

FOCUS GROUP- PROTOCOL

The research: The aim of the research is to explore why some people engage in domestic abuse against their partners, boyfriends/girlfriends or other family members and what could be done to prevent this.

Topics for discussion: Some example topics will be: causes and nature, differences between boys and girls, education and help. We will start with a short video.

Anonymity and ground rules: In the transcript we make of the discussion we will change all names and anything else that might make you identifiable to anyone else. The recording will not be made available to other people and will be destroyed once we have a fully typed up version of the conversations. We will only ask you what you think, not what has happened to you. We want you to treat each other respectfully and not talk about what other people have said outside of the group. Do you agree that this is a good rule? We would also ask that you: speak up, let everyone speak, and to try to keep to one person speaking at a time.

Confidentiality and harm: You should not talk about things that are personal to you if you do not wish to. We will not repeat what has been said in these discussions. However, if you tell us that you (or someone else) are at immediate risk of serious harm we may have to pass that information on. Before we do that, we would talk to you about what we may have to do and we would encourage you to talk directly to someone who can help. This might be the person who has organised the group or another local professional, such as an independent domestic violence advisor, youth worker, or a social worker. We will not do anything without letting you know and trying to agree with you the best way to help.

Recording: For accuracy.

Role of the facilitators: Mary-Louise: introduce topics; make sure everyone feels comfortable and has a chance to speak. Dave: take some notes to help in transcribing the tape and assist Mary-Louise. We will ask some questions to get the discussion started but we would like you to discuss the issues/questions among yourselves.

Clarifications: Any questions?

Introductions: Names (doesn't have to be your real name) and age only.

1) Causes

Dave

A recent government campaign defined domestic abuse as: the use of controlling or threatening behaviour, including violence, between people who have been dating, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional in nature. It can be between current partners or ex-partners.

The government made a video to try and tackle domestic abuse.

SHOW VIDEO

Mary-Louise

What do you think of the video?

Do you think this is how domestic abuse usually happens?

- Why do you think domestic abuse happens?
 - Prompts: jealousy; drink; disrespect???
- Can you think of circumstances where some form of violent, controlling or threatening behaviour in a relationship would be ok?

Sometimes, young people say that they think that violence against a boyfriend or girlfriend is okay if that boyfriend or girlfriend has cheated on them, or slept with someone else.

- What do you think?

2) Sarah and Mark

Dave

Sarah, age 16, has been going out with Mark, age 18, for six months. They had been thinking about moving in together until they had their first big argument. Mark didn't like it when Sarah went out by herself to meet her friends. He said he did not like her getting "dressed up like that" and told her which clothes he would rather she wore. She said that that was unfair at which point he got really angry before shouting "if you do that again you know what will happen" and slamming the door.

- How would you describe this relationship?

Mary-Louise

- Prompts: just call out the words that come to mind first.
- What do you think about Mark's reaction?
 - Why do you think Mark reacted in this way?
- What would you do if you were Mark/Sarah?

How do you think Mark's friends would react if they found out about what had happened?

- Angry?
- Sympathetic?
- Not care?

3) Couple Types

Mary-Louise

- Do you think a man being abusive towards his wife or partner is different from a woman being abusive towards her husband or partner?
- Is physical abuse different to other forms of abuse like verbal and the more controlling type behaviours (like Mark's behaviour)? In what way?
- Is being abusive different when couples are older, i.e. adults? Or if they had children?
- Do you think the issues are different for Black, Asian or White couples? In what way?
- Do you think the issues are different if we consider same sex couples? In what way?
 - [- What if a man is violent to his boyfriend?]
 - [- What if a woman is violent to her girlfriend?]

4) What would you do? The case of John

Dave

John is 15 years old. Today he pushed a girl in his class and called her 'a slag'. He is now waiting outside the headteacher's office.

Mary-Louise

- What would a headteacher normally do in response to an incident like this?
- What should the headteacher do?
- Would it make a difference if
 - a) the girl said John had threatened her before?
 - b) John revealed that he was living with parents who were abusive to each other?

If you were in charge, what kinds of things would you do to help young people who are experiencing dating violence?

If you were in charge, what kinds of things would you do to help young people who see domestic abuse at home?

If you were in charge what would you do about young people who are being violent towards their partners or other family members?

Have you had any domestic abuse education in school? How was it?

Do you think domestic abuse education in schools works?