



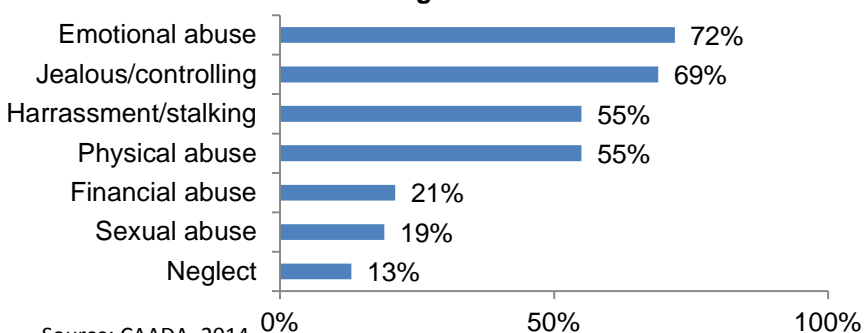
What is an abusive relationship

Relationship abuse between young people refers to relationships where the young people have been, or are in, an intimate relationship. This includes long term relationships and more casual or one-off encounters. If a young person is 16 or over and has suffered one or more incidents of controlling or threatening behaviour or assault by a boy/girlfriend, then they can be classed as a victim of domestic violence. Domestically abusive behaviours can take the form of physical, sexual, emotional and/or financial abuse, amongst other forms. Evidence shows that coercive and controlling behaviours are likely to escalate into violence and subsequently become a reoccurring feature in the relationship.

Recommended actions

- Begin to collate local data relating to young people and domestic.
- Consult young people in Cheshire West and Chester secondary schools and youth provisions on 'healthy relationships', to identify gaps in knowledge of healthy and abusive relationships.
- Use consultation findings to inform practice and the Cheshire West Domestic Abuse Strategy 2014/16.
- Deliver 'train the trainer' domestic abuse training to professionals working with 13 to 19 year olds, to improve early identification and ensure they have the skills, knowledge and competency to inform, educate and support young people experiencing, or at risk of, domestic abuse.
- Peer educators to provide educational workshops in informal and educational settings, for both boys and girls, to inform and raise awareness of unhealthy and abusive relationships.
- Ensure young people have access to young person friendly information and guidance packs on the signs of unhealthy and abusive relationships, safety planning and what support is available to them.
- Agree a care/referral pathway for disclosures for 13 to 19 year olds and professionals at a local level through Early Support Access Team (ESAT), Children's Social Care and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).
- Deliver bespoke training to external professionals and workforce who support 13-19 year olds on care/referral pathways and young peoples Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) Risk Indicator Assessment (RIC) /MARAC, including youth charities, youth service, Princes Trust and YMCA Training.
- Relevant Practitioners becoming involved with data collection with CAADA toolkit.

Types of abuse experienced by young people in England



Source: CAADA, 2014

Research by the NSPCC found that 33% of girls and 16% of boys reported some form of sexual abuse, 25% of girls and 18% of boys reported some form of physical abuse and 75% of girls and 50% of boys reported some form of emotional abuse. Those aged 13 to 15 were as likely as those aged 16 and over to experience some forms of relationship abuse.

Nationally, of young people referred to Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA), 83% were referred because of intimate partner violence in their relationship. The most common type of abuse was emotional abuse and jealous and controlling behaviour. However, many experience multiple types of abuse. The young people supported are extremely vulnerable and are at high risk of serious harm. The majority supported reported depression or anxiety, and more than a third had self harmed. Many do not live in a safe environment and are from 'troubled families'.

Teenage relationship abuse is often hidden due a number factors including having limited experience of relationships; being under pressure from their peers to act a certain way; and accepting violence in the relationship. One in five young men and one in 10 young women think abuse or violence against women is acceptable.

The NSPCC found that the majority of young people did not inform an adult of the abuse. The young person can also experience a feeling of entrapment. Experience of abuse can have serious outcomes including substance misuse, depression, self-harm and suicide.

Rationale: A healthy relationship is based on a caring and respect. Young people who experience abuse within an intimate relationship are extremely vulnerable and at risk of harm to their mental and physical health along with an increased likeliness of substance misuse and sexually risk-taking behaviour.