

# msm

MUTUAL  
SUPPORT  
MAGAZINE

ISSUE:7

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY  
**AND CULTIVATING  
COURAGE**

**THE  
EFFECTS OF  
EMOTIONAL  
ABUSE**

**NEVER JUDGE**  
WHAT YOU DON'T  
UNDERSTAND

**WARNING  
SIGNS OF A  
STALKER**

LOVE

**DOESN'T**  
HURT

OUR NEWEST  
AMBASSADOR:  
JANETTE MANRARA

photo credit © <http://www.multivu.com>

**INTRODUCING  
OUR  
LOVE  
DOESN'T HURT  
FASHIONABLE TOTE BAG**



**ONLY AVAILABLE AT  
[WWW.DVUK.ORG](http://WWW.DVUK.ORG)**



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



ONLY AVAILABLE AT  
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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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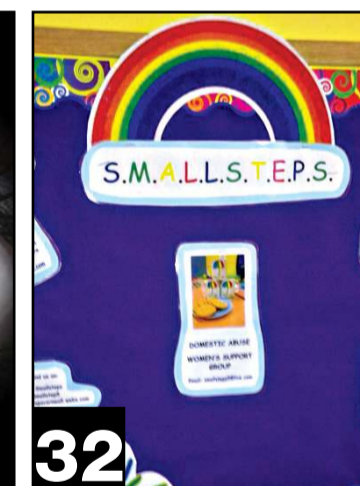
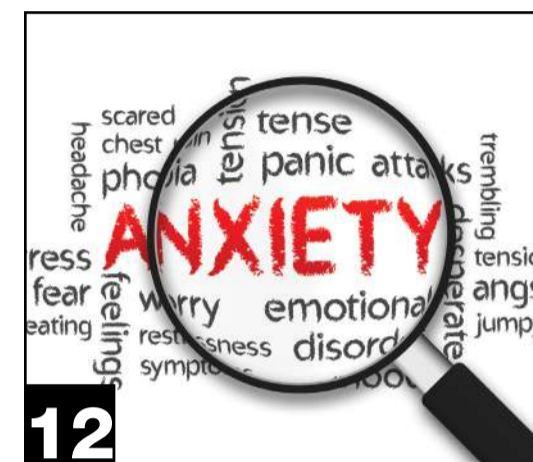
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# Warning Signs Of A Stalker

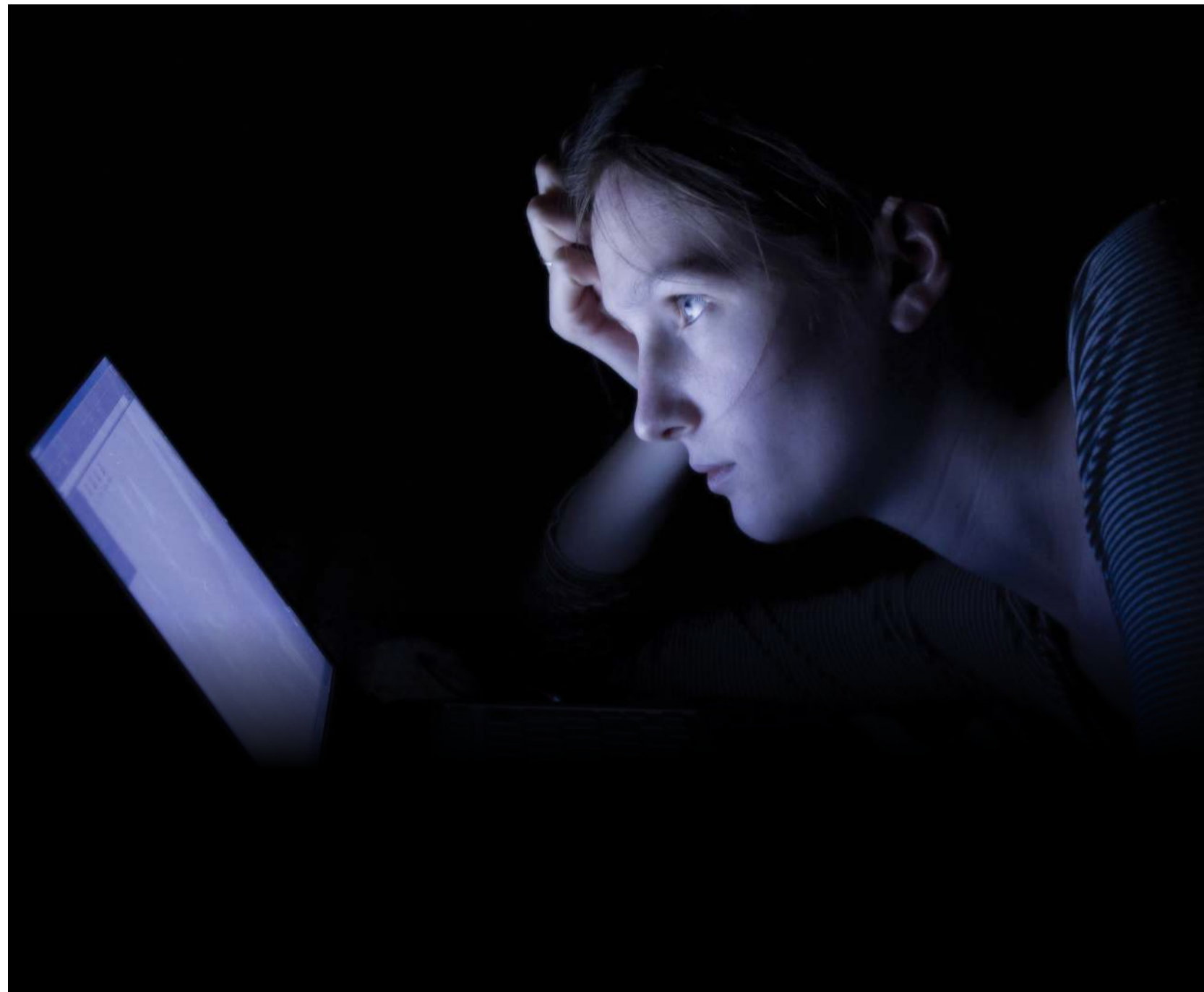
By Jennifer Perry

## WHEN YOUR PARTNER STARTS STALKING

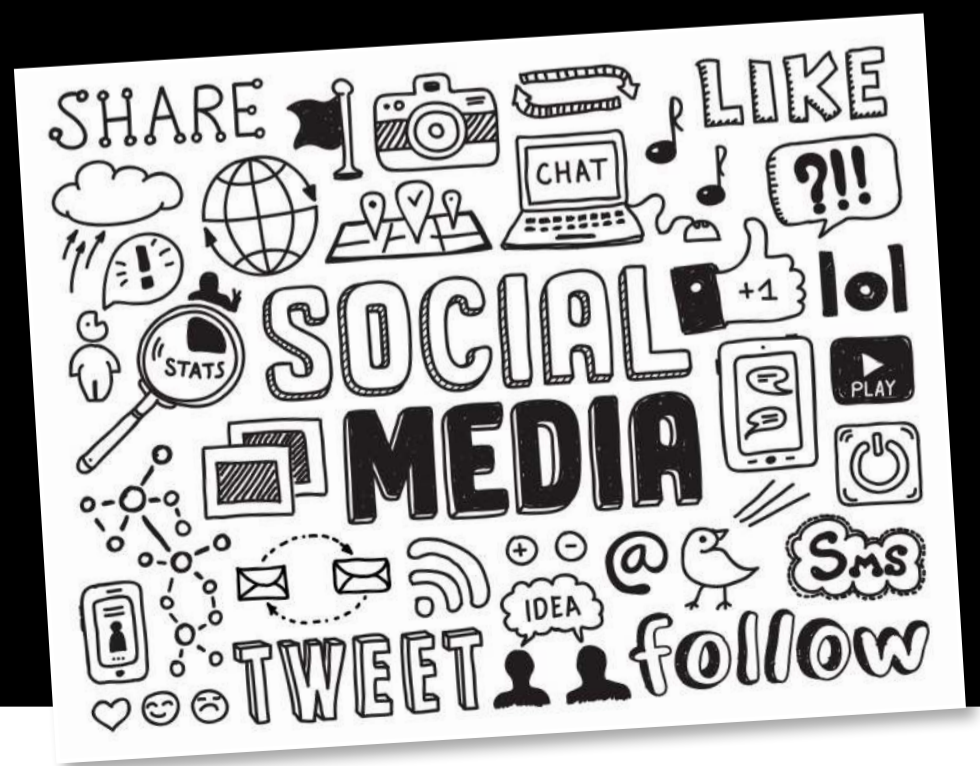
- They become demanding/controlling, they want to know who you are texting, e-mailing, what you are saying. They are suspicious, perhaps even paranoid.
- They are contacting you multiple times a day asking you to confirm where you are at – if you are at an unusual place and they seem to know - suspect that they have put some geo location software on your phone.
- They start sending aggressive, abusive or threatening texts.
- They start to contact your friends and family trying to check up on you, get information about you, or trying to damage those relationships.
- They start to spread rumors, put abusive, embarrassing comments online via social network, forums etc.
- They seem to know information that you haven't told them or know what you do online such as websites you've gone to, people you've chatted or sent e-mails to etc – suspect spyware on your computer.
- Your passwords stop working or keep changing.
- You find e-mails marked read that you haven't read, or e-mails sent from your account you haven't sent.
- Money starts going missing from your online bank account or goods being bought via online stores you use.
- Information is deleted such as friend's contacts, computer files, e-mails.



**OVER 50% OF EX-PARTNER STALKING STARTED BEFORE THEY LEFT THEIR PARTNER (MULLEN, PATHE AND PURCELL, 2009)**



# WHEN A STRANGER OR ACQUAINTANCE STARTS STALKING

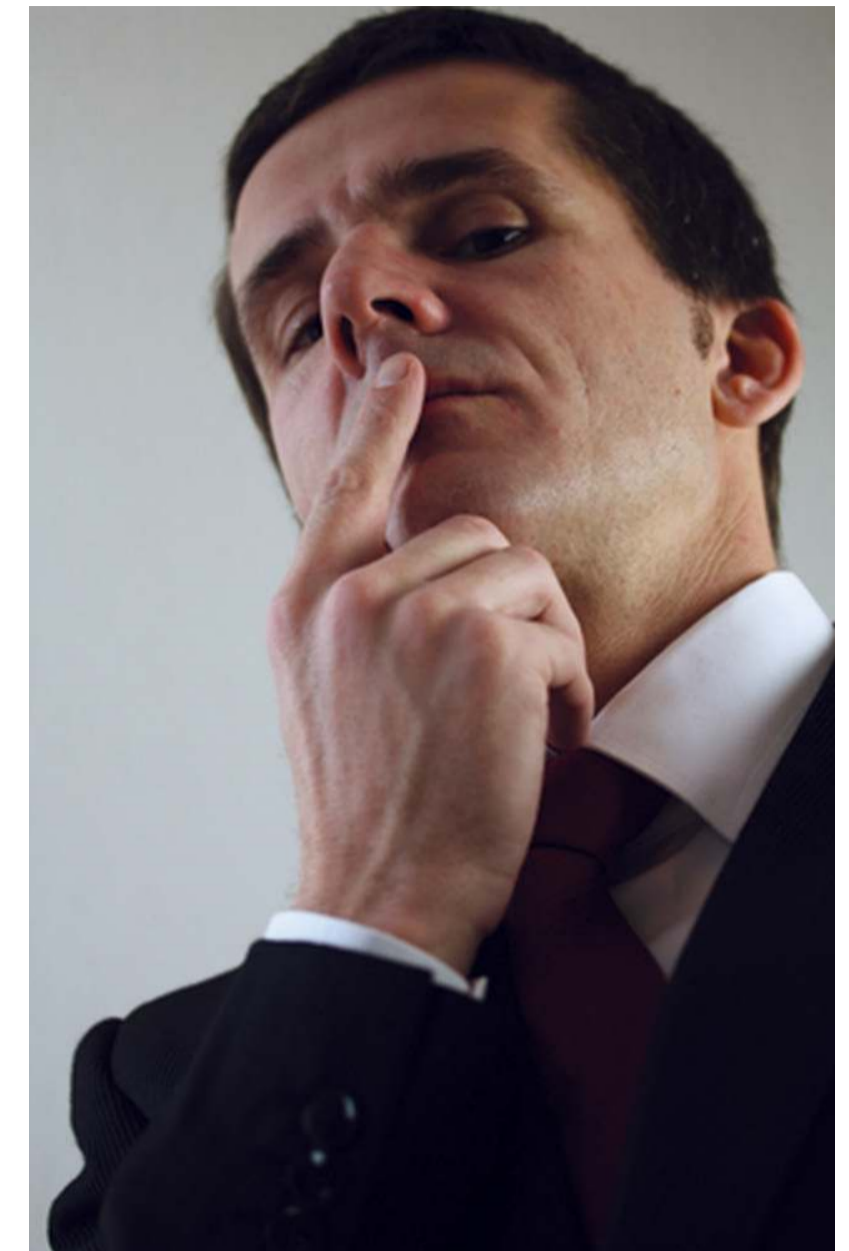


- They start contacting you multiple times a day.
- They are anxious to move from a dating site to private e-mail, texting, or telephone calls.
- They keep asking for personal information, where you work, where you went to school
- They agree with everything you say "as if you were soul mates".
- They start talking about how much they like you only after a few chats.
- They seem to be too interested – too soon.
- If you block them they try contacting you using another different account.
- They keep changing their story or somehow it just doesn't all add up. A good test is to tell a friend what he/she told you and get their response. They will be more objective.

## 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-stalking.com/>



- They become demanding/controlling wanting to know who your friends are, why you haven't been online etc.
- They know things about you that you didn't tell them.
- They seem to know when and where you are online. They say "I know you were online because I saw your posts" or they are always showing up in the same chatroom.
- They start adding your friends and family to their list, even though they don't know them.
- They talk about you a lot in forums and online. Make up stories about you or describe going on imaginary dates with you.

# UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY AND CULTIVATING COURAGE

BY PHILHAIGH@COUNSELLINGINLEEDS.COM



## WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Feelings of anxiety are natural in all of us and for the most part do not adversely affect us, but there are many complex reasons why for some people they become unmanageable and overwhelming. It's helpful to start by understanding where anxiety comes from in simple terms, as it helps us to make some sense of exactly why it happens. If for example, I were to suggest to you that your mind perceives doing something such as visiting the dentist as a threat, you might wonder where the sense in that is.



On the surface that doesn't appear to make much rational sense. However, our body and minds are primed for everyday survival, not for the modern world where most of our survival needs are already taken care of. Whilst our brains have adapted to higher reasoning so we are able to think about things rationally, our survival mechanisms remain the same.

Fear is the driving force for survival. If we feel fear, regardless of whether the reason makes any rational sense, our minds understand this as a threat and jump into action instantly. Historically, in order to survive any potential threats it's safe to say it was in our best interest to be at our strongest and most alert. For this reason our bodies are hardwired to react to fear and stress with a biological

survival mechanism. This mechanism is often described as the 'fight or flight' response.

## THE 'FIGHT OR FLIGHT' RESPONSE

When you feel under threat, fear triggers the release of hormones, Adrenalin and Cortisol, your bodies natural survival mechanism. As these hormones course through your system there are several physical effects as a result (These are the most common effects):

- Your heartbeat increases instantly, pumping blood faster throughout your body
- Breathing increases, taking in more oxygen to allow you to react faster
- You begin to sweat in order to cool your body from the anticipated exertion
- Your brain becomes hyper alert and senses feel heightened



In a situation where you are under threat these are all extremely useful adaptations for survival, they allow for an increased chance of survival in either running away or having to stand and fight. Of course, if you are for example, visiting the dentist, these physical effects are somewhat less helpful and much more frightening.

This fear is amplified if you do not understand what is happening, you may fear you are having a heart attack for example, or the sheer terror of not understanding what is happening to you can increase your anxiety, creating a vicious feedback loop which can cause a

sudden panic attack.

When it comes to feeling severe anxiety, it can be reassuring to now that what is happening to you is a reaction to a normal natural process, otherwise you may worry that you are somehow losing your mind or going crazy. If there is no physical threat, and you have no need to physically run away or fight, the effects of adrenaline subside more slowly which can lead to further ill feelings, and you may go on feeling agitated for a some time.

### **WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT ANXIETY?**

There is no magic bullet simple cure for anxiety,

and whilst that might seem disheartening it doesn't need to be. It does not mean we can't do anything about it; neither should it mean you have no hope of dealing with anxiety. It is simply acceptance that anxiety is a natural response which can at times get out of control and overwhelm you, ruining your quality of life.

If we were to eradicate anxiety we would be eliminating part of what it is to be human. There are however, problems we can be aware of, choices we can make and actions we can take to moderate and understand our experience of anxiety :

### **ALCOHOL :**

Alcohol is well known as a depressant but this term is often misunderstood. A depressant does not literally make you depressed, it 'depresses' or slows your nervous system, encouraging relaxation and a lack of inhibition. On the surface this sounds a great solution for someone who is not able to relax, so its easy to see why alcohol is used in this way. However, as with any depressant, or avoidant behaviour, if we become reliant on it, it can come at a high price.

**ALCOHOL IS PERHAPS THE MOST COMMON COPING MECHANISM FOR ANXIETY, ESPECIALLY SO FOR SOCIAL ANXIETY. THE PHRASE 'DUTCH COURAGE' COMES FROM THIS FORM OF COPING WITH ANXIETY, BY DRINKING ALCOHOL WE LOOK TO DULL THE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND TAKE THE EDGE OFF THE CONSTANT SENSE OF WORRY OR TO GAIN SOME SOCIAL CONFIDENCE.**

---

Alongside the dangers of alcohol addiction and health risks, for someone who suffers with anxiety, self blame or shameful feelings, drinking to excess can lead to a spike in anxiety. We may for example do something impulsive whilst drunk

which is against our values and leaves us full of self blame the next day. Coupled with the inevitable hangover which can dramatically increase anxiety and leave us dehydrated, agitated or nauseous, it can add fuel to the fire of the original issue.





## **FOOD :**

We tend to forget that food is the building blocks of our bodies and therefore has a big impact upon how healthy we are and how we feel. We have a tendency to take food for granted and eat whatever is convenient. Being more mindful about food and eating more healthily can have an impact on our moods and energy levels.

Managing your intake of sugar can help with your energy levels which naturally can have a knock on effect on moods, it can also help you to feel less jittery. It's also important to understand that a food intolerance can lead to you feeling unwell, which in turn can heighten or exacerbate feelings of anxiety.

## **CAFFEINE:**

Caffeine can increase our alertness and reduce tiredness, however if you are already in a state of hypersensitivity, it is likely to increase your anxiety and make you feel more agitated. By being aware of your caffeine intake you are helping to moderate the elements that you do have some control over.

## **EXERCISE:**

Alongside all the health benefits that we all know come with exercise, regular exercise can also help you in managing the agitated feelings and adrenaline associated with anxiety. It is also worth mentioning that this does not mean you have to do some gut busting extreme exercise. For example simply going for a walk is good for you and without distractions such as mp3 players or phones, can help you become more mindful of your feelings.

## **AVOIDING AVOIDANCE :**

If you are prone to severe bouts of

anxiety it's only natural that you have likely created your own ways of coping when anxiety strikes. Whether you avoid doing something because there is a risk it will bring on anxiety, or you have your own rituals that help you cope when it happens. At times we need to do this just for our own peace of mind and to get by, but if we become reliant on these rituals we may be reinforcing the feelings.

The natural reaction in the face of fear is to avoid it, when we do this we feel more comfortable in the short-term. However, when we react to fear in this way, we are unintentionally feeding fear and allowing it to grow within us. What may start as unease in a group of people, might lead to a fear of socialising and ultimately a fear of leaving the house if the fear remains unchallenged. Looking at it this way it is easy to see how over time anxiety can become like an invisible prison cell where the bars are slowly closing in.

## **OVERCOMING FEAR:**

The first and most important thing to know is that anxiety and panic attacks will not physically harm you. This is very hard to believe in the midst of a panic attack but it

is true. Your body is simply over reacting to stress. If you are able to accept that there is no threat and that the panic will pass, you are allowing your body to deal with the process naturally. The panic will rise and then slowly dissipate if you are able to be mindful of your feelings, control your breathing with slower deeper breaths and hang in there.

If your fear grows, the panic will likely increase along with associated symptoms. As someone who struggled with anxiety and panic attacks for several years, I know this both professionally and from personal experience and I do appreciate just how incredibly difficult it can be to let go of that fear.

The most important thing you can do is to realise you are in no immediate physical danger, embrace your vulnerability and tentatively try to let go. If you have experienced some form of trauma, a physically or emotionally abusive relationship, or you struggle with being vulnerable and accepting help, your fear may feel unbreakable but in seeking support you can take action to break in down.



## CULTIVATING COURAGE AND EMBRACING VULNERABILITY :

Letting go of fear is not often something we can do over night and we shouldn't expect ourselves to completely let go. Fear exists for a reason, we just need to find a way to live with it and differentiate between real dangers and the dangers in our minds. Embracing our fears requires courage, not the kind of courage we see glorified in films and books, but the kind we all possess but may not realise it.

This is the quiet kind of courage to continue everyday in spite of your troubles

and challenges. The courage required to leave your house when you're frightened of the outside world, the courage to take on a new challenge fearing you aren't up to it, or the courage to speak to trust someone when you're fearful of judgement.

Often we need someone to light the embers of our courage, to believe in us without restraint, reinforcing our gains and supporting us when we slip back. We need to know that we are allowed to slip and trip and still feel validated in our attempts, so that we can be brave enough

to try again. This is where the support of a trusted friend or support network can help.

Alternatively working with a counsellor can really help you to understand what is happening for you and the feelings behind your anxiety; whilst supporting you without judgement in reasserting yourself and taking control over your life. Imagine a safe place in which you can hold your fears up to the light and examine them, no matter how unacceptable they may feel, whilst you gather the courage to venture out and test your fears.

Progress is about self compassion, knowing when to allow yourself to relax and take time out for yourself and when to push and challenge your feelings, testings your fears. Be proud of small victories, they may look small but I know that they can feel giant. Those same small gains will reinforce your confidence and add up quicker than you can imagine.

I encourage you to seek out support, whatever that might be for you, with the right support, you can move forwards, learn to manage your fears, free yourself and embrace the future you deserve.



### 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'

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UK IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THEIR LATEST AMBASSADOR – STRICTLY COME DANCING'S JANETTE MANRARA

**D**omestic Violence UK is a non-profit organisation raising awareness, providing information and support for the victims of domestic and emotional abuse, through their 'Love Doesn't Hurt' campaign.

Currently, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men are victims of domestic abuse and over 2 women die each week at the hands of their current or ex partners.

There is absolutely no excuse for domestic or emotional abuse and Domestic Violence UK, along with Janette Manrara, seeks to inspire hope and raise awareness of this issue.

On becoming an ambassador for the organisation Janette had this to say, "I am delighted to be able to join with this wonderful organisation and help raise awareness on the issues of domestic and emotional abuse.

My hope is that people will join me in supporting Domestic Violence UK, either through social media and awareness campaigns to reach out and provide information and support to those who need it by signposting them to specialist support organisations and offering telephone counselling services

using accredited counsellors for their emotional health and wellbeing.

Janette joins our existing Ambassadors Andrew Lindsay MBE, radio personality Jenni Steele and Rachel Walker who are great supporters of the cause.

Join Janette and help make it clear that domestic violence is not acceptable. Be a part of the discussion and show your support by using the #LoveDoesntHurt on Twitter and help spread the word by sharing the Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/domesticviolenceuk](http://www.facebook.com/domesticviolenceuk)).

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.

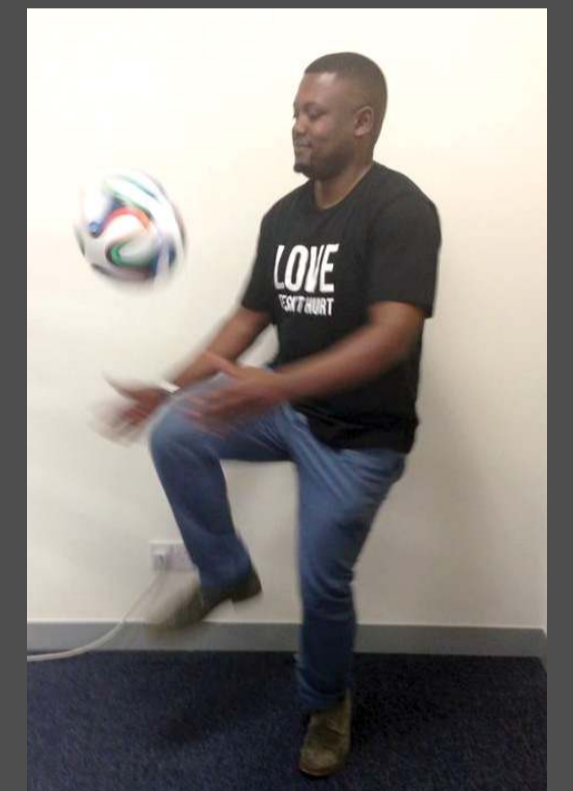
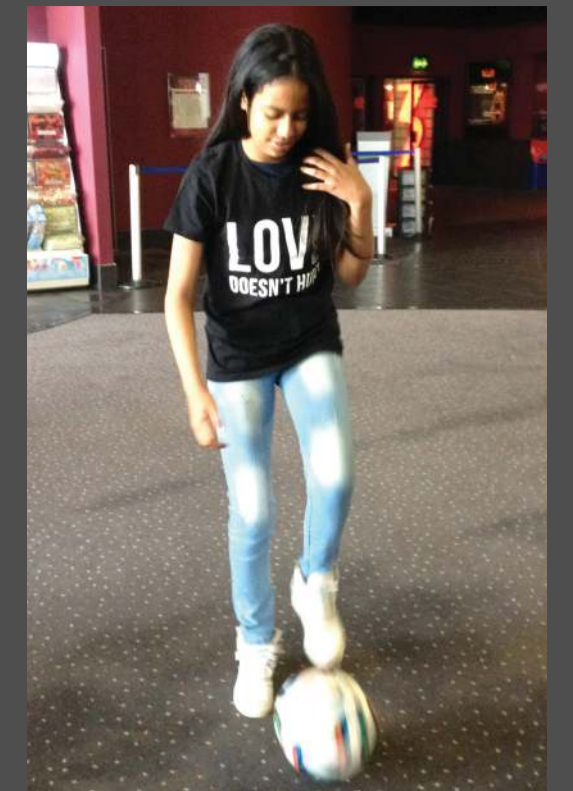
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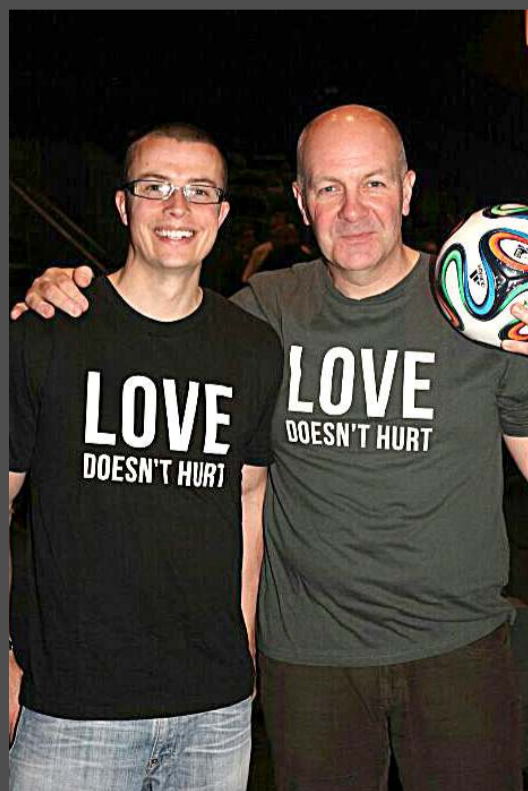
For enquiries regarding communications, media and press relations please contact:

Sharla Harriott – Public Relations Coordinator:  
[sharla@domesticviolenceuk.org](mailto:sharla@domesticviolenceuk.org)



# Pictures From Our **Love Doesn't Hurt** Campaign







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**



Spring 2014  
Support Groups East&West

Free Support Groups  
for women affected by  
Domestic Violence

Woman's Trust  
Lighthouse West London  
111-117 Lancaster Road  
London W11 1QT  
Phone: 020 7034 0303/0304  
Fax: 020 7034 0305  
Email: groupworkereast@womanstrust.org.uk

The Support Groups will be weekly sessions - once a week for two hours for a block of 8 sessions.

We ask women to commit to attending all of the 8 sessions.

Child care can be arranged with advance notice.

If you are interested you will need to book your place as soon as possible.

<b>Monday Group</b> Cheyne Children Centre 10 Thorndike Close London SW10 0ST Time: 10.15-12.15	<b>Wednesday Group</b> Latymer Christian Centre 116 Bramley Road London W10 6SU Time: 10.00-12.00
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For booking your place please ring Beth  
On 0207 034 0303/0304

<b>Monday Group</b> Gascoigne children centre Barking IG11 7AD Starting date: 16 June 2014 Time: 10.00-12.00	<b>Thursday Group</b> Stratford Advice Arcade 107-109 The Grove Stratford E15 1HP Starting date: May 29th 2014 Time: 10.00-12.00.
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For booking your place please ring Fawzia  
On 0207 034 0303/0304

## Charity Profile:

# WOMAN'S TRUST

### What is a Support Group?

A Support Group is a space where...

Women can share their life stories with other women who have had similar experiences.

Women can feel less alone and isolated.

Confidence and self-esteem can be built.

Women are not judged but accepted in all their entire selves.

Differences are cherished and honoured and not judged or discriminated against.

Women are encouraged to be positive and confident about themselves, their children and their relationships.

Women will learn the techniques of using support and other services such as counselling.

The Woman's Trust is an independent and confidential service providing **mental health** and **support services for women** who have been or are affected by domestic violence.

All our services are free and are **aimed at women who cannot afford to pay** for this kind of support themselves.

We are a **women-only organisation** and offer one-to-one counselling, personal development workshops and support groups as well as support to front line services.

Phone: 020 7034 0303/0304  
Email: admin@womanstrust.org.uk  
Web: www.womanstrust.org.uk  
Facebook: www.facebook.com/womanstrust  
Twitter: www.twitter.com/womanstrust

## HELP DO SOMETHING FOR THE ONE IN FOUR WOMEN AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# RUN/WALK

## 19 OCTOBER 2014

### 10km (run)/6.6km walk

### THE HUB . REGENTS PARK

nearest entrance *Monkey Gate*, underground *Baker Street*, Bus 274

Entry fee: £15 in advance or £20 on the day.

Early Bird bookings £10 before 31 August!

09:00 registration, 10:00 start

To enter, fill in the form overleaf

Bring friends to join you or cheer you on. Men and women welcome!

Donate to [www.justgiving.com/womanstrust-2014walkrun](http://www.justgiving.com/womanstrust-2014walkrun)  
£25 = 1 counselling session for a woman affected by abuse  
£25 per month will give the continuing support that she needs




helping women rebuild their lives

Woman's Trust is a registered charity (no 1143513); a company limited by guarantee (no 688678); and a member of the National Federation of Women's Aid.

# NEVER JUDGE WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

By Sam Billingham



EVERYONE AROUND US HAS A STORY TO TELL, BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ARE JUDGED MORE THAN OTHERS.

## HOW CAN PEOPLE JUDGE OTHERS ON WHAT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND?

To add insult to injury, victims are judged for staying in the relationship, encouraged to speak out yet, the harsh reality is, without care, guidance, support and aftercare, murdered by an ex partner.

## CAN SOCIETY REALLY AFFORD TO JUDGE ANY VICTIM OF DOMESTIC ABUSE? REALLY?

Does society not feel a little bit guilty of being so judgmental and then learning how many victims cannot "just leave" because when they do there life often results in murder.

Less judging and more awareness would be so much more beneficial to any victim

rather that too much judging and not enough awareness.

Poor attitudes are displayed toward victims of domestic abuse with so many victims, male and female, feeling so let down by society. Poor attitudes, inadequate training and judgmental does nothing apart from allowing perpetrators to carry on abusing.

## HOW DOES THAT HELP VICTIMS?

Victims are encouraged to speak out but feeling judged and criticised will do more damage than good. Many victims are isolated and with this negative behaviour from others, what other alternative do victims have other than staying with there perpetrator?

Domestic abuse is not a second class crime and victims shouldn't be treated as though they are the perpetrator, they are the victim in this complex cycle.

One of the barriers preventing victims from speaking out is being judged by friends, family and society – along with not being believed – a radical change in our culture is needed.

Victims of domestic abuse need support not judgement.

No one has the right to judge what they don't understand and no one understands

the complex cycle unless they have walked in a victims shoes across eggshelves, living in fear and being controlled every which way – just the tip of the ice berg for 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men who are victims of domestic abuse.

Judgement will put victims in danger. It's not taken seriously, victims are judged and criticised – sounds to me, like a perpetrators behaviour.

We need to see a culture change, soon otherwise how can we stop this epidemic. We are a hypercritical society, encouraging victims to speak out only to judge them and take away cuts and funding, preventing them to live without there perpetrator. We are playing right into perpetrators hands whilst perpetrators are getting away with murder.

We should never, ever judge what we don't understand.

## SAM BILLINGHAM BIO

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

Blog:

[www.sammieb1980.wordpress.com](http://www.sammieb1980.wordpress.com)

Website:

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



# SMALL STEPS

**S**mall steps are a domestic violence support group for women survivors of domestic violence and their families in Cornwall.

The group seek to help however they can offering counselling, advice, key speakers, a range of therapies, standing with individuals in court or at meetings and running activities.

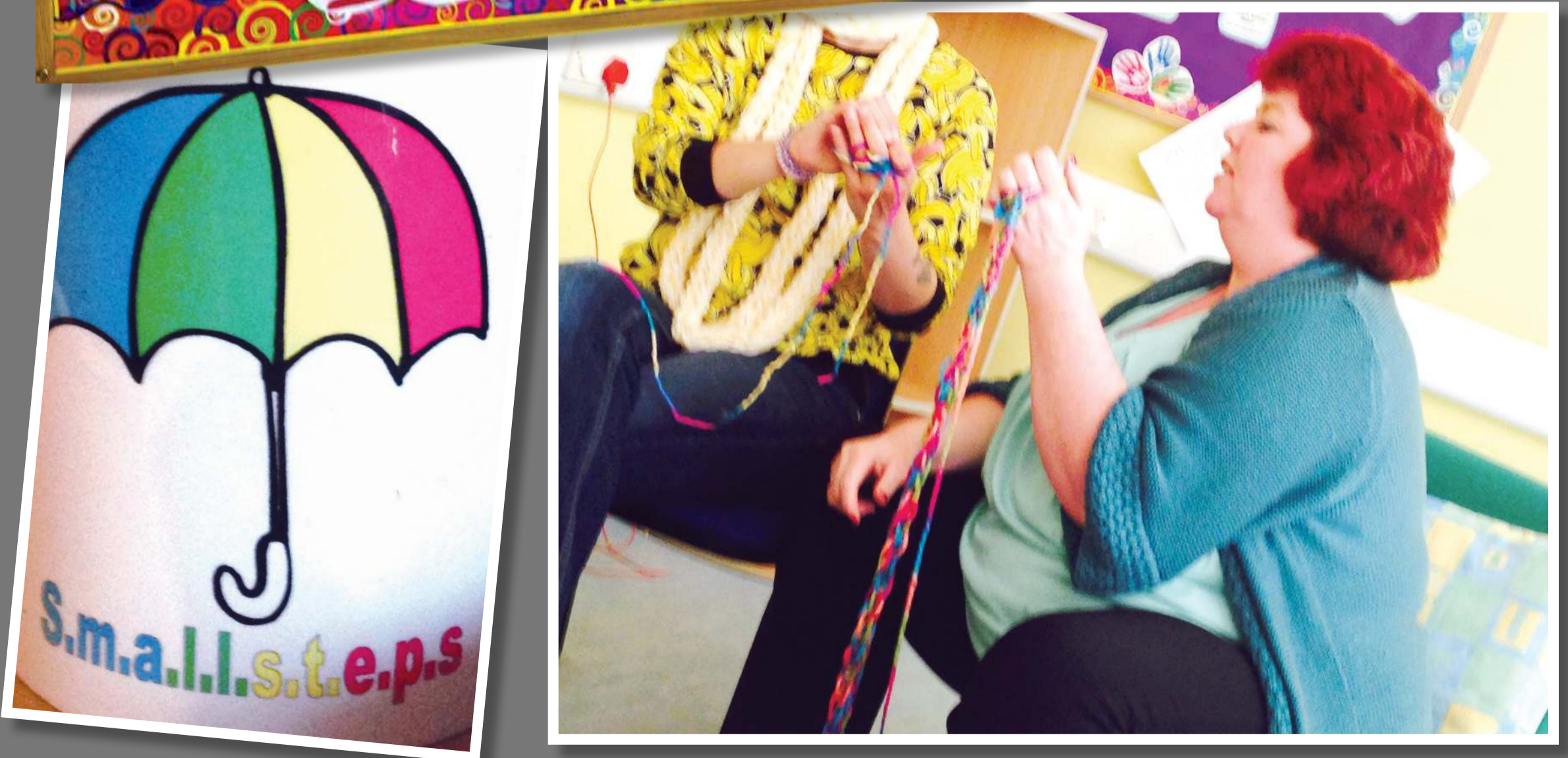
They meet weekly at local children centres during term time and hold family activity days during the school holidays, providing as many opportunities that enable children to access therapy and help rebuild family relationships as possible.

The group is voluntarily run by 5 women, who themselves are survivors; it is an inclusive group that encourages its members to be a part of making decisions, be listened to and be respected.

Entirely run on donations, fundraisers and grants, they are eager to raise awareness of domestic abuse, get people access to the right services and find the protection they require, while also supporting local family/children's activity based centres, such as the YMCA in Torpoint and live wire at Saltash.

Active at both a national and local level, the group has been busy writing to their local constituents on the topic of domestic violence and has also taken part in a recent police report, inviting the local officers to meet with them.

Their next fundraiser on Saturday 16th August 2014 at Torpoint YMCA This is a children's fun afternoon 1-4pm at £3 per family with lots of activities, entertainment, disco, stalls, raffle etc.



# No, I didn't want attention

*By Elaine Hook*

WHY DON'T YOU  
JUST LEAVE?

WHY DID YOU  
PUT UP WITH  
HIM?

YOU MUST BE  
STUPID

YOU WANTED  
ATTENTION

WHY DID YOU  
STAY?

**J**ust some of the comments laid bare at my door by so called friends when I finally plucked up the courage to break my silence, share my despair and flee my beautiful family home because I was being abused in every sick and sordid way possible.

## **DO YOU FIND THEM ABHORRENT?**

So, don't judge me till you have walked my journey. Don't judge me till you suffered at least as much as I did. Don't make assumptions, stereotype or think for one minute you know the trauma I suffered or what I went through. Don't ever tell me you understand or know how I must have felt because I can tell you, you don't. You can attempt to show me compassion and empathy for the death of my spirit and soul but I am sure it will come as a shock for you to be told that's all very nice but during my darkest hours no amount of compassion or empathy helped me and you were not there anyway. You are no friend, cause you walked away. And friends shouldn't walk away. Some of you even believed my abuser.

## **DON'T TELL ME I AM PARANOID.**

Let me enlighten you as to why I stayed. I am old fashioned and strangely I married for life. I did not sign up to be homeless, have no money and bring a child up alone. None of that was in my life plan or part of my dreams. Call me naïve or stupid but I always envisaged "for better for worse, till death us do part". I had worked hard at being a good wife and mother, friend and lover, soul mate and confidante, why would I walk away from that and put my daughter through hell, so I tried to stay, to keep trying. Trying to make a home; trying to keep us all together; trying to make it work.

## **SO DON'T EVER JUDGE ME OR MY DECISIONS.**

Because you see, leaving everything you know and own is scary, no, no, it's more than scary, it's off the planet and there are

no words to express the feeling. I fled, ran away, left everything. I forfeited my hopes and dreams to make a safe place for my daughter. When you have been made to feel useless, worthless and just generally non-existent for many years; you have no money and have no idea where you will go or end up with a small child, I have to tell you it is the scariest feeling on earth. I had been told for over 20 years that I was ugly, fat and no one would ever want me, so where on earth was I going to find help and hope.

## **SO DON'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND.**

Because being subjected to mental, verbal, emotional, sexual and finally physical abuse, my daughter and I had no choice but to flee in what we stood up in. We had to hide for fear of him finding us. We had no money and I had to borrow money from anyone who could help and created years of bad debt. The stress and discomfort was almost too much to bear. Depressed and suicidal at times, I suffered post-traumatic stress disorder and lived in a fog. Depression engulfed every minute of every move of every day. My world was always grey, overcast and dull; cold, scary and unknown. Lonely, misunderstood and ashamed I retreated from society and became reclusive. There was nothing familiar and I was paranoid I was being followed and spied on. I couldn't take more than two or three steps without looking behind me and if strangers got too close to me I freaked out. I was scared for years after fleeing that he would come and get me.

So please don't tell me it was my choice.

Because you see it wasn't. I had no choice. My abuser made the decision for me. In the end his behaviour forced me to leave. I tried to stay because I thought I could



make it better. I thought he would change. I thought he loved me. I hoped he loved me. I believed no one else would ever want me. I was groomed; brainwashed. I had no idea how I would survive. I had a beautiful family home; I didn't want to leave it. How would I tell my daughter? Where would my daughter go to school; did I have the right to upset her schooling. I felt guilty breaking up the family unit. Would there ever be a time I could forgive myself. Was I to blame. How was I going to earn money? What would we live on? Where would we live? Would my daughter ever forgive me? Maybe if I tried harder I could make this terrible life work till my daughter left home? Or would he kill me or would I kill myself?

## **HOW DARE YOU TELL ME I WANTED THE ATTENTION?**

Fourteen years later I have only

just had my personal possessions returned. I didn't see or have access to my belongings for all that time. I literally had to start over again. From a wooden spoon to a duvet, from a washing machine to cheese grater, we had nothing. Do rational people put themselves in this position for attention? Due to my abusers behaviour we have suffered immensely. I worked my arse off and made a new home and life for us both with the support of my amazing family. It has been heart wrenching, traumatic and painful for many years on many levels. Finally, we have contentment and peace, but it's been a long time coming. I can forgive but never forget. Domestic abuse is a life sentence; it damages your heart, soul and spirit. You can never trust fully ever again. Would anyone in their right mind put themselves through this for attention?



### **SO PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU GET IT.**

Cause you don't. I lost several "so called" friends; people I thought would stand by me and help. Friends that I thought would support me and give me a sanctuary; a bed for a while or even a few pounds for food. Friends I thought that would cook me a meal or just call to check on me. These "so called" friends didn't believe I was abused. Apparently I wanted the attention. Apparently I was so fickle that I needed to flee my home and marriage and break up my family because I needed the attention. I didn't have bruises or black eyes; he was careful and clever where he hit me. Because I was abused mentally, verbally, emotionally and sexually the public are ignorant and reluctant to

believe. And, yes, my husband raped me on numerous occasions. And, yes, there is rape within marriage. No means no, even when it is your husband. We were estranged under the same roof but he forced me to have sex under duress even through my tears and cries for help. And he made kinky obscene requests and raped me again when I said no and protested.

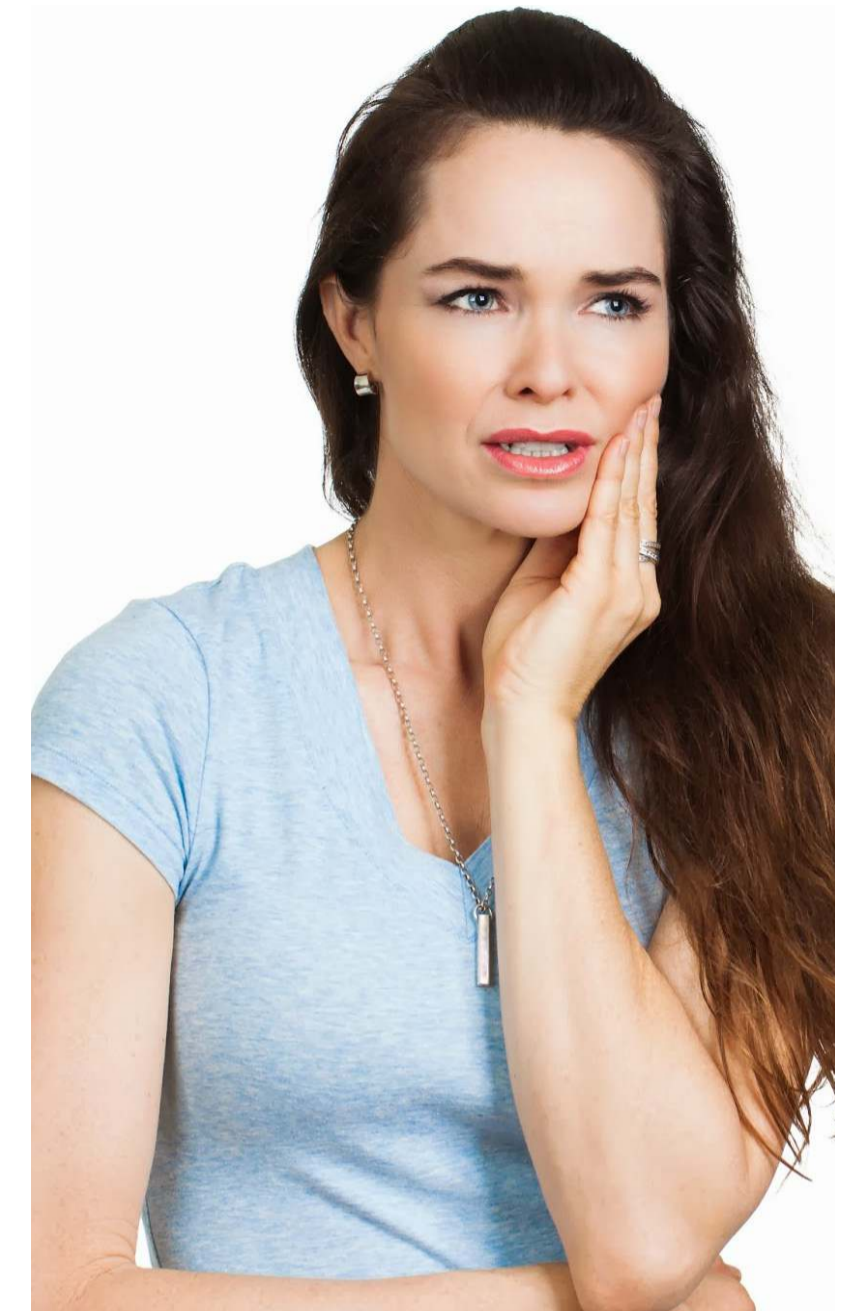
### **SO NOW PLEASE TELL ME WHY YOU DIDN'T LISTEN OR BELIEVE ME.**

How could you not believe me? When a person tells you they are unhappy, scared, controlled, criticised and even subjected to a form of slavery...listen and hear their cry for help. Abuse is

abuse whether it is domestic, child abuse, bullying, slavery, FGM...abuse is abuse. Abusers and psychopaths have no conscience or remorse, are arrogant and controlling. They can be liars and have double lives... Jekyll and Hyde. They have secrets, criticise, groom and brainwash you into believing you are not who you thought you were. They isolate you and you become their possession; you are extremely vulnerable, scared and have no confidence or self-esteem. This is what they want because this gives them more and more power over you. By fleeing my ex-husband lost control and became violent and even more abusive, texting me abusive messages every night in the middle of the night to frighten the crap out of me and to continue to try to keep his control and power over me.

### **SO DO YOU NOW GET IT; DO YOU NOW BELIEVE; ARE YOU NOW LISTENING?**

I hope so, I really do. I hope you feel sorry and ashamed. I hope you are embarrassed about your behaviour and additional pain and trauma you placed in my heart. I hope you never disbelieve a victim again. I am now strong and I have my confidence and self-esteem back and my heart, soul and spirit have very nearly healed. So to those of you that hang people like me out to dry I say this...I hope you now see there was no intention of needing attention. I hope you listen, hear and believe. I hope you begin to have some understanding of why we stay and why we leave. You see anyone who flees their family home must be unhappy; no sane woman does this on a whim...and certainly not for attention.



### **ELAINE'S BIO:**

Elaine is a Writer & Blogger of her travels across four continents as a teacher working with early years and primary children in many challenging countries. She is also an Education Consultant and has specialisms in safeguarding, special educational needs, early years and gifted and talented education. Elaine is a proud survivor of 20 years of domestic abuse and an advocate for the safety, peace and hope of women and children. Elaine works hard writing curriculum and training materials as a volunteer for several children's charities. You can read Elaine's blog at [averyenglishmrsteacup.blogspot.com](http://averyenglishmrsteacup.blogspot.com) follow her on Twitter @ed2inspire and contact her on [elainehook@hotmail.com](mailto:elainehook@hotmail.com)

# The Effects Of Emotional Abuse



**T**he effects of physical abuse are usually apparent. In other words, if you are being physically abused, you may display a bruise, knot, cut or a black and blue eye, but the effects of emotional abuse can be more difficult to recognize. An emotional abuser can negatively affect your self-esteem, mood, self-confidence, personal and romantic relationships, sex drive, and/or academic and work success. It is important to note that the effects of emotional abuse can

be just as traumatizing and debilitating as those related to physical abuse.

If you are being emotionally abused, you may falsely blame yourself and/or justify the abuse, stating that "at least he/she only yelled at me and didn't physically harm me" or "He/she only berated me because I nagged him/her about the dishes after he/she had a long and stressful day at work."

Emotional abuse can have long-lasting physical, mental and social effects so it is important to speak to someone about it as well as seek professional help and support as soon as possible.

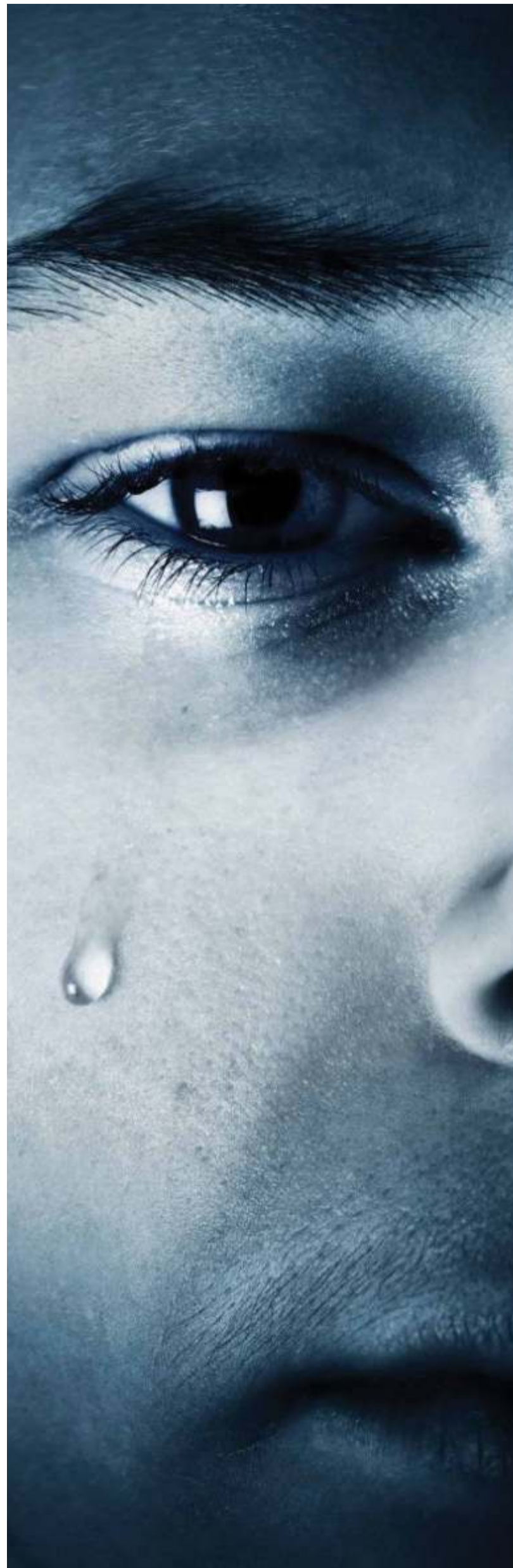
## SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- An individual who tries to control who you talk to, how you dress, what you do and how you feel about yourself.
- An individual who constantly belittles and humiliates you (i.e. telling you that he/she loves you, even though you are "not too smart.")
- An individual who threatens to physical harm you if you try to exit the relationship.
- An individual who tries to manipulate you until you feel like it is "your fault" when he/she emotionally abuses you.
- An individual who demands to know your whereabouts at all times.

- An individual who goes into a "fit of rage" when you spend times with friends and family.

## SHORT-TERM EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Anxiety/Apprehension
- Guilt/Shame
- Passivity
- Repeated Crying
- Eye Contact Avoidance
- Feelings of Helplessness and Hopelessness
- Feelings of "Walking on Eggshells"
- Feelings of Uselessness/Lack of Control
- Low Self-Esteem/Low Self-Confidence



## LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Withdrawal
- Depression
- Low self-worth, self-confidence and/or self-esteem
- Emotional unpredictability
- Irregular sleep patterns and/or sleep disorders
- Undiagnosed physical distress
- Suicidal thoughts
- Total dependence on the abuser
- Inability to trust
- Inability to complete tasks and achieve success
- Feelings of being trapped and isolated
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse

## SEEKING HELP

It is important to understand that the effects of emotional abuse can affect all areas of your life.

The trauma you suffer at the hands of an emotional abuser can follow you, even after you have left the situation.

Thankfully, counseling, therapy, and support groups can help you process what you have experienced so that you can build healthy and supportive relationships.

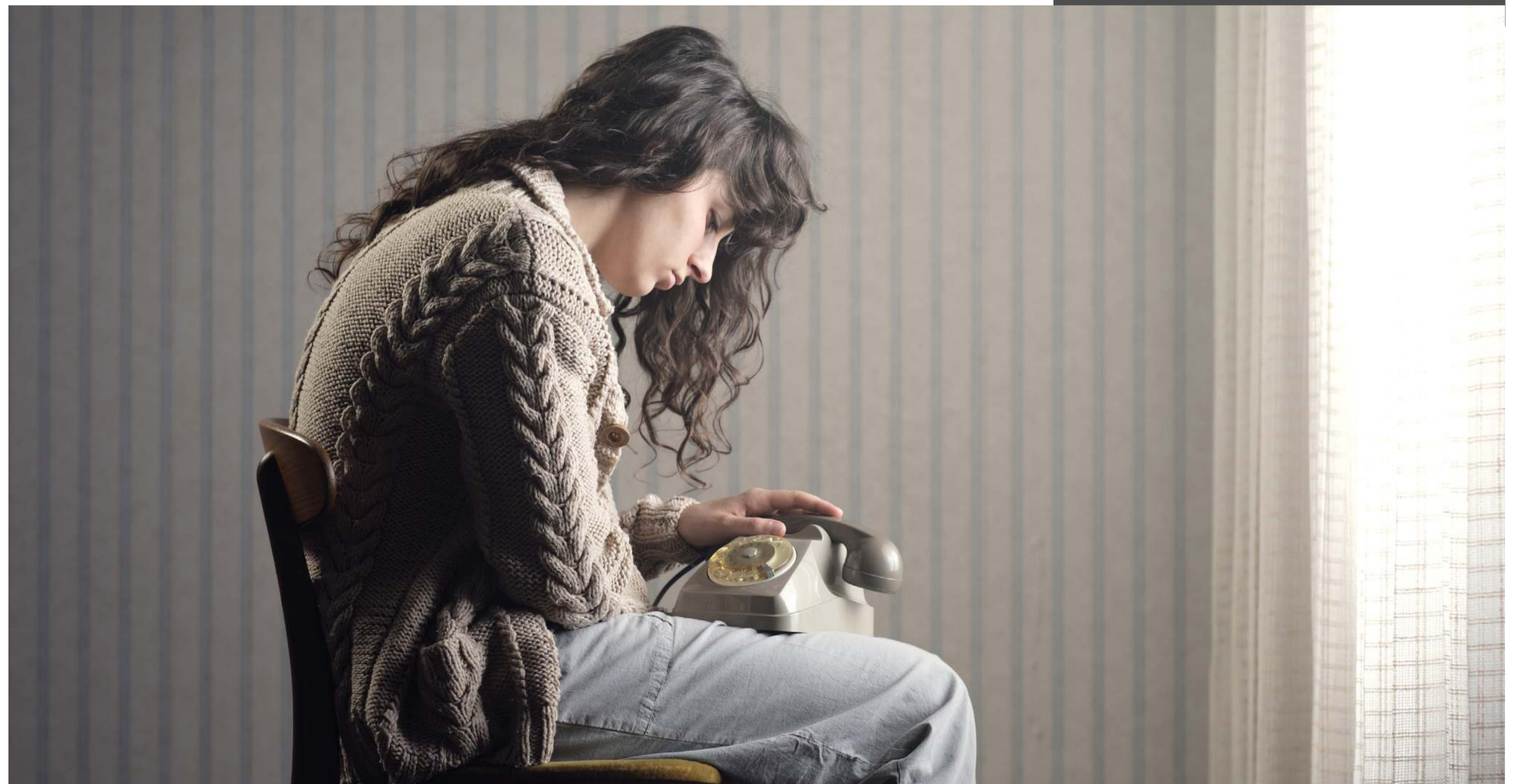
In addition, a strong support system can help you safely leave an abusive situation and move on with your life.

Regardless of whether or not the abuse happened yesterday or years before, help is available.

## YOU DESERVE TO BE HAPPY.

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](#)





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/>

## #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.