



Title: Abuse and relationships
Part 1: Partner control, Coercion and Violence

Level: THIRD/FOURTH

Links to Curriculum for Excellence

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
I recognise that power can exist within relationships and can be used positively as well as negatively. HWB 3-45a I know how to access services, information and support if my sexual health and wellbeing is at risk. I am aware of my rights in relation to sexual health including my right to confidentiality, and my responsibilities, including those under the law. HWB 3-48a I know where to get support and help with situations involving abuse and I understand that there are laws which protect me from different kinds of abuse. HWB3-49b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains the impact an imbalance of power can have on relationships, including sexual relationships, for example, consent, coercion, responsibility for actions and decisions. • Knows how to access confidential information, guidance and help. • Gives examples of laws in relation to sexual health, for example, age of consent, right to confidentiality, consent, coercion, grooming. • Identifies how to take action in a situation involving abusive or inappropriate sexual behaviour, for example, ending unhealthy relationships, local support, police.

The learning intentions and success criteria are met with delivery of both parts of this topic.

Learning Intentions

- Young people explore signs of abusive relationships and propose a range of strategies for accessing help.
- Young people understand the law protects them from abuse in relationships.

Success Criteria

- I can identify the signs of unhealthy relationship.
- I can talk about my right to be safe in intimate and sexual relationships.
- I can name sources of information, help and support.

Resources to support this activity.

- PowerPoint slides
- What is abuse in a relationship? Information leaflet to take home.
- ‘This is Abuse’ series of film clips:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6G4BEfJ0pM> (2 minutes 20)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zthG1nzn0uY> (1 minute 33)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO_7qHQslIs (2 minutes 51)

Whenever you use content on a platform like YouTube, please cue the film you intend to play in advance, check it is the film you want to view, and skip adverts.

Activity

1. Start with an acknowledgement that when we imagine our future relationships, we will usually think about loving and caring partners, but sometimes people can find themselves in situations where a partner is not loving and caring. Sometimes in relationships there can be a partner who tries to control their partner or is abusive toward them. Explain that this is what the class/group will think about today so that everyone can learn how to recognise these bad situations – and know that there is help available.

NOTE: In this session's discussions, while it is important to acknowledge that any person can experience abuse in a relationship, we also know that women and girls are by far most likely to experience the different forms of coercion or abuse described in the activities that follow. This can be highlighted and inform discussion.

2. **What is abuse in a relationship?** Share the slide, ask the young people to work in small groups to identify examples of each type of abuse.

What is abuse in a relationship?

There are different kinds of abuse that can happen.

1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Digital abuse
5. Financial abuse

3. Then share the information leaflet (which the young people can take away). Give the small groups a few minutes to run through the information to see if their given examples are there. To make it more manageable, suggest that the different groups look at different sections and then each can report back key things to the larger group. Ask for any questions young people have to help clarify what any of the terms or examples mean.
4. **Digital abuse.** At this age, and in the coming years, this may be an area of relationship abuse that young people can face – it is important they recognise it as such. Spend some time looking at this section of the information leaflet, discussing examples, ensuring understanding.
5. **Domestic abuse.** Explain that this term is one the young people might have heard. The word 'domestic' really just means in the home environment, but we realise that abuse doesn't just happen *in the home*, it happens *in the relationship*. With this in mind, the term is used to describe any of the abuses already talked about. If someone reports this abuse, then it is counted as a domestic abuse incident. Use the next 4 slides and discuss responses to the statistic/fact presented, if it helps with understanding and the discussion you could ask the young people *what do you think might be going on in this picture?*
 - Domestic abuse is when someone uses physical, emotional, digital or financial abuse or sexual violence to control, force, threaten or degrade a partner or an ex-partner.
 - There are 60,000 incidents of domestic abuse reported in Scotland every year – but it's thought that many are not reported.
 - Around four out of every five incidents of domestic abuse have a female victim, with one in five incidents there is a male victim.

- One in four lesbian/bi women have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship. Two thirds of those say the perpetrator was a woman, a third a man. Almost half (49%) of all gay/bi men report experience of domestic abuse from a family member or partner.
- 1 in 5 children and young people live in a home where there has been domestic abuse.

6. **What about young people?** Share the fact presented on the slide and have some discussion – what do young people think – are they surprised? How does it make them feel? How would they feel if this was something a friend experienced?

A study of 13- to 17-year-olds by NSPCC suggests this abuse can begin in their teenage years. 25% of girls and 18% of boys in the study reported having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner.

7. **Watch and discuss.** These short scenarios which develop two parallel stories of relationship abuse were made by the Hollyoaks TV programme (the young people might know/view) for a campaign called 'This is Abuse'. They should be shown one at a time with discussion in between – exploring young people's views of the scenarios, focus on what abuse is happening here? What could they do to help if this was happening to someone in their family or a friend? The situations remain unresolved, the voice over at the end of the 3rd film urges young people to seek help. (*The website given no longer works, stress that information about support will be given later in the lesson*).

- I. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6G4BEfJ0pM> (2 minutes 20 – this first piece introduces experiences of abuse, coercion and control for 2 women)
- II. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zthG1nzn0uY> (1 minute 33 – this second piece continues to present experiences and urges young people to recognise signs and seek help)
- III. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO_7qHQslIs (2 minutes 51 – this 3rd piece explores how friends can identify abuse and help)

8. Stalking and harassment

Having talked about all these elements of abuse in relationships young people may have raised or used the term 'stalking'. This slide explains this. If this hasn't been raised to date it is also helpful information; stalking can be a criminal act perpetrated by someone known or unknown to the victim.

Stalking is unwanted, focussed behaviours carried out by one person, or persons, against another, causing fear and alarm.

A wide range of behaviours may qualify as stalking – including sending unwanted messages, harassment and monitoring on social media, following or loitering, or verbal abuse. In Scots law, stalking is defined as a 'course of conduct' that places another person in a state of fear or alarm. A 'course of conduct' is defined as two or more incidents. That's all it takes for stalking incidents to become criminal.

[Stalking and harassment | Scottish Women's Rights Centre \(scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk\)](https://www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk)

9. **End with the series of slides** (checking understanding as you go) that remind young people about some key messages, including the final slide about seeking support or help.

Important things to remember.

- Healthy relationships are all about respecting each other. You should feel loved, safe and free to be yourself.
- Abuse in relationships can happen to anyone. It's not normal, it's never OK and definitely not part of a healthy relationship. It isn't always physical; it can be emotional and sexual abuse too. If your relationship leaves you feeling scared, intimidated or controlled, it's possible you're in an abusive relationship.
- Relationship abuse can destroy someone's self-confidence, have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing and leave them feeling isolated, lonely or depressed.
- **There's never an excuse for relationship abuse.** Anger, jealousy, alcohol or wanting to protect the other person – none of these justify abuse. If you are in an abusive relationship, or someone you love is, then you should talk to someone you trust.
- **Childline** provides free confidential advice and support for all young people your age. Whatever your worry, if it's about you or someone you love, Childline counsellors are there to help. Speak to them by phone, online or email 24 hours a day.

Information and chat online <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Phone 0800 1111

Additional ideas

Young people who want to do further reading or research could visit these sites/agencies:

- **Scottish Women's Aid** is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse: <https://womensaid.scot/>
- **Zero Tolerance** is a charity working to end men's violence against women. It began in 1992 with a ground-breaking Edinburgh-based poster campaign which brought the issue of domestic abuse out from behind closed doors and into public consciousness and asserted that violence against women was never acceptable: <https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/>
- You might want to share information about Scotland's new legislation in this area. Or direct young people to this information. **6 things you need to know about Scotland's new Domestic Abuse Law** has been written by the Scottish Women's Rights Centre, available here: <https://www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk/news/news/7-things-to-know-about-scotlands-new-domestic-abuse-law/>
- You may have concerns about the expression of misogyny in the school setting. Young people may be connecting with social media influencers in this regard. Participation in the **Mentors in Violence** programme may assist you in addressing these issues and creating a school culture that is safe for all: [Mentors in Violence Prevention \(rshp.scot\)](http://www.rshp.scot) You may also find these open resources helpful: [Gender Based Violence | Mentors in Violence Prevention in Scottish Schools \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](http://glowscotland.org.uk)

Connecting with home

This text could form the basis of communication with parents and carers about both parts of this topic.

We are talking and learning at school about abuse and relationships. We want to make sure young people can recognise the signs of an unhealthy relationship and know where they can get help and support. When we learn about unhealthy relationships we are talking about grooming, sexual exploitation and domestic abuse (which can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, digital abuse and financial abuse).

- This information is about grooming – what it is and how to protect children and young people: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/grooming/>

- If you are a parent or carer with concerns that your child is being groomed you can find out more here, including how to make a report: [Should I make a report to CEOP? | parent/carer](#)
- We encourage young people to contact ChildLine if they have a worry or concern. They can phone 0800 1111 or chat online <https://www.childline.org.uk/> all in confidence.
- As an adult, if you are affected by domestic abuse or are concerned about someone who is, we would recommend that you contact Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline. It offers 24-hour help and support on 0800 027 1234 and online here: <http://sdafmh.org.uk>

Further learning activities are available that connect to this RSHP curriculum content.

- Abuse and relationships: Grooming and sexual exploitation

Practitioner Notes