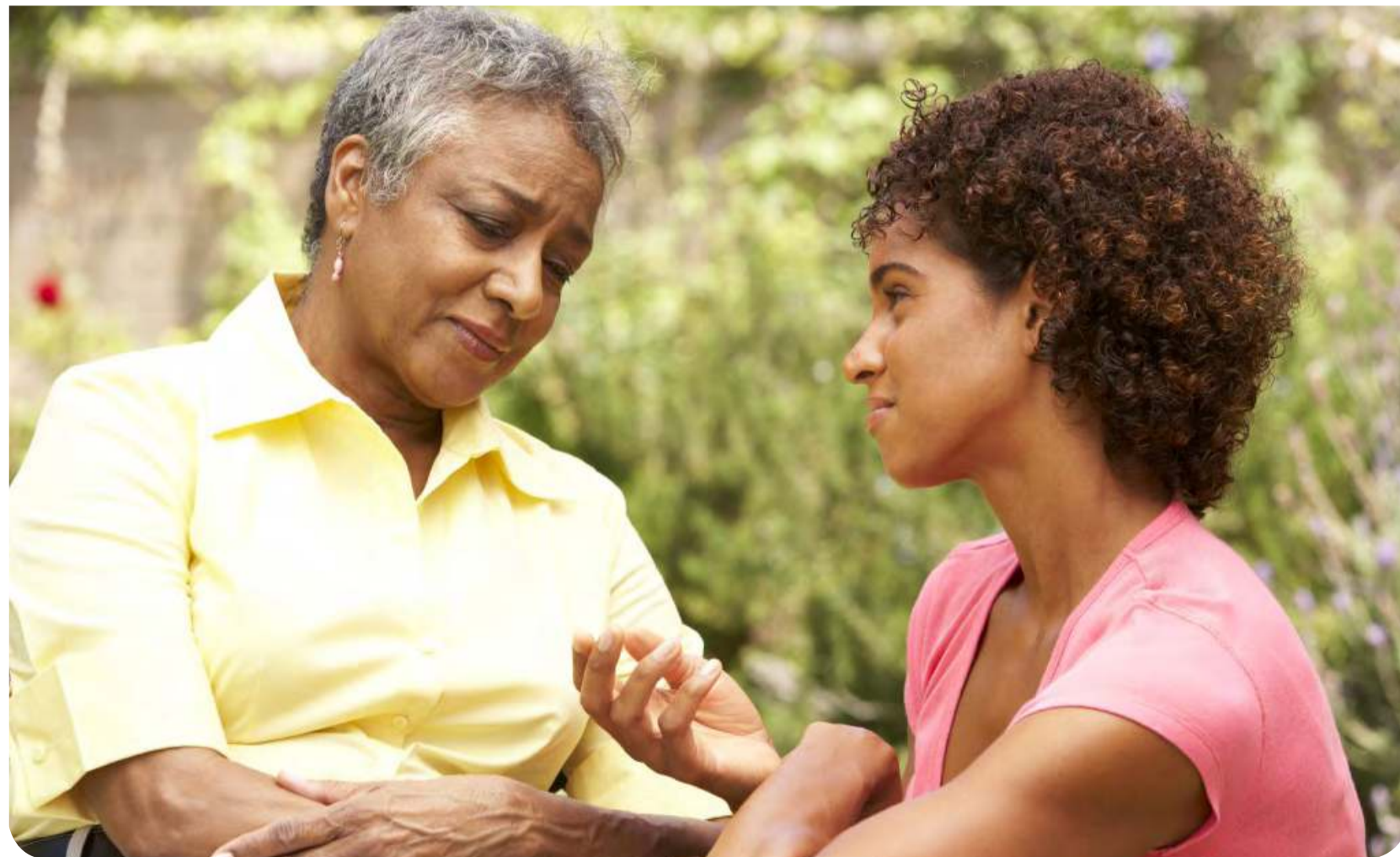
## EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY...

It's easy to think that out of context these responses can seem really harsh. But in reality we have all likely said something unintentionally clumsy with good intent. These responses are more likely than we might like to admit and you may have noticed they also have something in common; a difficulty with allowing ourselves to experience vulnerability.

It's not something we are naturally accustomed to, neither should it be as it's only natural we seek to avoid such feelings. However, it is precisely the capacity to experience feeling vulnerable and not instantly react to it with a knee jerk which enables us to help others feel better about themselves. Take a moment and think of something which you

are embarrassed about and consider the feelings it might invoke in you if you were to risk telling someone. If you were to receive a similar response to one of the above how might it make you feel? This might give you a slight insight into why sometimes those who we are trying to help or support can become frustrated with our well-meaning efforts.

**IT IS PRECISELY THE CAPACITY TO EXPERIENCE FEELING VULNERABLE AND NOT INSTANTLY REACT TO IT WITH A KNEE JERK WHICH ENABLES US TO HELP OTHERS FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES.**



## RESIST TRYING TO FIX THE PROBLEM...

Often the best we can do when faced with someone in distress is to actively listen to what they are saying, be aware of ourselves and the way in which we respond. Try to resist diving in to fix the problem, listening in itself is an active form of help and support even if it does not feel that way. Sometimes your mere presence can be all that's required to soothe someone, people often just want to know that someone is there for them without getting freaked out.

If we experience someone being calm, understanding and warm towards us, accepting us regardless of our distress, our painful feelings are lessened and we are slowly able to navigate our way through distress. This is one way in which counselling



can be a powerful tool in helping you shift difficult feelings or beliefs that you hold about yourself.

Counsellors are trained and experienced in being able to contain and work with distressing and vulnerable feelings in order that you feel free to express whatever ails you, without feeling dismissed or shamed, or that you have to offer the same support in return.

Most importantly of all be aware we all have limits, if you don't know what to say then maybe that is what you should actually say? Just telling someone you can't fix the pain but you can be there alongside them is often enough. You are not expected to solve their feelings or to be a therapist, just to listen, but knowing how not to respond can aid both of you greatly.

## PHIL HAIGH'S PROFILE

Phil Haigh is a Therapeutic Counsellor working with a variety of issues, including physical and emotional abuse, stress, anxiety & depression. Phil supports people in understanding and making sense of their stories, raising self awareness, restoring hope and moving forwards in a way meaningful to them. Phil is a registered member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). You can read Phil's blog at [www.counsellinginleeds.com](http://www.counsellinginleeds.com) follow him on Twitter @CounsellorPhil or contact him on [PhilHaigh@Counsellinginleeds.com](mailto:PhilHaigh@Counsellinginleeds.com)

Pictures  
From Our  
**LOVE**  
**DOESN'T HURT**  
Campaign





# #lovedoesnthurt info

(THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UK)

**#Lovedoesnthurt info** is a monthly newsletter for Domestic Violence UK. It will provide readers with a brief summary of all the operations, activities, campaigns and projects happening within the organisation.



**WE ARE GETTING READY TO  
SUPPORT 2 REFUGES FOR  
CHRISTMAS ON THE 6/12/14  
WITH A FEW ITEMS AND  
VOUCHERS #LOVEDOESNTHURT**

## Vouchers For Refuge

**BE A PART OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UK'S LATEST INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY!**

By sending us vouchers for supermarkets, Health & Beauty shops, and clothes stores, you can support a local refuge.

We believe that this can make a big difference to families. All you need to do is post your vouchers to -

Domestic Violence UK CIC, BM6503, London, WC1N 3XX

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*We will ensure that 100% of the vouchers get to the refuge*

Help us show that  
**#Lovedoesn'thurt**



# SIGNS OF CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR



## TRY TO TELL YOU WHO YOU CAN AND CANNOT HANG OUT WITH.

Does he/she seem jealous or protective of you when you are around certain people? This can become controlling once they start trying to keep you away from your friends.

Consider themselves to be the boss or the dominant one in the relationship.

Controlling people are often on a power trip. They will take pride in being seen as the one who is in charge. Ask yourself how you feel about your role within the relationship.

## REFUSE TO TAKE YOUR IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS INTO MUCH CONSIDERATION.

Do they always seem to be in opposition about your take on certain issues? Are they doing this on purpose in order to invalidate any input you have?

## TRY TO TELL YOU WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT WEAR.

Controlling lovers will often feel threatened by the idea of their partner attracting attention from the opposite sex. Do they ever comment negatively about how you choose to present yourself?

**C**ontrolling Behaviour is: a range of acts designed to exploit, intimidate and manipulate someone for selfish reasons.

This involves depriving them of their independence in an effort to show domination and this type of behaviour is extremely dangerous because it leads to other types or forms of abuse.

The objective of this article is to highlight a few signs of controlling behaviour.

**A controlling partner might:**

### MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING YOU.

Is he/she making any decisions or alterations that affect you without your knowledge or

your say so? Consider whether or not you feel like your opinions are valuable to your partner.

Suggest how your money is spent.

Do they always seem to keep track of how much you make and where your money is going? A controlling person might criticize your spending habits or try to take over how you spend your own money.

**CONTROLLING PEOPLE ARE OFTEN ON A POWER TRIP. THEY WILL TAKE PRIDE IN BEING SEEN AS THE ONE WHO IS IN CHARGE. ASK YOURSELF HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR ROLE WITHIN THE RELATIONSHIP.**

### TRY TO TELL YOU WHERE YOU CAN AND CANNOT GO.

Similarly to the wardrobe, they will try to control where you go so they can keep a certain hold on you.

### ACCUSE YOU OF LYING WITH LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE.

Do you always find yourself being accused of lying about things like where you were or who you were with? They always seem paranoid that you are doing something to betray them.

### ACCUSE YOU OF CHEATING ON HIM/HER.

Does your partner repeatedly accuse you of being unfaithful?

Controlling people will often be the ones with trust issues because they feel insecure.

### BE UNREASONABLY DEMANDING.

Those who try to control others will often express their wishes in the form of an order instead of asking. Pay attention to how

they are framing their suggestions. Is it a demand or a request?

### RESORT TO THREATS, ULTIMATUMS, OR BLACKMAIL.

With more intense situations, they will try to use tactics to instill fear and intimidation in order to get you to submit to their demands.

### RATIONALIZE THAT THEIR BEHAVIOUR IS ALL BECAUSE THEY LOVE YOU.

Have you ever felt mistreated by them

and then hear them say something along the lines of, "I am only doing this because I love you?" This is how they rationalize their controlling behaviour.

### MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING TO PROVE TO THEM.

Do they repeatedly manage to keep you on your toes and walking on eggshells to prove that you are worthy of them?

### CONSTANTLY CHECK UP ON YOU AND MIGHT EVEN SPY ON YOU.

Are they always calling to check in to where you are or what you are doing? Have you ever caught them looking in on you in person, on your phone, or on any of your social network accounts?

### HAVE A WAY OF BLAMING YOU FOR EVERYTHING.

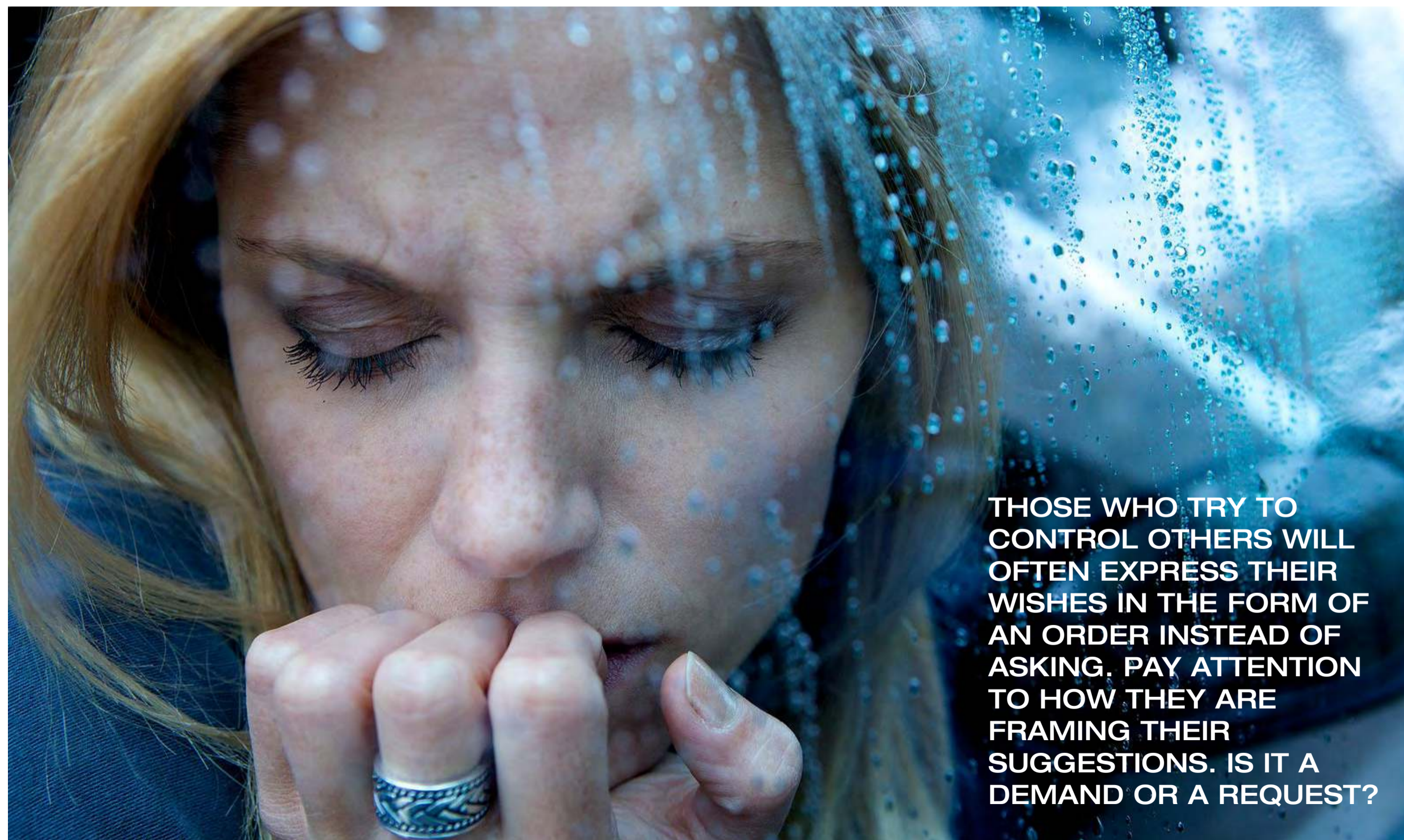
When you have an argument and strongly feel they are at some fault in the matter, you seem always be the only one to apologize to them, but never the other way around.

### ASK OR PERSUADE YOU TO CHANGE THINGS ABOUT WHO YOU ARE, YOUR BELIEFS, AND VALUES.

Most relationship require adjustments and small changes, but always be extremely cautious when your partner wants you to change major characteristics about yourself that you feel uncomfortable with.

### KEEP AN UNBALANCED GIVE AND TAKE ROUTINE.

Are you always the only one giving in the relationship, and your partner is the one doing all the taking?



**THOSE WHO TRY TO CONTROL OTHERS WILL OFTEN EXPRESS THEIR WISHES IN THE FORM OF AN ORDER INSTEAD OF ASKING. PAY ATTENTION TO HOW THEY ARE FRAMING THEIR SUGGESTIONS. IS IT A DEMAND OR A REQUEST?**



### INVADE YOUR PRIVACY.

Do they take an issue with you having private phone or text conversations? Have they ever asked to have any of your passwords to any of your online accounts? Ask yourself how you feel about your privacy and do you feel your need for your space is being honoured.

### REFUSE TO COMPROMISE.

Does your partner insist on having things their way in favor over yours? Are they stubborn or difficult in dealing with issues that require a compromise?

### GET IRRATIONALLY UPSET WHEN THEY DON'T GET THEIR WAY.

If they ever hear the word "no" or they don't get their way, how do they act? Do they become aggressive, dramatic, or even violent?

If you are in an abusive relationship and requires an urgent response or needs in-depth support please contact the National Domestic Violence Helpline on **0808 2000 247**, the Men's Advice Helpline on **0808 801 0327** or The National LGBT Helpline (Broken Rainbow) on **0300 999 5428**.

You could also find support organizations using our [ONLINE DIRECTORY](#)

You can raise awareness in so many creative ways by using our **#lovedoesnthurt POSTERS**

Please visit <http://domesticviolenceuk.org/download-love-doesnt-hurt-campaign-materials/>

**LOVE  
DOESN'T HURT**



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

**DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE UK**  
IS ENTIRELY  
RELIANT ON  
VOLUNTEERS,  
PROFESSIONALS,  
DONATIONS AND  
GOODWILL TO  
CARRY OUT  
ITS DUTIES.

PURCHASE Our Love Doesn't Hurt Tshirts,  
Beanie Hats and Jumpers from our **online store**  
[www.dvuk.org](http://www.dvuk.org)



YOU CAN; Download all our Love Doesn't Hurt  
**Campaign Materials** ([Click Here To Download](#))



VOLUNTEER to take part in any of our  
**events, campaigns.....**

Be part of our [Vouchers For Refuge Initiative](#)

[Become a Member of the Hope Network](#)  
(SUPPORTING us with a **minimum**  
**contribution** of £5 a month)



**Contribute to our blog**  
or The Mutual Support Magazine.\*

**KINDLY**  
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**FUNDRAISE FOR US**

## YOUR SUPPORT WILL

- Help us continually raise awareness on the issues of domestic and emotional abuse
- Publicize our 'Love Doesn't Hurt' campaign
- Provide and possibly extend the number of telephone counselling sessions offered to individuals who have experienced domestic or emotional abuse
- Maintain our presence online.
- Maintain and constantly update our online, mobile and text directory which allows individuals find their nearest specialist support organisations
- Help us produce our free online magazine every quarter
- Help us support a local refuge with vouchers and other gifts or items
- Allow us publish content written by professionals on our blog.
- Help us maintain our web forum, host our websites and /Forum hosting, content creation....
- Give us the opportunity to work on other projects
- Allow us update, monitor and syndicate content directly from NHS Choices for our Wellbeing Centre

**Thank you!**

# WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND'S MENTAL HEALTH?

BY DR. POOKY KNIGHTSMITH

## POOKY'S PROFILE

I often run [student workshops](#) on a range of issues related to mental health and emotional wellbeing. Regardless of the precise topic, the question that students most often ask me is 'what should I do if I'm worried a friend has a mental health issue?'

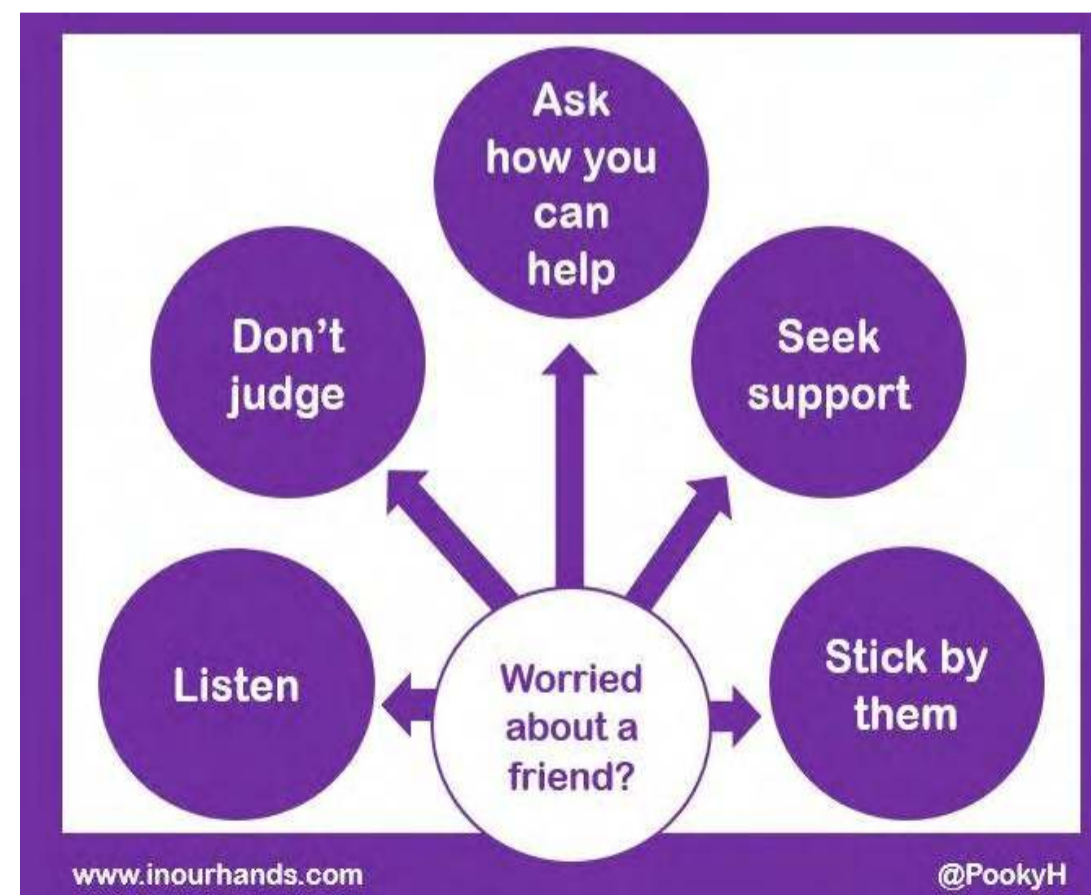
Perhaps it's something you're wondering about too, or you'd like to be able to share ideas with your students or friends or your own child. I've shared my ideas below but I'd love to hear yours too – please leave a comment or drop me a line [pooky@inourhands.com](mailto:pooky@inourhands.com) or tweet [@pookyh](https://twitter.com/pookyh)

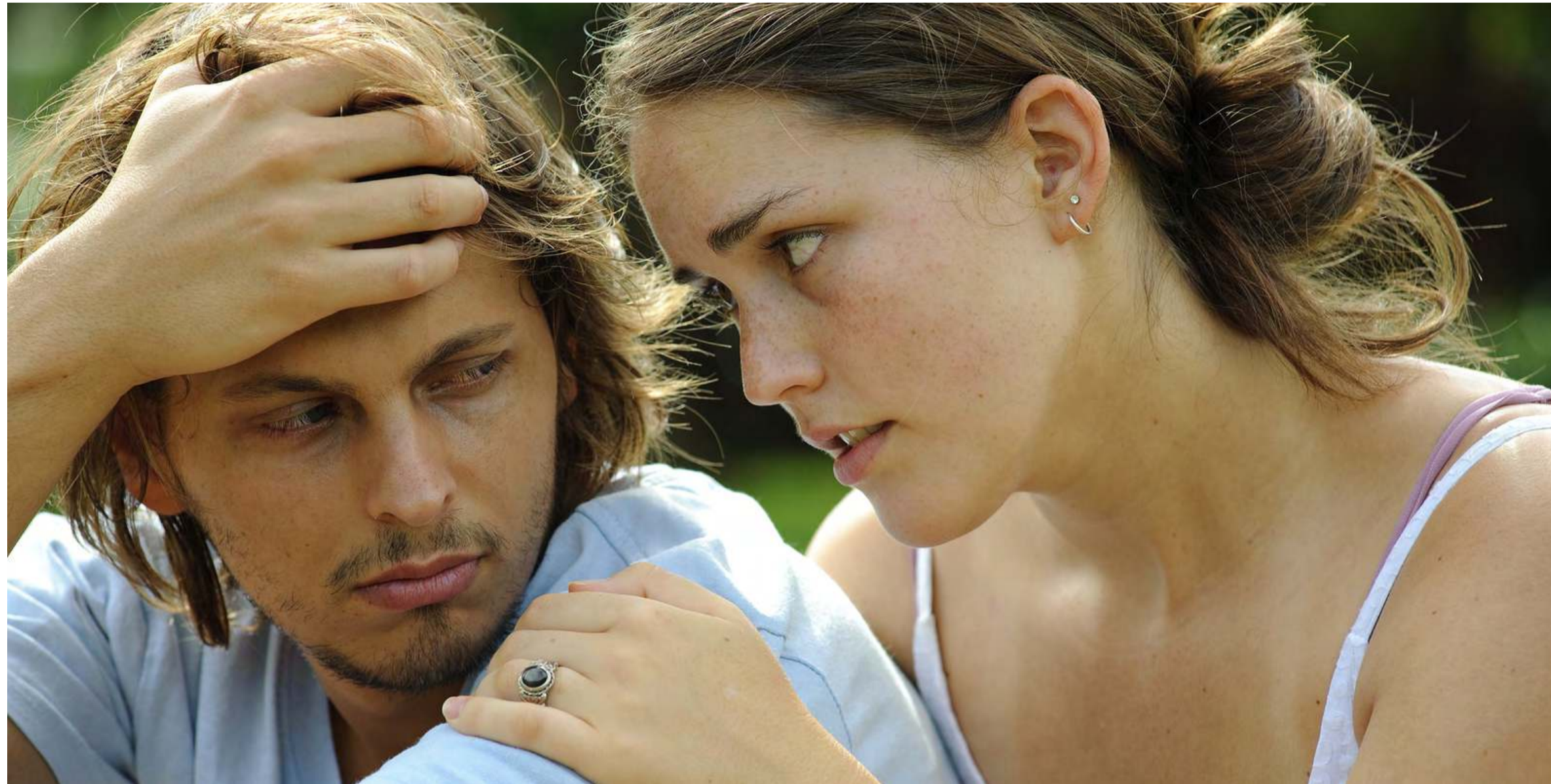
## LISTEN

The most important thing you can do for your friend is to make time for them and to listen to them. They need to feel listened to, so get rid of all distractions. Being given the space and time to talk is a really important first step and something that is hugely supportive right through (and beyond) the recovery journey.

## DON'T JUDGE

More than almost anything, young people with mental health and emotional wellbeing issues such as depression, eating disorders and self-harm tell me that they fear the judgement of others. They worry that people will over-react, thinking that they are crazy or want to kill themselves. Or sometimes they worry that people will be dismissive





and think that they're just attention seeking. A good friend listens without judgement and still sees their friend rather than an unhelpful label ('anorexic', 'self-harmer' etc), after a friend discloses their concerns to them.

### ASK HOW YOU CAN HELP

When someone shares their struggles and concerns with you, the most helpful thing you can ask is 'how can I help?' There is no need to dissect the ins and outs of why your friend feels this way, that is the

work of a therapist, but as their friend you can talk to them about practical measures you can put in place to support them through each day. Think about difficulties and barriers which are making each day harder for them. For example, if they're struggling with anxiety they may find arriving at school in the morning when it's really busy makes them feel panicky and out of control. To relieve this you might arrange to meet them a short walk from the school gates and walk into school with them to provide them some moral support. Exactly how you

can help will vary from person to person and is likely to change over time as well so the best thing to do is to have a discussion with your friend to bounce some ideas about. You should also try to revisit the topic every now and then.

### SEEK SUPPORT

Depending on the nature of your friend's concerns, it's likely you'll need to encourage them to seek further support as you'll not be able to manage the problem between you. Telling a trusted adult e.g at home or school

will enable you to access further support – for both of you. Your friend might be reluctant to share their concerns with anyone else but if you're worried then it's important that you don't go it alone as your friend might be in danger. Also, you may end up developing wellbeing issues yourself if you take on your friend's concerns without any additional help. You can help your friend to feel reassured and more in control of the situation by discussing:

- **WHAT** information needs to be passed on – you only need to





share enough to access support, not everything they've told you.

- **WHO** needs to know – think carefully about who you trust to respond appropriately and support you both.
- **HOW** you're going to tell them – does your friend want to do it themselves, do they want you to do it for them, should you do it together or should you write a letter or email?

Of course, we should always try to seek our friend's consent before alerting someone to their

issues, however, there are some circumstances in which you should tell a trusted adult right away to keep your friend safe and to access support as quickly as possible. These circumstances include:

- Self-harm including alcohol or drug misuse
- Suicidal feelings
- Difficulties concerning food including bingeing, starving, vomiting or laxative abuse
- Abuse at home (physical, sexual or emotional)

- Abuse from a boyfriend or girlfriend (physical, sexual or emotional)
- Bullying of any type

If you need reassurance before you or your friend talk to someone face to face then you can get good support, anonymously, from the Samaritans or Childline either on the phone or online.

### STICK BY THEM

Finally, stick by your friend, through thick and thin and through ups and downs. It's hard being friends with someone who's facing these kinds of difficulties; you may find your friend pushes you away, stops coming out with you, starts acting differently to the person you made friends with or ignores you completely. But rest assured that your support will mean a huge amount to them (even if they don't show it) and will help them through their recovery. Even just the occasional text message can mean a huge amount to someone who's struggling to get through each day.

**Good luck – your friend is lucky to have you.**

## Hope Network

Partnering To Raise Awareness And Inspire Hope

Domestic Violence UK CIC ([www.domesticviolenceuk.org](http://www.domesticviolenceuk.org)) is a not for profit organisation set up to provide information and support as well as inspire hope in victims/survivors of abuse.

All our operations, projects, counselling sessions..... are self funded or provided by well meaning individuals who want to see the growth and success of the organisation but we need more help to support as well as sustain the entire organisation.

**Hope Network** is a collection of individuals or organisations funding the vital work we do through their generous donations each month. We strongly we will be able to continually provide our services as well as raise awareness on the issues of domestic and emotional abuse with the support received from Hope Network.



Members of the Hope Network get a certificate, card, newsletter and a printed copy of our magazine\*

For further information please visit <http://domesticviolenceuk.org/about/hope-network/>



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