

Women's

WOMEN'S
AID

North Ayrshire

FOCUS ON DISABILITY & DOMESTIC ABUSE

All abuse is serious. For some disabled women it is more difficult to ask for support because there are additional barriers to accessing services and support. At North Ayrshire Women's Aid we believe you, and we will work with you to make sure that you have access to further support if required.



www.nawomensaid.com



17 Vernon Street, Saltcoats, KA21 5HE



01294 602424

WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Domestic abuse can affect anyone, including people of all different abilities. Domestic abuse is so much more than hitting and physical violence; it can be emotional, sexual and financial, too. It's a pattern of behaviour that leaves you feeling scared, intimidated or controlled.

Nobody deserves to be treated this way.

If your partner is abusive, it is not your fault, and there is nothing you could do to make them change their behaviour. Abusers will often tell you it is your fault that they are acting that way, or that they only behave like that because they love you. Love is never an excuse to treat someone badly, or to be abusive.

Because domestic abuse is about power, abusers can use lots of different ways to get control. Disabled people have many of the same experiences as non-disabled people.

DISABILITY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

If you have an ongoing or chronic health condition, a disability or learning difference, an abuser might use this as part of the abuse. Abuse is **never** your fault. Only the abuser is responsible for their actions.

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, including those in which someone is a caregiver.

If someone takes advantage of the power they have as a caregiver, this could be abuse.

North Ayrshire Women's Aid is here for you and support is available to you.

DISABILITY CAN MAKE IT HARDER TO ASK FOR HELP

Someone who is disabled and experiencing domestic abuse may find it more difficult to protect themselves, access sources of help, or remove themselves from the abusive situation.

People with disabilities may be reliant on the abuser for personal care or mobility.

Learning disabilities can also affect survivors' ability to access support and their understanding of their own abuse.

FACING EXTRA BARRIERS

Disabled people suffering abuse may already be socially isolated because of their disability. It is harder to disclose abuse if they rarely see other people without their abuser being present.

For a person with disabilities, moving out of their home comes with additional concerns about the accessibility of a new home or refuge. They may be worried that they will lose their current level of independence if they are forced to move elsewhere.

People with disabilities may be reluctant to report domestic abuse from a partner whose care they depend on.

Taking away equipment or aids to limit independence

Refusal to help with attending important appointments.

Refusing to perform tasks to help, such as interpreting if you are Deaf.

Sexual touching while being helped with personal care.

Theft of state benefits or any other financial income

SOME OF THE EXTRA WAYS DISABLED WOMEN EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC ABUSE

Being told it is hard work to care for you.

Demands for sex in exchange for caregiving

Prevention of access to medication or pain relief

Doing things to make a health condition worse, such as smoking indoors.

Being denied important care or medication

Over- or under-medicating, or changing a medication without consent.

Being isolated from friends, family, support workers and support groups

Being called names due of a disability.

Being told they aren't capable of looking after children because of a disability.

SAFE SPACES IN BOOTS PHARMACIES

It might be difficult to call or access support from home. You can visit any Boots pharmacy and ask to use the consultancy room. In this room, there will be information about support services and you can make the call safely.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE ABUSE AS A DISABLED PERSON

1

Tell someone you trust: a friend, a medical or care professional, family member, or an organisation like North Ayrshire Women's Aid. Try to get some time alone with this person, if at all possible.

2

Record details about what happened, including dates, times, locations. This can be helpful if you decide to report it but not essential.

3

Consider reporting the abuse. This is entirely your choice, and you can change your mind later.

4

Seek help from a professional who specialises in domestic abuse to guide you through the healing process.

WHO CAN HELP DISABLED WOMEN EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE?

If you are in immediate danger then you can call the police on 999. You can speak to your doctor about abuse confidentially, and ask for medical assistance if you need it.

Disability Information Scotland

provides reliable and accessible information for disabled people in Scotland.

www.disabilityscot.org.uk

Call: 0300 323 9961

Text: 0798 436 7599

North Ayrshire Women's Aid

A specialist local service that provides emotional and practical support to women affected by domestic abuse.

01294 602 424

nawomensaid.com

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Free 24-hour helpline for women who have experienced domestic abuse and violence, with all female advisors.

0808 2000 247

nationaldahelpline.org.uk

SignHealth

Resources and support for deaf people experiencing domestic abuse.

Text ONLY 07800 003421

da@signhealth.org.uk

Turn2Us

Information on benefits, charity, and support services across the UK.

www.turn2us.org.uk

People First Scotland

Scottish national organisation of adults with a learning disability.

peoplefirstscotland.org

DOMESTIC ABUSE AND DISABILITY FACTS

- Disabled people experience higher rates of domestic abuse than non-disabled people.¹
- Disabled people are more than twice as likely to experience abuse from an adult family member compared to non-disabled people (14% vs 6%).²
- Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and also twice as likely to suffer assault and rape.³
- 48% of domestic abuse survivors aged 61+ have a disability.⁴

I didn't realise I was being abused. I thought it was normal. It wasn't until later that it got worse and worse and the abuse increased. I was sexually abused and he demanded money from me and so on, you know. I was just overwhelmed and I just wanted it to stop and I wanted to leave. He threatened me with a gun and I think that's when I finally realised that absolutely that was not acceptable and I needed to get out.

I told the police. To communicate with the police it was really difficult for me and when I met them I didn't have an interpreter so I couldn't make a statement straightaway because there wasn't an interpreter there. But when I contacted DeafHope they helped me. Rosie*, deaf survivor helped by the DeafHope (now SignHealth) service

Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline.

0800 027 1234
Text / WhatsApp: 07401288595
helpline@sdafmh.org.uk

UK SAYS NO MORE is working with businesses such as Boots, Morrisons, HSBC and TSB banks, and Superdrug, Well, and independent pharmacies across the UK to provide Safe Spaces in their consultation rooms for people experiencing domestic abuse.

You can use a Safe Space in whichever way works for you:

<https://uksaysnomore.org/safespaces/>.

You can input a postcode/ location and determine what distance you want to search for.