

Helping you to...

Get it Right!

Information
for men
who are
concerned
about their
behaviour in
relationships

A few words about this booklet...

This booklet aims to give you help and advice to take the first steps in addressing your behaviours, helping you to improve your life and your current or future relationships. All you need to do is to “want” to change and learn from our help.

It can be difficult facing up to your problems, but reading this booklet can be your first step. We can offer you the tools to make the changes for a more positive future. Throughout this booklet, we use the term ‘partner’ to include wife and girlfriend.

While reading this information, we encourage you to think honestly about your own behaviours. Think about how many times you’ve behaved in a certain way, have you been abusive, controlling or even violent, is there a pattern to your behaviour? Being more aware of your behaviours makes it easier to change them.

It takes hard work to change your behaviours, but it can be done. This booklet can only offer you information and make you aware of some of the effects of the problem, to discuss this further, contact Pathways on:

01226 249800 or email us at **pathwayscentre33@yahoo.co.uk**

We’re here to help!



Think about your behaviour

Have you ever: Called your partner names, put her down/mockled her or criticised her? Have you threatened to harm her, her friends or family? Have you threatened to harm yourself if she won't do what you want? Have you ever checked up on her, looked through her phone or social network accounts, do you make her account for her time or try to control who she sees?

Have you ever: Slapped, punched or hit your partner? Have you pushed, kicked or grabbed her? Threatened her with objects, grabbed her hair or tried to strangle/choke her? Have you ever thrown or smashed objects in the house or punched/kicked doors or walls?

Have you ever: Pressured your partner in to having sex, touched her sexually against her will, sulked or punished her for not having sex or pressured in to having sex with others? Have you made her watch pornography or taken sexual photos knowing she's not comfortable with this?

Have you ever: Demanded to know everything your partner spends money on, do you make all the financial decisions, do you keep all the money making your partner ask for or be grateful for any money?

Have you ever: Tried to contact your (ex) partner by phone, text, letter, social network sites or through a third party when she has asked you not to. Have you ever waited for her in a place she might be such as school or the shops?

Stop and think... how would 'YOU' feel if someone treated you like that?



Time to Change!



Have you ever asked yourself..?

What's it like for her?

Remember

- !** No matter how angry you feel, it's never ok to scare your partner
- !** It's not your partner's fault that you behave the way you do
- !** You can change your behaviour if you choose to do so
- !** Domestic abuse is a criminal offence. The police and the criminal justice system are taking this more seriously than ever before and they have the power to prosecute you even if your partner withdraws her statement

How does your behaviour affect your partner?

Understanding what it's like for your partner, "how it feels for her" being on the receiving end, can help you become less likely to be abusive in the future.

Health and Physical Effects

If you've used physical violence against your partner, she may have suffered any of the following injuries:

- Broken bones
- Black eyes
- Bruises
- Body stiffness
- Cuts/split lip
- Burst ear drum
- Hair pulled out

There are some cases where women have even been killed or permanently disabled by their partners.



Even if you haven't been physically violent, your partner may have developed any of the following physical problems:

- Feeling physically tense
- Feeling tired/exhausted
- Feeling anxious/on edge
- Panic attacks
- Finding it difficult to sleep
- Palpitations

As well as the physical effects, abuse also has an impact on women's emotional wellbeing. She might start feeling:

- Stressed
- Alone/Isolated
- Vulnerable
- Humiliated
- Depressed
- Scared
- Ashamed
- Worthless
- Drained
- Unloved
- Confused
- Hurt
- Nervous

What is this doing to your relationship?

Relationships always suffer as a result of abusive behaviours. If you are abusive towards your partner you can't expect her to feel the same about you as she did before, even if she might try or pretend.



So what might happen?

- Your partner might distance herself from you
- She may become withdrawn, not talk to you or share things with you
- She might not be truthful with you, (trying to protect her and/or children)
- She might be scared of you, be anxious around you
- Your relationship might suffer physically, you might not feel close anymore, she may not have the same sexual feelings for you
- You might feel frustrated or depressed

Do any of these sound familiar?

Do you have children or stepchildren?

Is this how you want your relationship to be?

Think about how they may be affected!



Many people affected by domestic abuse say their children aren't aware of the abuse that is going on in the home, especially if they were in another room when it happened. But studies show this is not the case.

Children are a lot more aware than most people realise. They can suffer long-term harm if they live with abuse or violence in the home, even if it's not directed at them.

Children might be exposed to and/or affected by the abuse in many ways, they might:

- !** See or hear the abuse
- !** Be woken by your shouting/arguing, causing them to feel scared and not know what to do
- !** Have difficulties sleeping, worrying about their mum or whether the abuse will start
- !** Find it hard to concentrate
- !** Wet the bed, making them feel embarrassed
- !** Develop eating disorders, panic attacks, stress or anxiety
- !** Try intervening, putting themselves at risk
- !** Be scared if things are being thrown about
- !** Feel they have to behave differently when you're around so as not to annoy you
- !** Become distrusting, jumpy, develop low self esteem or psychological problems
- !** Be made subject to child protection investigations or court proceedings
- !** Copy your behaviour, becoming abusive to their mum or bully children at school
- !** Turn to drink/drugs or misbehave, getting in trouble with the law

Even if your children haven't seen you being abusive or violent, it is almost certain that they will have overheard things. Imagine being in another room, listening to the shouting and your mother being abused, not knowing what will happen or how/when it will end.



Time to Change!

Remember

- !*** The impact of your abuse can go on for years
- !*** Even if your child didn't witness the abuse, they can still be harmed by it
- !*** Telling yourself "It's not that bad" doesn't make it better. How bad does it need to be before you do something about it?

Admitting it's not right

So you meet a woman who you really like, begin a relationship and work towards a future together, but somewhere along the way things have started to go wrong.

You may not intend to hurt your partner, but you are doing. You might be feeling bad about how you're behaving - ashamed or guilty. Facing up to what you've done and how it's affected her can be one of the most difficult things to do, but taking responsibility is the biggest first step towards change.

Why don't people take responsibility?

- It stops you feeling bad about yourself
- You don't have to look at yourself and the way you behave, you don't need to change or do anything about it.
- Not taking responsibility for your abuse/violence means there's more chance it will continue.

So....how might you avoid taking responsibility for your behaviours?



Have you ever Minimised your actions - have you ever said...?

- *“I only gave her one slap”*
- *“It only happens now and again”*
- *“I didn’t mean to hurt her”*
- *“I hardly touched her”*



***I only gave
her one slap***

You may minimise your actions to make it easier for you to live with your abusive behaviours and to avoid being judged by others. But unless you face the seriousness of your actions, you can’t change them.

Have you ever Blamed your partner - have you ever said...?

- *“She asked for it”*
- *“She knows which buttons to press”*
- *“She makes me jealous/angry”*
- *“She hit me first”*
- *“She wouldn’t shut up”*
- *“She knows what I’m like”*



***She
wouldn’t
shut up***

Blaming your partner means you are denying your responsibility for your own behaviours. When blaming your partner you might:

- Focus on your partner’s behaviours rather than your own
- Think or say, *“If only she would do/not do something, I wouldn’t behave this way”*
- Feel that she needs to change in order for you to stop being abusive or violent

Pathways speak to a number of men who want to tell us how their partner causes the problems and make them behave the way they do. Some men feel they are the victim and in some cases they are but for others, they are just minimising or denying their own actions, trying to blame their actions on their partner.

Taking full responsibility for your behaviour is essential to make changes. You need to recognise that ‘you’ are in control of how ‘you’ behave, and it is not your partner’s fault. If you find yourself blaming your partner, try this:

- Focus on your behaviour
- Think about your partners feelings
- Remind yourself that you are in control of what you do



Blame can be placed elsewhere too

You might also blame other factors in your life, for example:

- Problems at work
- Having no money/debt problems
- Children
- Your poor upbringing or bad experiences as a child

Although these might cause changes in your mood and you may argue about these, none of these cause you to be violent. Plenty of people experience these things without becoming violent. Think of a time that you've been stressed about work or the children or money, when you weren't abusive.

Another may be alcohol and/or drugs

People react differently to alcohol and drugs. Many people use them without ever becoming violent or abusive. If you find that when you drink you become more abusive or aggressive and you still drink- then you're making a choice to be abusive. You are still responsible for your behaviour even if you are drunk or high.

When some people are drunk or high, they may become more violent, it can also be more difficult to stop yourself, meaning you may cause more damage than you intended to your partner and/or family.

Remember:

- !** You may cause more harm to others when you have been drinking alcohol or using drugs
- !** If you chose to drink or take drugs, have a safe limit or do it away from your family. This may mean planning to stay elsewhere for the night
- !** Being 'out of it' is not an excuse. You're still responsible for your own behaviours, drunk, high or sober

Other excuses

Instead of admitting it was your fault, you might want to believe that something just took you over, such as 'a red mist', maybe you want to believe that the pressure inside you built up too much so you had no other choice, 'you just blew/explored'. But think about this for a moment.....most of the time your abuse isn't random, but specifically directed towards your partner. You wouldn't normally 'explode' randomly at passers-by when you feel bad, neither would you 'see red' and hit just anyone who happens to be near.

This is just another way to not look at your own behaviours. When in reality you could make a difference.

Have you ever stopped yourself being abusive towards her in front of someone else?

Have you ever hit your partner where you know no one will see her bruise?

If so, you haven't lost complete control in these situations, which shows you can maintain control.





Why be abusive?

Abuse isn't about losing control, most of the time it's about trying to be in control. Think about the times when you have abused your partner, what did you want to happen in these times? There is usually an intention behind your abuse.

What was your intention?

What did you want to happen?

Was it any of these...?

- To make her stop doing something
- To make her do something
- To make her shut up
- Punish her for doing something you didn't like
- Punish her for hurting your feelings
- To get your own way

This is what we mean when we say that domestic violence is about power and control. Whenever you're trying to make her do something she doesn't want to do or make her stop doing something she wants to do, you're trying to control her.

Remember:

- !*** You aren't made to be abusive, it is a decision. You have the choice of whether to be abusive or not. There are other options
- !*** If you want a relationship based on intimacy, trust and respect, you must stop blaming your partner or other factors and face up to the fact that you are in charge of your own actions, therefore only you can make the changes
- !*** Just because you've been violent or abusive in the past, doesn't mean the future has to be the same

Time to Change!

So what can you do? - Prevent abusive behaviours ***Spotting the warning signs!***

This section will help you to be more aware of when things are heating up and you're getting into a situation where you may be abusive towards your partner. The more you are aware of your 'warning signs', the more you will be able to stop yourself from being abusive.

When you notice the following 'warning signs' in yourself, do something about it.....Take a 'time out' (See page 15)



Warning signs

You feel yourself wanting to argue:

Examples might include conflicts over parenting, money, relatives, friends and who's right or wrong.

Physical warning signs:

Think about what is happening for you physically before you become abusive:

What do you feel in your body? For example, tension in your stomach/shoulders/neck/jaw, heavier breathing or increased heart rate.

Do you do any of the following?

Point your finger at your partner, clench your fists, throw your arms about, pace up and down, raise your voice or shout, glare at your partner or say hurtful things to her.

Emotional warning signs:

Do your emotional feelings change? For example do you feel: resentful, angry, trapped, confused, guilty, embarrassed, upset or hurt?

Mental warning signs:

What are you thinking before you become abusive? Are you thinking negative things about your partner, do you try to justify your behaviour because you believe she deserves it, do you use degrading names/words to hurt your partner?



Negative self-talk makes things worse, things you might say could be:

- *“She’s doing this deliberately to wind me up”*
- *“She’s so stupid”*
- *“She never gets anything right”*
- *“She never listens to me”*
- *“Why doesn’t she just shut up”*

These are all your warning signs. If you know that you have been abusive in the past, then it’s important that you are able to recognise these emotional warning signs in the future. Anger, hurt and other feelings are unpleasant and can be difficult to manage, but they do not have to lead to violence. There will be times in your life when you have dealt with difficult feelings without being abusive.

Remember

It’s never too late to make a different choice. A positive choice, you can walk away and avoid the abuse.





Time to Change!

Time to take a time out!

A time out is a tool used to avoid escalation of abusive words and behaviours, as well as possible violence in relationships.

- Time outs allow you time to calm down and think more clearly, reflecting on your situation.
- Time outs do not always stop the cause of the arguments but they do help you to think more clearly finding the most appropriate way to deal with an argument without damaging your relationship.
- Time outs and their correct use (e.g. the length of time taken for a time out) should be discussed with your partner before putting them in to place, so you both know what to expect when a time out is taken.

How to take a time out

As soon as you recognise your warning signs, take a moment to step back from the situation and take a time out.

Calmly let your partner know that you need to take a time out and remove yourself from the situation for the agreed time discussed between you and your partner.

We suggest leaving your home for 1 hour and to stick to this time, not 50 minutes, not 3 hours. There are two important reasons why you need to stick to the hour:

1. You can build trust and reliability if you stick to what you say you are going to do.
2. 1 hour is a realistic length of time in which to calm down and review what was happening. If you start to shorten this time, you increase the risk of returning and being abusive.

During your time out, calm yourself down

During the first 20 minutes or so, work on calming yourself down. Think of how you can control your behaviour, rather than controlling hers. Reflect on the situation; think about alternative behaviours and what you can do to prevent this escalating again. Whatever you do, make sure it's something that helps you to calm down and don't use alcohol or drugs.

Examine your behaviour

During the rest of your time out, think about 'your' behaviour and any negative thoughts that you were having about your partner. You may want to write some of these down if that helps you. What did you want to change about your partner? If you're going to be non-abusive, you will need to be able to focus on changing 'your' behaviour rather than your partners.

Think about what you're going to do or say when you return home. Also think about things you may not normally think about, such as how your partner is feeling, try to understand her point of view, reflect on her good points and listen to what she says.

Returning home

Before you return home, it's sometimes a good idea to ring your partner to let her know that you on your way home and that you have calmed down. When you get home, if your partner wants to discuss the situation with you, do so in a non-abusive and non-blaming way. If during the discussion you find yourself becoming worked up again and recognise any of your warning signals, tell her this and take another time out.

If your partner doesn't want to discuss the situation when you return home, don't push her; maybe suggest a time agreed by both of you when you could calmly discuss the situation.

If she is not prepared to talk to you at all yet, leave her alone until she is ready to do so. If you try to force her to talk about things, you are being abusive.

Talk to your partner about time outs

It's very important to talk about time outs with your partner well ahead of when you will need to use one. Do this at a time when you're calm and she has agreed to discuss it with you.

She may not want to talk about it with you, if this is the case, leave this information with her and then she can read it at another time if she chooses to. A time out is a tool for you and your partner.

Don't abuse the time out

It is important that you don't abuse the time out. If you do any of the following, you are abusing the time out process:

- Using it against her by storming out in the middle of an argument
- Using it as an excuse to go to the pub or to stay out late
- Telling her that she needs to take a time out
- Returning from a time out without having calmed yourself down/ still wanting to argue
- Using it to control your partner in any other way

These actions are not respectful and are another form of abuse against your partner.

Join the Get it Right Programme

This programme is designed to support and help men to change their abusive behaviours and develop respectful, non-abusive relationships. The biggest part of the programme is run as a group so men have the chance to learn from each other and support one another, and we also offer one to one appointments throughout the programme.

The groups run weekly and offer either an afternoon or an evening group for any men who want to change their behaviours. We also run a group specifically for men aged between 17 and 25 years.

The funding for our younger men's group has been very gratefully received from Lloyds TSB Foundation.

The programme covers 8 different themes, looking at various aspects of relationships, being:

1. Non-violence
2. Non-threatening behaviour
3. Respect
4. Support and Trust
5. Honesty and Accountability
6. Sexual Respect
7. Partnerships including:
 - Economic Partnership
 - Shared Responsibility
 - Responsible Parenting
8. Negotiation and Fairness



You can contact us yourself by telephone, email or call in to our office.

***Time to
Change!***

I used to pretend that the violence wasn't that bad - pushing and shoving and stuff like that. It wasn't till we looked at the effects of violence on women and children on the programme that I realised how frightened she was of me

Malcolm, 44

Believe in yourself

***You can change if you
really want to!***



Contact Pathways now:

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33-35 Peel Parade
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Get it Right!

