



In partnership with:



“
**TOUGH
TALK**”
CARDS

**Domestic
Abuse
Awareness
Month 2025
Add-on**

Domestic abuse doesn't always leave bruises. It can be financial, emotional, controlling, and it can show up in ways that are hard to spot, and even harder to talk about.

That's why we've created these **Tough Talk cards**: for Domestic Abuse Awareness Month: simple, sensitive prompts to help managers open the door to support when a team member might be struggling.

They're not a replacement for your workplace policies or safeguarding procedures - just a little extra help for when the conversation matters most.

Because no one should have to face it alone.

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Foreword

By Sharon Livermore MBE, Founder of Domestic Abuse Education Ltd.

Domestic abuse doesn't stop at the front door, and that means it's everyone's business.

For many victims, work can be their only safe space: a place of normality. That's why it's so important for employers and managers to know how to spot the signs, start a conversation, and offer support when it's needed the most.

These Tough Talk cards are a simple way to help you do that, to start having open conversations where people feel able to speak up without fear of judgement or repercussions.

Use the three R's: *Recognise, Respond, and Refer*. Recognise the signs that something isn't right. Respond with empathy and understanding. And refer people to the support, policies, and guidance that can help keep them safe.

When workplaces understand their role, they don't just change culture, they help change lives.

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Domestic abuse isn't always physical

“ You don't seem to be yourself at the moment, is everything okay? ”

Signs to Look For:

- Increased anxiety or distraction
- Withdrawal from colleagues
- Frequent unexplained absences
- Reluctance to talk about home life

Domestic abuse can take many forms, such as emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, or coercive. It's about power and control, not just violence. Often, it's hidden behind closed doors, making it hard to spot at work.

Signposting and Helplines:

- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** – for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, confidential support and advice:
Freephone: 0808 2000 247
- **ManKind Initiative** – for men experiencing domestic abuse
Freephone: 0808 800 1170
- **Karma Nirvana** – for survivors of honour-based abuse and forced marriage
Helpline: 0800 5999 247



Work can be a lifeline

“ I just wanted to check in, how are you doing at the moment, really? ”

What Helps:

- Listen without judgment if someone chooses to confide in you
- Keep conversations private and confidential
- Be flexible with time off or hybrid arrangements if needed
- Know where to signpost for specialist support

For many people experiencing domestic abuse, the workplace may be their only safe space, a place where they feel seen, supported, and able to breathe. That means HR and line managers can play a crucial role in helping someone take their first step towards safety.

Signposting and Helplines:

- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** – for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, confidential support and advice:
Freephone: 0808 2000 247
- **Galop** – for people in the LGBTQ+ community facing domestic abuse,
Phone: 0800 999 5428
Email: help@galop.org.uk



Financial control is a form of abuse

“ I just wanted to check, do you feel in control of things like your accounts, bills, or financial decisions right now? If not, there’s support we can look into together. ”

Signs Might Include:

- Frequent stress or anxiety about money
- Reluctance to discuss finances
- Requests for urgent salary advances or support with bills
- Sudden changes in behaviour or attendance

Abuse isn't always physical; it can also be financial. Coerced debt occurs when someone is pressured into loans, credit cards, or other financial commitments in their name. This can trap victims, limit independence, and have long-lasting effects on their wellbeing and employment.

Signposting and Helplines:

- **Surviving Economic Abuse** - specialist support, advice and resources around financial and economic abuse
Website: survivingeconomicabuse.org
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** - for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, confidential support and advice:
Freephone: 0808 2000 247



Every conversation matters

“ Sometimes it’s hard to know who to talk to when something’s weighing on you. Do you want to talk about anything? ”

Signposting and Helplines:

- **ManKind Initiative** - for men experiencing domestic abuse
Freephone: 0808 800 1170
- **Samaritans** - for emotional support, someone to talk, non-judgemental listening
Free, 24/7 phonenumber: 116 123
Web chat also available via their website

A workplace culture built on trust, awareness, and compassion is one of the most powerful ways to support employees experiencing abuse. Many will hesitate to speak up if they fear judgment or repercussions.

Action to Foster a Safer Culture:

- Listen actively and maintain confidentiality
- Offer flexible work arrangements when needed
- Signpost internal and external support services
- Check in regularly, showing ongoing understanding and care
- Model supportive behaviours, small, consistent gestures matter

