



## How can you help?

### **Advice for friends, family, neighbours & the wider community if you suspect someone is experiencing abuse.**

During the coronavirus crisis, incidents of domestic abuse and violence have increased. This is likely to remain the case as we come out of lockdown because perpetrators will not want to relinquish control. As friends, family, neighbours or members of the community you can provide a lifeline for someone experiencing abuse.

Communities have achieved amazing things during the crisis and it is important that we continue to send out the message that there is no excuse for abuse. We've put together some guidance on how to support survivors but, **PLEASE REMEMBER, SURVIVORS ARE THE EXPERTS IN THEIR OWN LIVES**

#### **IN AN EMERGENCY**

**Encourage** them to call 999 in an emergency.

**Tell** them about the **Silent Solution** if they cannot speak.

**If** they are deaf or cannot communicate verbally, let them know about the **emergency text service** and encourage them to register.

**If you are worried that someone is in danger you should call 999.**

**It's** important to remember that someone could be experiencing abuse from a partner, ex-partner, family member or carer.

**We** understand that neighbours can feel reluctant to call the police. It is important to remember that your actions could provide a vital lifeline for a survivor.

**You** might be worried about what will happen if the perpetrator suspects you reported the abuse. Ensure you take steps to protect your own safety, and **never confront the perpetrator.**

**You** can also report a crime by calling the police on 101, or anonymously report a crime by calling Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111 or **online**.

**The** police have a duty to protect everyone and nobody should be discriminated against for any reason, including their immigration status.

## STAY CONNECTED

**It is** important that we find ways to stay connected and reach out to people at the moment as our movements are still restricted. Try to keep in contact with your friends, family members and neighbours, and ask how they are. It is essential we create safe spaces and opportunities for people to ask for help if it's needed. If you are worried about someone, tell them you are.

**Remember**, some people, including young people and children, may be out in public spaces despite restrictions because it's not safe to be at home. The Government has confirmed that if someone is experiencing abuse they can leave their home to seek help.

**Survivors** may take the opportunity given by food shopping, work, exercise, medical appointments or trips to the chemist to seek help and support.

## IF SOMEONE TELLS YOU THEY ARE EXPERIENCING ABUSE

- **Listen** to them and do not judge.
- **Never** blame them for the abuse, excuse or justify the perpetrator's behaviour. Do not ask them why they have not left or tell them that they should leave.
- **Believe** them.
- **Validate** what they are telling you. Eg. 'I'm really glad you told me,' 'this isn't your fault,' 'you are not alone'.
- **Ask** them what they need, and be guided by them. The survivor is always the expert in their own lives. It is important to be patient and allow them to set the pace. It is important the survivor feels they have choices. Remember, nobody knows the perpetrator as well as they know the perpetrator
- **If possible**, share information about how to get specialist support. Our contact details are below.
- **Offer** to keep in touch by phone or online - ask them which is the safest way to do this.
- **If you** have a trusting relationship with the survivor you can discuss a code word with them. This code word can be used if they need you to call the police on their behalf.

**01254 260465**

**[info@thewishcentre.org](mailto:info@thewishcentre.org)**

**Live Chat available 10am-12 noon and 2pm - 4pm via [www.bddwa.org](http://www.bddwa.org)**

**If you are outside of Blackburn with Darwen search for services in your area here [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)**