

Young teenagers' experiences of domestic abuse: A case for early prevention?

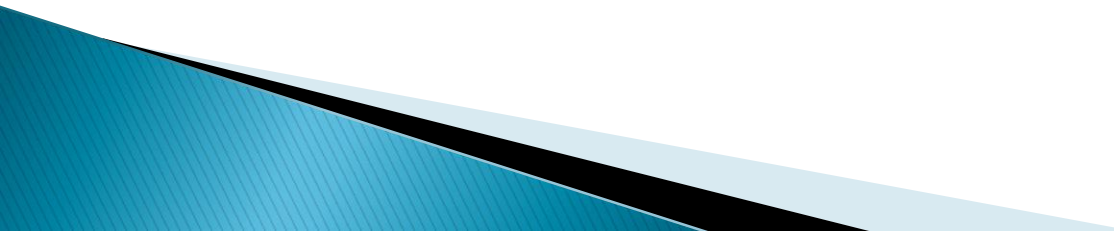
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What are young people's experiences of domestic abuse?

Young people witnessing abuse

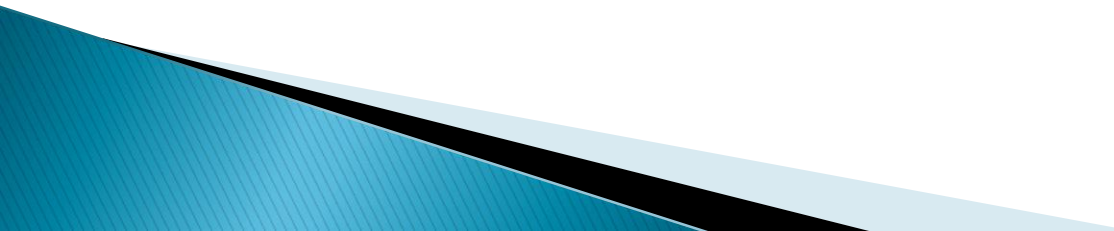
- Three quarters of domestic abuse incidents occur when children are in the house (Solomon and Fraser, 2009).
 - 17.5% of 11-17 year olds and 26% of 18-24 year olds have witnessed physical violence at home (Radford et al., 2011).
 - Effects of living with a parent who is abusive: fear, guilt, shame, anxiety, physical injury, problems with schooling, peer relationships, poor concentration, depression, aggression and problems in adult relationships (Kitzmann et al., 2003; Mullender et al., 2002).
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Violence in young people's relationships

Barter et al (2009)

- 1353 young people aged 13-18 [$\frac{3}{4}$ aged 15+]
- Eight schools in England, Wales and Scotland

Victimisation

- 22% moderate physical violence (pushing, slapping, hitting, holding down).
 - 8% severe physical violence (punching, strangling, beating up, hitting w. object).
 - Girls more likely to experience physical violence than boys and repeated violence.
 - 72% girls and 51% boys emotional violence.
 - 31% girls and 16% boys pressured/forced to do something sexual.
 - 18% girls and 11% of boys had been pressured or forced to have sex.
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Barter et al (2009)

Perpetration

- 25% girls and 8% of boys perpetrated physical violence.
- 59% girls and 50% boys perpetrated emotional violence.
- 3% girls and 12% boys perpetrated sexual violence.
- Girls: high levels of negative impact.

Help seeking

- Low rates of help-seeking among those who had experienced abuse.
 - 43% of girls and 64% of boys told no one.
- US studies: teenagers more likely to turn to peers for help (Foshee et al., 1997; Ocampo et al., 2007).

From Boys to Men Research Study

Stage 1

- What are the rates of domestic abuse among young teenagers – aged 13-14?
- What is the nature of the abuse at this age – is there any overlap between being a victim *and* perpetrator
- What percentage of young people would seek help if it happened to them?
- In what ways do gender and experiences of abuse impact on the willingness to seek help?

Questionnaire

The questions below are very sensitive and personal (about you). You do not have to answer the questions if you do not want to and you can stop answering the questions at any time. **Think about people you have dated, and past or current boyfriends or girlfriends. Have THEY:**

If you have NEVER been on a date or had a boyfriend/girlfriend please circle 'Never' for each of the 10 questions

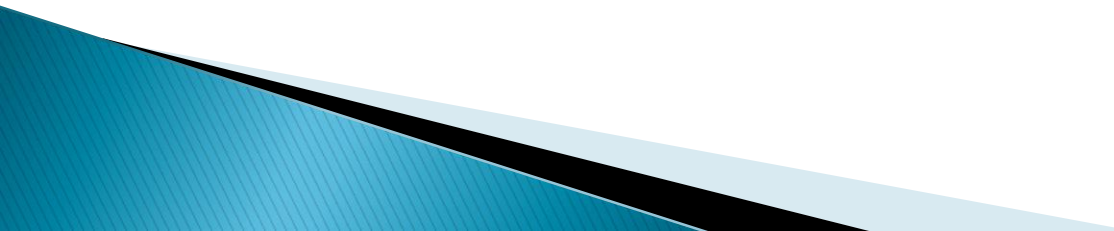
	(Please circle one)	If you ticked once or more than once did this happen in the last 12 months?
1) Ever pushed, slapped or grabbed you?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
2) Ever punched, kicked or choked you, or beaten you up?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
3) Ever threatened to physically hurt you?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
4) Ever pressured or forced you to have sex?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
5) Ever pressured or forced you to do anything else sexual, including kissing, hugging and touching?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
6) Ever called you nasty names to put you down?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
7) Ever stopped you from seeing your friends or family?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
8) Ever told you who you can't speak to?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
9) Ever checked up on who you have phoned or sent messages to?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No
10) Ever damaged something of yours on purpose?	Never/Once/More than once	Yes/No

- Three sections:
 - Victimisation (10 questions)
 - Perpetration (10 questions)
 - Witnessing (8 questions)
- Measured: physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

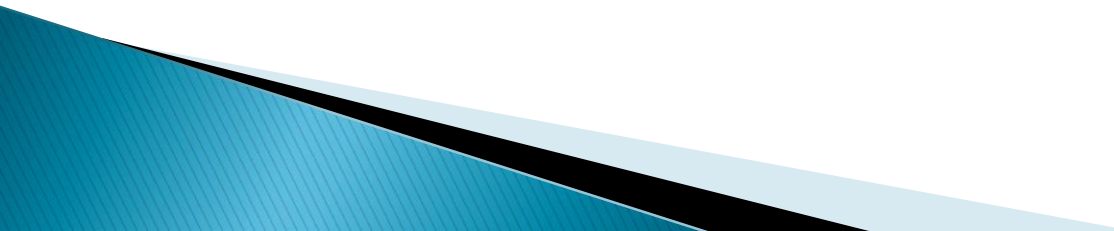
Help-Seeking

- Suppose a boy/girlfriend ever hit you, how likely would you be to seek help from an adult?
- Suppose you found out that an adult who looks after you was being hit by their partner, how likely would you be to seek help from an adult outside of your friends and family?

1= Not at all likely, 2 = Not likely, 3 = Somewhat likely or 4 = Very Likely.



Participants

- 1143 year 9 children, aged 13-14.
 - 13 secondary schools in Staffordshire.
 - 541 males and 568 females (missing for 34).
 - Ethnicity: 89% white; 5% Asian; 3% Mixed; 1% Black; 0.3% Chinese; 0.2% other.
 - Nationality: 95% British.
 - Parental opt out (19) and self opt out (28). Twice as many boys than girls opted out of the research.
 - 83% had been on a date (predominantly heterosexual relationships).
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Experiences of victimisation

- 45% of pupils (44%M, 46%F) victims of at least one type of abuse
 - Emotional abuse/controlling behaviours: 38%
 - Physical abuse: 17%
 - (21% if extended to threatening/damage of property)
 - Sexual abuse: 14%
- 17.6% had experienced both emotional and physical abuse, 21% experienced emotional abuse only, 3.9% experienced physical abuse only.
- No significant differences between girls' and boys' rates of victimisation...
- ...except for sexual victimisation where girls experiences were significantly higher (18% of girls compared to 11% of boys).


Perpetration of domestic abuse

- 25% of pupils (25%M, 24%F) perpetrated at least one type of abuse
 - Emotional abuse/controlling behaviours: 20%
 - Physical abuse: 7%
 - (8% including threatening/damage to property)
 - Sexual abuse: 4%
- 5.2% had perpetrated emotional and physical abuse; 15.1% emotional only; 3.3% physical abuse only.
- No significant differences between girls' and boys' rates of perpetration.

Witnessing domestic abuse

- 34% of all pupils (30%M, 39%F) witnessed at least one type of abuse.
 - Emotional abuse/controlling behaviours: 27%
 - Physical abuse: 19%
 - (24% including threatening/damage to property)
- 19.5% witnessed emotional and physical abuse; 10.9% emotional only; 6% physical abuse only.
- Girls were more likely to report witnessing each type of abuse than boys.

Associations between victimisation, perpetration and witnessing domestic abuse

- 51.2% of those who had experienced abuse also admitted to having been abusive.
 - 92.3% of perpetrators reported that they had been victimised.
 - 19.5% were victims and perpetrators; 17.8% victims only; 1.4% perpetrators only
 - 67% of those who have witnessed abuse had also been a victim of abuse in their own relationships.
 - Those who had witnessed abuse within the family were more likely to report having perpetrated it – 42% compared to 15%.
 - Therefore, perpetrators also reported significant levels of both victimisation and witnessing abuse at home.
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Help seeking

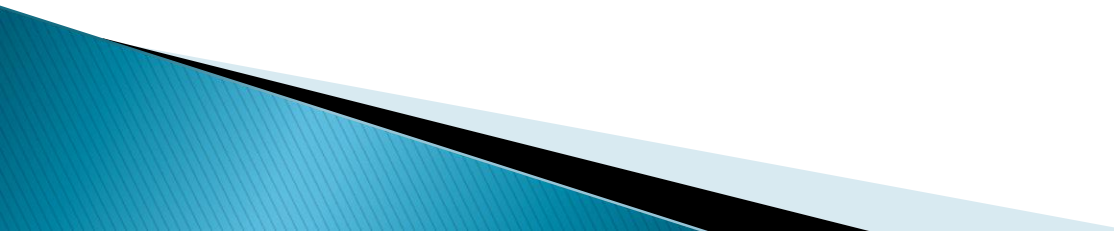
1. Suppose a boy/girlfriend ever hit you, how likely would you be to seek help from an adult?
 2. Suppose you found out that an adult who looks after you was being hit by their partner, how likely would you be to seek help from an adult outside of your friends and family?
- More likely to seek help in relation to witnessing abuse than abuse in their own relationship (71% compared to 45%).
 - Boys (33%) were less likely to seek help than girls (68%) if they experienced abuse in their own relationship.
 - No gender differences for help seeking in relation to witnessing abuse.

Association between help-seeking and experiences of abuse.

Help seeking for abuse in own relationship

- Victims of abuse (40%) were less likely to seek help than non-victims (56%).
- Female perpetrators (50%) were less likely to seek help compared to female non-perpetrators (72%).
- Those who had witnessed abuse at home (44%) were less likely to seek help than non-witnesses (54%).

Help seeking for witnessing abuse

- Girls who had witnessed abuse (66%) were less likely to seek help than girls who had not (78%).
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Conclusions

- Over half (52.5%) of the whole sample of 13-14 year olds had experienced some form of domestic abuse – as victim, perpetrator or witness.
 - Slightly lower rates of abuse reported than in previous research with older teenagers/young adults.
 - Abuse in relationships starts at a much earlier age than was previously recognised.
 - Few 'pure' perpetrators.
 - Interventions need to target children before age 13.
 - Preventative work should be responsive to the fact that many have already experienced abuse, or have witnessed it, and have experiences of dealing with it alone.
 - Education needs to be alive to gender differences, but not to neglect the considerable overlaps in boys' and girls' experiences.
 - Barriers to overcome to encourage more children to seek help – for some, this is shaped by previous experiences.
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