

The Hideout is a website for children and young people that may be experiencing domestic abuse at home.

www.thehideout.org.uk

Teenagers may also experience abuse in their own intimate relationships. For advice on how to talk to your teenager about healthy relationships, please visit

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/controlling-behaviour-in-relationships-coercive-control/>

Other factsheets in this series

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Leaflet 1a You, your child and domestic abuse

Leaflet 2 Parenting Babies under 18 months

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Leaflet 4 Parenting Preschool Children

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Leaflet 9 Communicating with your child about domestic abuse. What children need to hear from the victim

You can access these factsheets and find out more information about domestic abuse at the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership website

www.cambsdasv.org.uk

Cambridge Women's Aid **01223 361214**

(City/South Cambs)

Refuge **07787 255821**

(Fenland, East Cambs, Hunts)

Children's Social Care (Cambridgeshire)

0345 045 5203

Specialist abuse services for children & young people (Peterborough) **01733 669404**



**Cambridgeshire
& Peterborough**
Domestic Abuse & Sexual
Violence Partnership

Parenting a teenager who has experienced domestic abuse



Leaflet 6

PARENTING A TEENAGER WHO HAS EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC ABUSE

The teenage years for most parents and teenagers are a time of difficulty. This can be made particularly difficult if there is domestic abuse and/or violence. During the teenage years, your child is learning who they are, and are comfortable exploring this. They are beginning to realise that they are young adults. They may begin to question authority (even the most adjusted of teenagers will begin to question authority!). They are prone to self doubt. Peer relationships are very important and over take (although do not replace) the relationships with parents and caregivers. They begin to overcome self consciousness as they progress through their teenage years and it is important for them to have people that they feel they relate to. Sexual and gender identity is established which can be hard for young people. There may be same sex feelings which the teenager has to learn to explore and come to terms with safely. They begin to experiment with roles and find the one most suitable for them.

Parenting teenagers can be made more difficult if there is domestic violence/abuse in the home.

They may be trying to go through the natural processes of separation from the parents. This may be made more difficult for them because they may feel that you need them and rely on them to help you with the abuse. This can cause resentment and can restrict their ability to explore who they are. They may feel socially isolated due to the problems at home. Their emotional development can be affected in many ways. They may begin to explore intimacy with a peer which could reflect the intimate relationships that they have experienced between their care givers. They may also be

beginning to build sustainable friendships which could also suffer because of the domestic abuse and/or violence. Teenagers need to have a sense of integrity, trust, happiness, security and self confidence. These can all suffer as a result of domestic abuse or violence.

HOW DO I BEGIN TO OVERCOME THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE/VIOLENCE WITH MY TEENAGER?

Communicate with your teenager. Listen to them. You may not like what they have to say but they need to tell you how they are feeling about the abuse and/or violence. Try to be nonthreatening. Your teenager, despite all of their efforts to be/appear independent, needs you. If they have experienced domestic abuse they may display some of the following:

They may be angry and confused

They may resent you for putting up with the abuse and/or not standing up for yourself

They have unrealistic expectations and beliefs about intimate relationships

They may be aggressive to others

They may harm themselves or others

They may suffer poor self esteem

They may be particularly shy

They may try to protect you from your abuser

They may rebel against authority figures

They may have poor coping skills

They may experience depression, stress or anxiety

HOW CAN I HELP MY TEENAGER?

Talk to them, but don't pressure them

Make time for them to come to you

Take time away from the home so that they can relax with you

Come up with safe and simple ground rules for both of you

Develop a safety plan

Name and praise positive behaviour

If you feel that you are not coping with your teenager or that their behaviour is worsening or dangerous it is important to get help and support as soon as possible.

You can speak with your IDVA your teenager's teacher, your GP or seek counselling for your teenager and you if appropriate.

All of the above agencies have a duty of care to you and your teenager. If your teenager is considered at significant risk of harm then these agencies may have to share information with each other. Where possible, we, and they, will attempt to get your permission to share information. In some cases though, we may need to share information without your permission if it would put your teenager at further risk if we did ask permission.

Many parents worry that the impact of the abuse and/or violence will remain with their child throughout their lives and that their children will be negatively influenced by the abuse/violence. This is not the case. In many situations, supporting your child with the abuse and communicating with them about the abuse will help to get rid of any of the negative effects the experience of domestic abuse and/or violence has caused. There is a lot that you can do to help. Please note that the term 'experiencing domestic abuse' means seeing, hearing, knowing about or being abused.