



Relationship Abuse: Support within a University Context

Healthy relationships are built on trust, respect, and communication. Nobody deserves to be mistreated or harmed in any intimate relationship; all forms of relationship abuse are unacceptable and can have an impact upon your mental & physical well-being. This guide describes various forms of intimate partnership abuse which may also be referred to as domestic abuse or coercive control.

The risk of relationship abuse is highest among young people – especially women aged 16-24 years, but it can happen to anyone regardless of age or gender. If you think you have been affected by any form of such abuse, the key messages to recognise are that you are never to blame for the abuse and that you can seek [help & support](#).

Forms of relationship abuse:

Emotional/Psychological Abuse aims to maintain control and undermine your self-confidence. Examples include:

- Calling you names & putting you down.
- Constantly criticizing, insulting or belittling you.
- Ignoring you as a means of punishment.
- Using words, looks, or gestures to instil fear.
- Extreme jealousy & accusations of cheating.
- Trying to control what you wear, where you go and with whom you spend your time.
- Using guilt or emotional blackmail to make you feel responsible for their actions or emotions.
- Threats of self-harm or suicide.
- Isolating you from friends and family.

Sexual Abuse involves any non-consensual or coercive sexual activity. Examples include:

- Being forced, pressured or manipulated into engaging in sexual acts you don't want or are uncomfortable with.
- Ignoring your boundaries and consent around sexual activities.
- Withholding or tampering with contraception.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Emergency services:

Call **999** for the Police or Ambulance service if you feel at risk of immediate harm or danger.

Call **101** for Police in non-emergency

University Security: 0131 650 2257

Crisis support:

NHS 24 – 111 for critical mental and physical health support outside of GP opening hours

Edinburgh Crisis Centre – 0808 8010 414 for support if experiencing a mental health crisis

Breathing Space – 0800 838 587 if you're feeling low, anxious, or depressed

The Samaritans – 116 126 to talk about anything that's worrying you

Specialist GBV support:

The Equally Safe Team – email equallysafeteam@ed.ac.uk to access the University's gender-based violence support team

SARCS – 0800 148 8888 within 7 days of an assault to access a forensic medical examination and sexual violence support

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre – 0131 556 9437 for sexual violence support

Abused Men in Scotland – 03300 949 395 (Mon-Fri 9am-4pm) for male domestic abuse support

Edinburgh Women's Aid – 0131 315 8110 for female domestic abuse support

For a comprehensive list of local and national GBV support services, please visit: edin.ac/GBV-support

Physical Abuse involves the use of force that can cause fear, alarm or injury. Examples include:

- Hitting, slapping, use of restraint and/or objects or weapons, pushing, beating, kicking, shaking, choking, biting, hair pulling.
- Throwing objects, destroying belongings, threats to hurt others – such as dependent children, wider family members or pets.
- Preventing you from leaving a room or a place.
- Forcing you to take drugs or alcohol.
- Stopping you from sleeping.

Financial Abuse can include controlling access to money and resources. Examples include:

- Controlling your income and spending, access to bank accounts, demanding an account of money spent and restricting access to essential goods.
- Preventing you from working and/or studying to force dependency on them.
- Using finances and debt to manipulate and coerce you (including fraudulent access to your bank accounts and borrowing money in your name).

Stalking & Harassment can include persistent unwanted attention that results in placing you in a state of fear or alarm. Examples include:

- Showing up at your home, school, study space or workplace without invitation.
- Sending threatening, unwanted or excessive messages.
- Following your movements online and offline.
- Watching you and contacting your friends, family, school or work to get more information about you.

Digital Abuse can be used to coerce, threaten, control or harm you through the use of technology. Examples include:

- Constantly monitoring your online activities, demanding passwords and watching your social media accounts.
- Using tracking apps to monitor your activities, location, and use of spyware without your consent.
- Demanding, sharing, or threats of sharing intimate images of you without your consent (also known as revenge porn).

If you think you may have been impacted by any of the above-mentioned forms of abuse, or any other form of GBV, you can seek support from [Equally Safe](#) at equallysafeteam@ed.ac.uk. Please see our resource on '[safety planning](#)' to find out more about the ways in which we can support you.

Additional University based support is available through the [Student Counselling Service](#), [Student Wellbeing Service](#) and [Chaplaincy](#).

If you would like to report your experience to the Police, or to the University more formally, please see our '[reporting options](#)' handout to explore some of the options available to you.

If you prefer self-directed support, you can access our '[managing the emotional impact of GBV](#)' handout, or access various GBV support articles & links to specialist external services through the Report + Support platform: reportandsupport.ed.ac.uk