

# MSM

MUTUAL SUPPORT MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2021  
ISSUE NO. 18



**LIGHT AT THE END  
OF THE TUNNEL**

**DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE UK  
UPDATE**

**MESSAGES FROM  
DEBBIE, MARITA &  
EMILY**

**FUNDRAISERS**

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

# FOREWORD

ISSUE NO:18 - FEBRUARY 2021

## 03

Welcome to the latest edition of DVUK's Mutual Support Magazine. We've included a number of features for this issue and some #lovedoesnthurt campaign pictures.

Thank you so much for supporting Domestic Violence UK.

Inspire Hope - Be A Voice  
Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

[WWW.DOMESTICVIOLENCEUK.ORG](http://WWW.DOMESTICVIOLENCEUK.ORG)

**MSM**  
MUTUAL SUPPORT MAGAZINE



YOU CAN GET  
**INVOLVED**

Visit: [www.domesticviolenceuk.org](http://www.domesticviolenceuk.org)



LIGHT AT THE END

# OF THE TUNNEL

By Samantha Billingham

I left my abusive relationship in November 2006 after my ex partner slapped me, splitting my lip open as I held our ten month old daughter in my arms.

It was at that moment I knew things had to change in our relationship. It was a Friday evening and we had been to our local pub and I always felt frightened about what could happen next when he had been drinking.

We got back home and apparently according to him, I had "said the wrong thing" and before I knew it, I was tasting blood in my mouth.

We were standing on the doorstep as he swung his arm back and slapped me hard across my mouth. He muttered something and before I knew it, he was gone. Clutching my daughter closer to me I went back inside and phoned the Police.

They came but didn't take a statement



LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

from me on that night because I was intoxicated. I was scared and shaking as he came back home in the early hours, I knew I had to act as normal as I possibly could without giving him any clue whatsoever as to what I was going to do.

I knew I had to do it the right way this time and for the safety of my daughter so I had to treat extra carefully over the next couple of days.

On the Monday morning, I put her into her pram, told him I was going to the shop (this was the only place I could go alone, although when I did go he would bombard me with texts demanding to know

where I was and who I was talking to) but instead caught the bus to the local police station.

Making my last ever statement to the Police filled me with fear and I was frightened of what my perpetrator could do to me but I knew it was the right thing for me to do for the safety of my daughter.

I came out of the Police station shaking but I knew I was doing the right thing, I remember phoning my dad & telling him I was now on my way to a local firm of solicitors to get an Injunction Order out against him. I was petrified as I sat in the solicitor's office & before I knew it the Order had been granted

**When I left the relationship I wasn't given a helpline number or signposted to specialist services,**

**I was referred to an 8 week awareness course at my local SureStart Centre by Social Services, which is the only reason I attended because I was scared that they would take my daughter away from me if I didn't go - my ex perpetrator had constantly told me I was a s\*\*\* mother**



## LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

In May 2009 I set up my own support group to be the support I never had. It started off as a secret Facebook group, which is still active today.

I run a voluntary support group called SODA Survivors of Domestic Abuse which reduces isolation and raises awareness for others, it is a safe haven for people to come together without judgement and to understand that they aren't alone

To date, I have been a speaker at many different events up and down the country, sharing my story with others and raising domestic abuse awareness.

I use the media as a platform to raise awareness too, I write a regular column for a local newspaper and more recently I have my own regular radio slot on a local radio station because I believe the one thing that we can all do for victims of domestic abuse is raise awareness for them.

It was only when I left my relationship that I learned I had been a victim, I didn't recognise his controlling behaviour because he did it in such a way that made me think he loved me.

**I am also an Ambassador for a local charity called The Haven Wolverhampton,**

DOESN'T HURT



## **LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL**

who support women and children who have experienced domestic violence, homelessness and domestic abuse.

In 2021 I will be collaborating with a local beauty salon where SODA will be taking up residency in the salon. A beauty therapist, nail technician and hairdresser see and hear so many domestic abuse disclosures without knowing where to signpost them too; having SODA in the salon means the team members can signpost clients as soon as the disclosure is made.

There is light at the end of the tunnel, just take one step at a time to get to where you want to be.

Samantha Billingham

Founder of SODA [www.sodahq.uk](http://www.sodahq.uk) and [awareness4all.uk](http://awareness4all.uk)

Ambassador of The Haven, Wolverhampton <http://www.havenrefuge.org.uk>

Columnist for Express & Star <http://www.expressandstar.com>





**Inspire Hope - Be A Voice.  
Speak Up Against Domestic  
Violence**

**#LOVEDOESNTHURT**

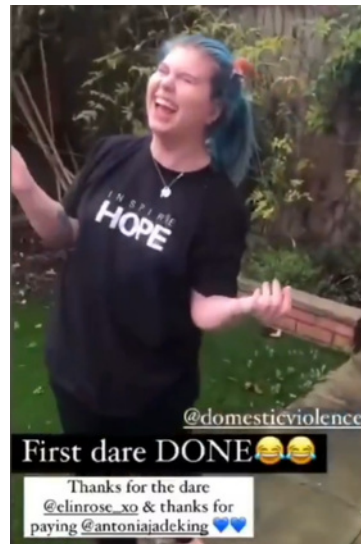
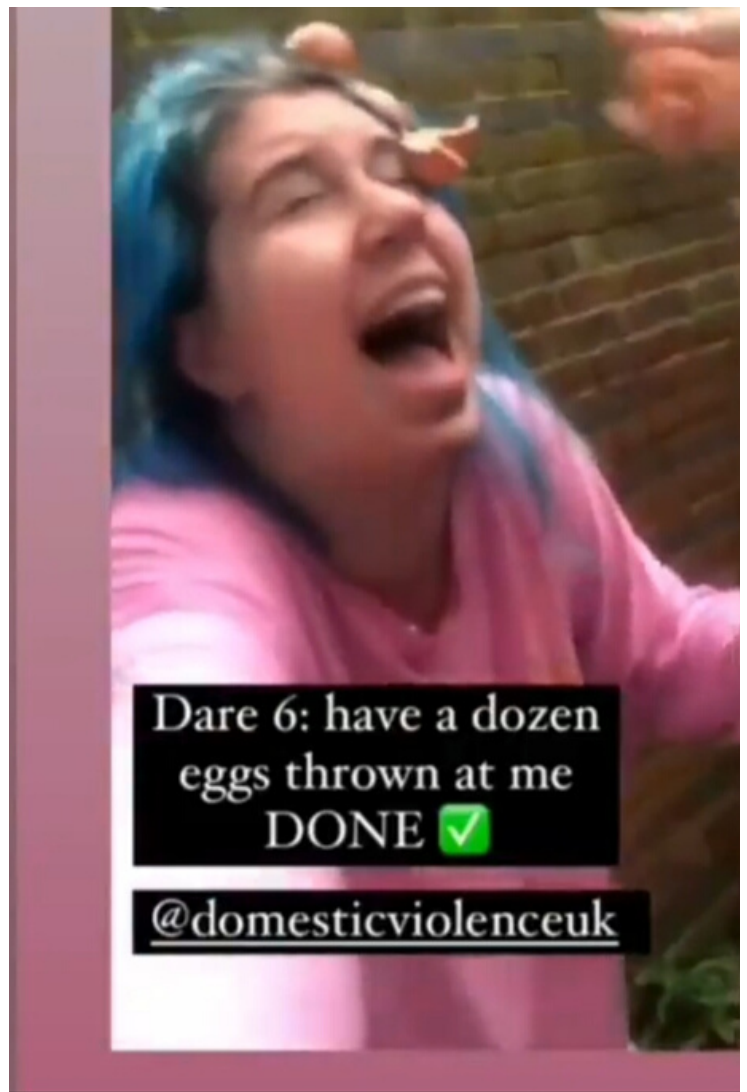
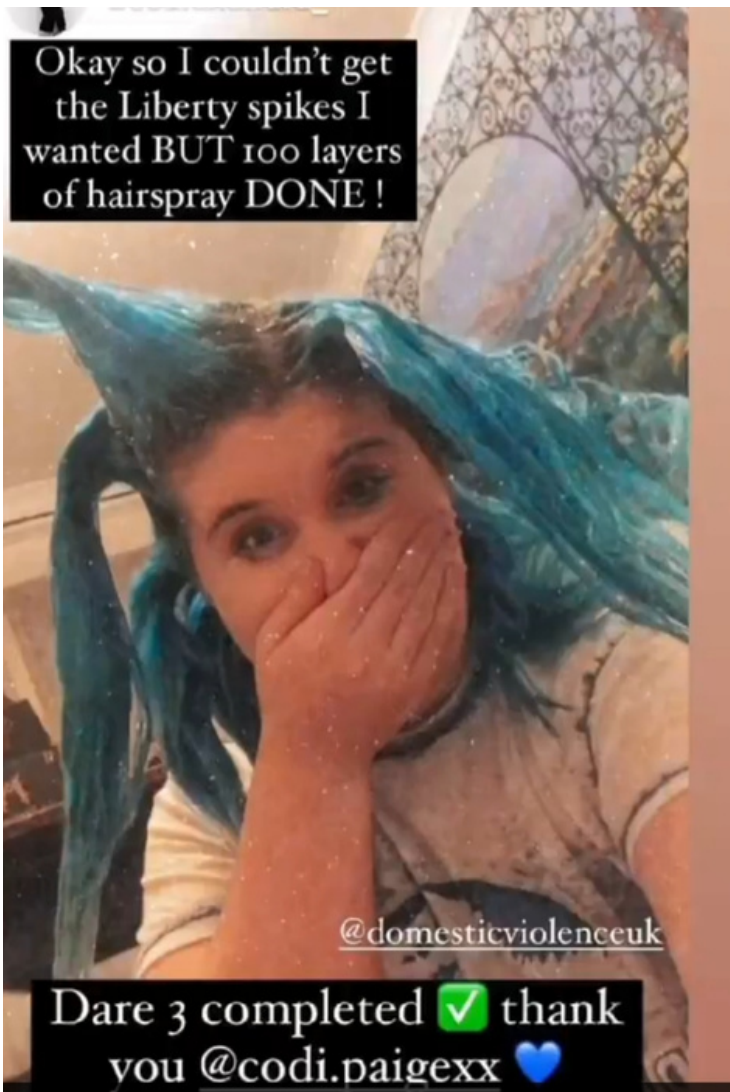


# BEC'S FUNDRAISER





# BEC'S FUNDRAISER



## BEC HAS RAISED £151 SO FAR.....

Thank you so much.....  
INSPIRE HOPE - BE A VOICE

**LOVE**  
DOESN'T HURT

**LOVE**  
DOESN'T HURT





# A MESSAGE FROM MARITA

From aged 20-27 I was in a domestically abusive relationship and marriage. I felt trapped, I felt I couldn't leave. I was beaten on a daily basis, I was tormented and mentally abused.

**From being weighed in the morning and beaten for putting on weight to being pinned down and punched and told I was a fat, ugly, mess and no one would miss me- that I should kill myself.**

What changed? I began to tell friends and family and even my workplace the true nature of my relationship. After marriage everything got much worse, I developed anxiety. The constant beatings and put downs- I wanted to take my own life to escape my living hell.

For me, it was a moment when I was removing important items from our house as he continually destroyed my belongings, I removed my bible, a feeling came over me-

a realisation of my identity as one of God's children, he stopped me from going to church, praying, even my bible was hidden.

That was it- I had denied myself for too long of my identity. From that moment on- I was leaving him, I was going to start my life again. It took amazing supportive friends reporting him to the police, the support from the domestic abuse unit meeting in secret, helping me and encouraging me to leave. Women's Aid was a God send, they gave me the knowledge I needed to leave.

Up until the moment I left- I was being strangled, pinned down, punched... when I left I was covered in bruising. I've never looked back.

**Once you leave, you begin to come into yourself again. You accept you can't go back to the person you once were. You become someone new, I've chosen to make my trauma my testimony.**



I've been blessed with a loving family and friends.

Yes, you have flashbacks to the trauma, it's learning to process those flashbacks and realising you never did anything wrong, you did not deserve this treatment and you are free now to do live your life as you please.  
#lovedoesnthurt #inspirehope

*Marita 2021*

## THE ADVICE HUB

An Online Support Project  
Coordinated By Domestic  
Violence UK

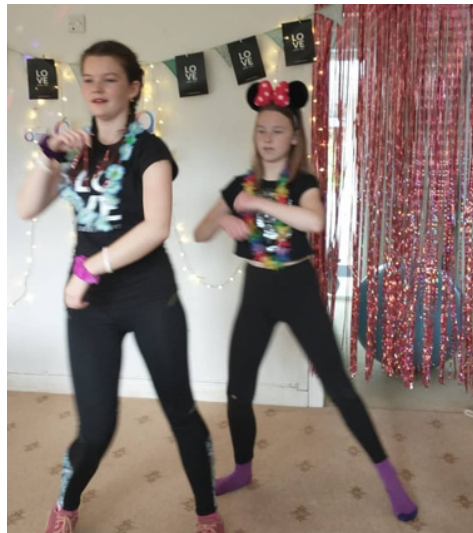
[www.theadvicehub.org](http://www.theadvicehub.org)





# ELLA'S FUNDRAISER





## ELLA RAISED £175 FOR DVUK

Thank you so much.....  
INSPIRE HOPE - BE A VOICE

# THE HOPE INITIATIVE

The Hope Initiative is responsible for a number of projects which assist local refuges, individuals and families

- 01 THE VIRTUAL FOOD BANK PROJECT
- 02 VOUCHERS FOR REFUGE PROJECT
- 03 THE TOILETRIES PROJECT
- 04 THE CLOTHING PROJECT

BE  
A VOICE



## THE HOPE INITIATIVE

# VOUCHERS FOR REFUGE PROJECT

Help us show #lovedoesnthurt by supporting our Vouchers For Refuge Project.

We currently support 5 local refuges every quarter with boxes containing essential items. You can participate in this initiative by donating small items\*, toiletries, gift cards or vouchers for supermarkets and stores.



## THE HOPE INITIATIVE

# THE VIRTUAL FOOD BANK PROJECT

The Virtual Food Bank project is part of The Hope Initiative and its objective is to deliver free food boxes to individuals/families who are in need of food supplies.

The boxes contain the following items: tinned vegetables, soup and baked beans, store cupboard staples such as – pasta, rice, noodles, cereal, coffee, tea and biscuits





## THE HOPE INITIATIVE

# THE CLOTHING PROJECT

The Clothing Project is part of The Hope Initiative and its objective is to support families and individuals with a limited number of free clothing parcels

These items are t-shirts, blouses, children's clothes, sweatshirts.....

*Gospel Elegance's Virtual  
Get Together*

Join us online for an evening of  
fun, games, poetry and  
**Networking**

Ticket proceeds going to mental health and  
domestic violence charities

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*Friday* | FEBRUARY 12TH 2021

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7:00  
PM

Zoom details will be shared once  
you've booked online

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Tickets just £10.00. Book online [www.eventbrite.co.uk/gospelelegance](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/gospelelegance)  
or email [gospel.elegance123@gmail.com](mailto:gospel.elegance123@gmail.com)



# *Gospel Elegance's Virtual Get Together*



Special Guests on the night  
from psalmist  
Alysha Warren and  
The Voice finalist  
Michelle John



comedian 'Shacklefoot'  
and Stanley Nwankpa  
Health Professional



Friday FEBRUARY 12TH 2021



7:00  
PM

Zoom details will be shared once  
you've booked online

Tickets just £10.00. Book online [www.eventbrite.co.uk/gospelelegance](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/gospelelegance)  
or email [gospel.elegance123@gmail.com](mailto:gospel.elegance123@gmail.com)

1

**08082000247**

ENGLAND: THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

2

**08000271234**

SCOTLAND: DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

3

**08088021414**

NORTHERN IRELAND: DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE HELPLINE

4

**0808801080**

WALES: LIVE FEAR FREE HELPLINE

5

**08009995428**

NATIONAL LGBT HELPLINE (GALOP)

6

**08088010327**

THE MEN'S ADVICE LINE

7

**01823334244**

MANKIND INITIATIVE

8

**WOMEN'S AID WEBCHAT**

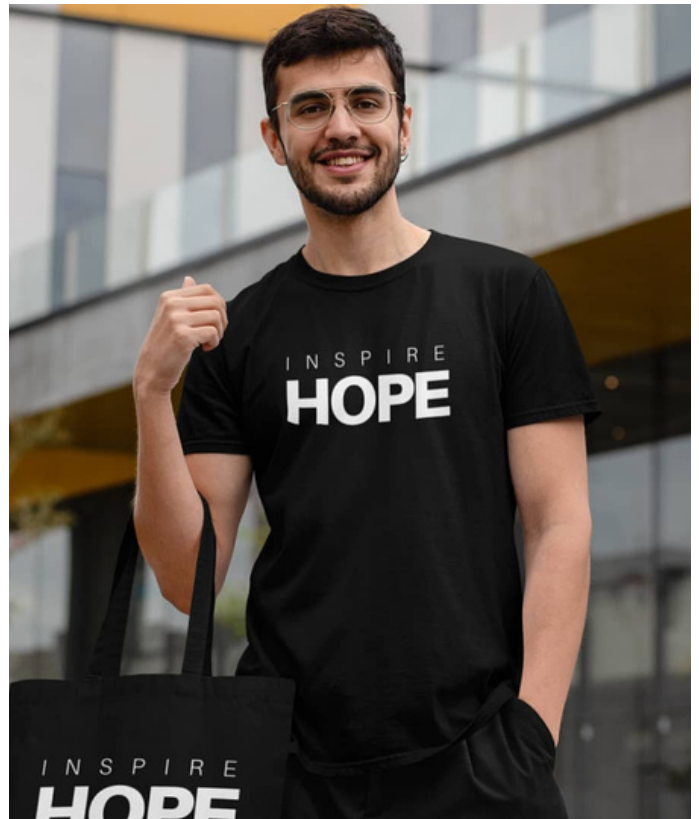
[HTTPS://CHAT.WOMENSAID.ORG.UK](https://chat.womensaid.org.uk)



## THE PORTRAIT PROJECT

INSPIRE HOPE - BE A VOICE  
SPEAK OUT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
[WWW.LOVEDOESNTHURT.ORG](http://WWW.LOVEDOESNTHURT.ORG)

## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



# CAMPAIGN PICTURES





## A MESSAGE FROM DEBBIE

When you are stuck in a relationship where you are trapped in turmoil and are being constantly put down, belittled and treading on egg shells it's draining, demoralising and it eats away at your soul

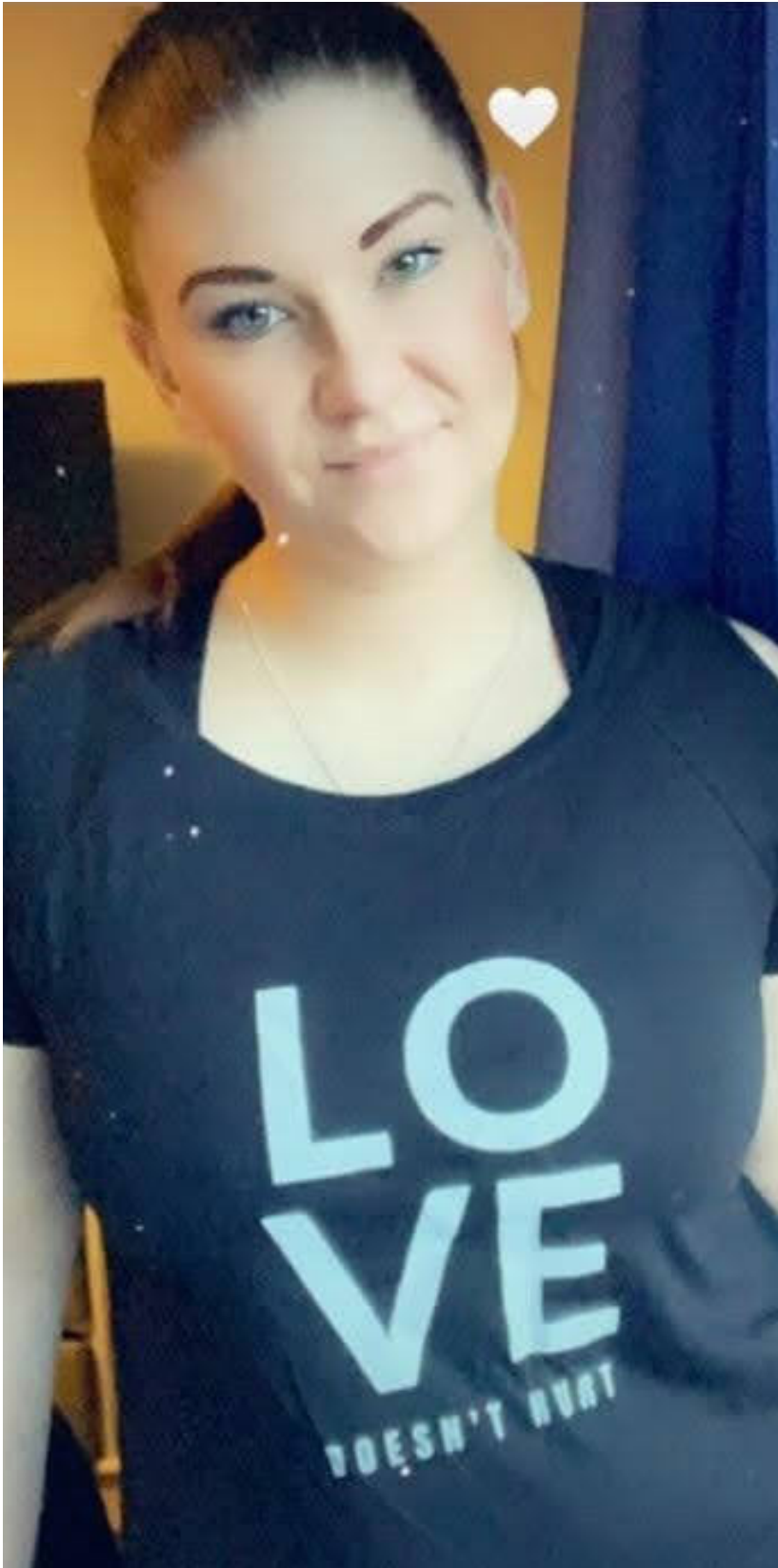
You change as a person, you put your all into that other person in the hope one day it will change, one day things will be different and you will feel loved instead of worthless!

But it never changes all you get

in return is the pushing, anger, put downs, withheld affection to deliberately hurt you, a smack in the face, threats, possessions smashed and left with huge financial debts.

I have experienced all this in my past relationships, I had the strength to pull myself out of the prison I was suffering in, I am now free and I am slowly healing. However there are still so many women and men stuck in similar situations not able or too scared to escape or too trapped in the

**trauma bond of a twisted love story I support many people in private forums online and give as much advise as I can drawing on my own experiences in a hope to help others**



I also have massive love and support for this charity @domesticviolenceuk

They have the amazing The Hope project to help support people and INSPIRE HOPE and are spreading the amazing message which I fully support LOVE DOESN'T HURT! Which raises awareness of domestic violence.

*Debbie 2021*

INSPIRE  
**HOPE**





## A MESSAGE FROM EMILY

New Year with new lockdowns means increased abuse for many. Christmas Day was the first time my partner assaulted me.

Read my story below or swipe for more information. You are never alone

**TW:** Abuse, IPV, violence. We had a really lovely Christmas. But as we got ready for bed, he turned on me.

He had a habit of doing that - Sweet and loving one minute, and then cold the next.

I already knew he had 'a bit of temper - He had called me names, thrown things and punched a wall in the past, 'but it was manageable' I would tell myself.

This time, it was midnight and he demanded to see my phone. He wanted to "see who had wished a Merry Christmas". I paused - I thought it was a joke, and I refused. But he was serious, and he coldly announced

"It's either me or your phone". Even in that moment, I could identify the red flags, "I can't, this feels controlling" I told him while crying. He refused to change his mind. This was the man I wanted my future with, who I wanted to make happy...

Was I going to throw it all away over a phone?  
I handed over my phone.

He obviously found nothing, but his anger was unsatisfied, "why did it take so long to hand over your phone?" he accused. He got angrier and angrier, until he decided that I was "an intruder in his home" and he "wanted me out". I tried to explain that it was too late to go anywhere, but it just made him angrier.

**Until out of fury, he grabbed my arm and pulled. Hard. He dislocated my wrist. The next few days were a weird blur of confusion. He was embarrassed that he had hurt me. He gave me a flurry of kisses and promises that he would be better.**

Yet, in the same breath, he still held firm that his anger and his actions were valid because I had "left him no other choice as an intruder in the house". Only one of us uttered the words "I'm sorry", and it wasn't him. And that was just the start of our story.

One week later, I was stood with my arms wrapped around him, wishing him a Happy New Year. Less than 9 months later, I was sat in the back of an ambulance wondering "how we had got here

**Domestic Violence isn't just a statistic or a bunch of 'red flags' that come up on your newsfeed, each statistic is a story that 1 in 4 women will experience in their lifetime. It is a story of hurt, confusion, and broken promises. A story that if you knew the ending, you may never have chosen to begin.**

But there is always another ending, if only you choose to turn the next page. If you can relate to any part of this story, please reach out to myself, a friend or one of the helplines listed.

You are never alone, and you are stronger than you think



#### **SPECIALIST SUPPORT HELPLINES**

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline - 08082000247  
The Men's Advice Helpline - 08088010327  
The National LGBT Helpline - 03009995428

# CAMPAIGN PICTURES



## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



## CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

You can help us raise awareness and support our Love Doesn't Hurt campaign by downloading and printing our posters and flyers. Visit [www.domesticviolenceuk.org](http://www.domesticviolenceuk.org)



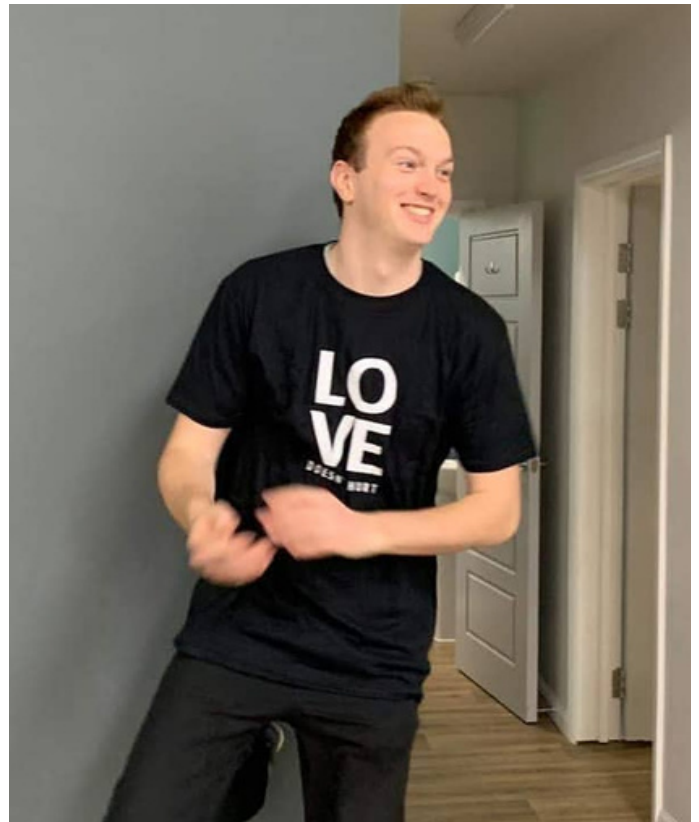
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- #LOVEDOESNTHURT #INSPIREHOPE

## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



# CAMPAIGN PICTURES





## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



# OUR ONLINE STORE

**LOVE**  
DOESN'T HURT

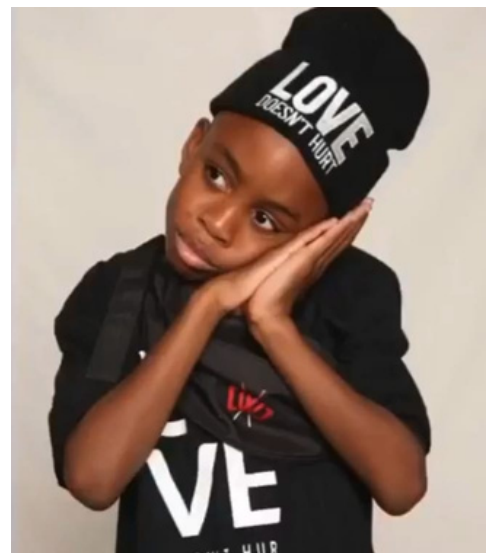
WEBSITE: [DVUK.ORG](http://DVUK.ORG)  
INSPIRE HOPE - BE A VOICE



## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



# CAMPAIGN PICTURES



LOVE DOESN'T HURT CAMPAIGN



**LOVE**  
DOESN'T HURT

[LOVEDOESNTHURT.ORG](http://LOVEDOESNTHURT.ORG)

INSPIRE HOPE - BE A VOICE  
SPEAK OUT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
[WWW.LOVEDOESNTHURT.ORG](http://WWW.LOVEDOESNTHURT.ORG)

HOW YOU  
CAN HELP







## HOW YOU CAN HELP

The way you respond to someone experiencing domestic or emotional abuse is very important and it can make a real difference in their lives.....

There are a few practical things that you can do to support the person physically and emotionally:

- Do not judge them at all
  - Show some concern about the situation and encourage them to open up with time.
  - Always talk to them in private
  - Ensure your response supports and encourages them to talk about the situation. It could create an opportunity for them to explore their options and in time make their decisions.
  - Always be there for them even if they give excuses, reject your support, become defensive and deny there is a problem.
- It's extremely important you listen and believe what you are told because it helps to build an ongoing relationship based on trust.
  - Reassure them that the abuse isn't their fault. Violence is a choice the abuser makes and they(the abusers) are solely responsible for their abusive behaviour.
  - Do not assume it isn't that serious
  - Do not tell anyone to leave or criticise them for staying in the relationship.
  - Allow them make the decision of leaving in their own time because it involves both emotional and practical considerations.
  - Offer to go with them to the hospital or GP if they've received any injuries or require medical attention.
  - As much as possible do not panic but be very sensitive, caring, cautious and



respectful.

- Focus on helping them rebuild their self confidence
- Be patient. – Leaving an abusive partner is a process.
- Do not mediate or be the contact person between them and the perpetrator
- Volunteer to keep copies of their important documents or items
- Remember to take things easy and look after yourself while supporting someone through such a difficult time
- Acknowledge that it takes strength to trust someone enough to talk to them about experiencing abuse
- Acknowledge that it could be a frightening and very difficult situation
- Assure them of the fact that they are not alone and there is help available to them.
- Encourage them to speak to specialist support organisations

## **SPECIALIST SUPPORT HELPLINES**

**The National Domestic Abuse Helpline -**

**08082000247**

**The Men's Advice Helpline - 08088010327**

**The National LGBT Helpline - 03009995428**

# CAMPAIGN PICTURES





Passing the message down t

## CAMPAIGN PICTURES



# DONATE

WE DON'T RECEIVE ANY GRANTS  
OR GOVERNMENT FUNDING.....

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A  
DONATION TO SUPPORT US.....

[www.domesticviolenceuk.org/donate](http://www.domesticviolenceuk.org/donate)



