

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/DOMESTIC ABUSE

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a major public health, equality and human rights issue. Gender-based violence is the collective term for 'violence that is directed primarily but not exclusively against women by men. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty and ultimately relates to gender inequality.'

GBV can encompass a range of abuses including:

- Domestic abuse
- Rape and sexual assault
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment and stalking
- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Harmful traditional practices (eg: FGM, forced marriage and "honour" based violence)

This protocol focuses mainly on domestic abuse, with separate protocols for Sexual assault and FGM.

Background

Sandyford staff may be the first formal agency to which people who have experienced GBV turn to for help. Many people appreciate being asked questions by health staff about their home situation, as it provides an opportunity to be heard, and to gain help and support. There is national guidance on the role of the health professional in identifying GBV which this protocol is based on. [GBV Guidance Overview \(healthscotland.scot\)](https://www.healthscotland.scot) 2018.

Sandyford's integrated clinical proforma includes questions about GBV and it is important to ask these, and to feel confident about sources of information and referral if a disclosure is made.

Domestic abuse is a child protection issue. If a person is being abused by a current or former partner and there are children in the home, they are likely to have experienced abuse by the same perpetrator.

Clarification of Abuse

- Staff should make themselves aware of the recognised physical, emotional and behavioural indicators of domestic abuse (see below).
- If any of these signs or symptoms is apparent, or if a client implies or discloses domestic abuse, staff should consider the possibility of domestic violence and act accordingly.

Your Role

- Provide a supportive environment to help disclosure (this may mean moving to another room for privacy). Staff should make every effort to interview the client alone, as the perpetrator of the violence may be accompanying the client (this includes arranging an independent interpreter if the patient's first language is not English). Where possible give the option of seeing a member of staff of the same sex

- Gathering information on health problems associated with abuse
- Assessing for immediate and long-term health and safety needs
- Providing information/signposting and referring on where appropriate
- Clearly documenting disclosures of abuse and actions taken

Identifying Problems or Exploring the Situation

- If there is reason to think that domestic abuse may be an issue, or there has been partial disclosure, follow up by asking indirect non-threatening questions such as 'Is everything alright at home?'
- Direct non-threatening questions should also be asked if the client affirms that there are problems.

Documentation

- Staff should ensure clear and accurate documentation of the consultation, as medical records may at times be used in legal cases.
- Staff should give assurances of safety and confidentiality. However, rarely confidentiality may be breached should child protection/vulnerable adult issues arise. See GMC/NMC guidance and Sandyford Confidentiality guidance regarding limits of confidentiality.
- Where you have completed a Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) and need to refer to a MARAC please inform the inclusion team by making a referral. (MARAC – multi-agency risk assessment conference)
- Urgent safety concerns should be discussed with the Doctor of the Day.

SafeLives Dash risk checklist should be used to inform whether a referral to MARAC or other support agencies is indicated

Referral criteria for MARAC:

- Professional judgement (see below)
- Score of 14 or higher on Dash checklist ('Visible Risk')
- Potential escalation (e.g. increase in Police callouts, strangulation- this increases risk of domestic homicide by **7x**)

If referred to MARAC:

Refer to Sandyford Inclusion Team, if there are any immediate safety concerns please discuss with the Doctor of the Day.

Professional judgement: if a professional has serious concerns about a victim's situation, they should refer the case to MARAC. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of 'honour'-based violence. This judgement would be based on the professional's experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet criteria 2 and/or 3 below.

Provision of Information

- Staff should enquire about the client's safety and that of any children before the client leaves the clinic.
- If the client and / or the children are in immediate danger, options include involving the police or facilitating access to a refuge
- It may be the case that the client feels unable to make a decision about leaving the domestic situation at this point, so it is important to ensure that they have information, or know where to find it.
- If he/she needs immediate access to a refuge, a local organisation should be contacted from the clinic, otherwise offer the client a counselling appointment or referral to a local domestic violence organisation for further support and information (see below).
- It may be that a visit to SCASS (0141 211 6700) at this stage will help the client consider options either now or in the future. Trained staff can offer an immediate "Listening Ear" session and/or explore options about counselling or other emotional support.

Physical Symptoms of Abuse

- Injuries that are repeated, chronic, or of several different ages and sites.
- Frequent visits to Sandyford, Accident and Emergency Services or Primary Care services with vague complaints or symptoms.
- Gynaecological problems, frequent vaginal and urinary tract infections, dyspareunia and pelvic pain.
- Frequent use of prescribed tranquillisers or analgesics.
- Attempts to minimise injuries.

Emotional Symptoms

- Alcohol and drug misuse.
- Suicide attempts or gestures.
- Depression and/or anxiety.

Behavioural Signs

- Reluctance of client to speak or disagree in front of their partner.
- Attempts to hide injuries by clothing or jewellery.
- Partner accompanies client, insists on staying close and answers all questions directed to client.
- Intense irrational jealousy or possessiveness expressed by partner or reported by client.
- Appears evasive, socially withdrawn and is hesitant.

Men and people in same sex partnerships can suffer domestic abuse and violence: see list of appropriate agencies below.

REFERENCES

What health workers need to know about gender-based violence: an overview
www.gbv-an-overview.pdf (healthscotland.scot) - accessed February 2024

Appendix 1: Sources of Help (all information below checked February 2024)

Scottish-wide contacts:

Region	Housing	Social Work
Glasgow City	Out of Hours 0800 838 502	0141 287 0555
Glasgow South	0141 276 8201	
Glasgow North East	0141 276 6153	
Glasgow North West	0141 276 6168	
East Dunbartonshire	0300 1234510	0141 777 3000 (out of hours 0300 343 1505)
West Dunbartonshire	01389 776400	01389 608080 (out of hours 0800 811505)
East Renfrewshire	0141 577 3001	0141 577 3003 (out of hours 0300 343 1505)
South Lanarkshire	0303 123 1012	0300 123 1008
North Lanarkshire	0800 953 2424	0800 121 4114
Paisley	0300 300 0222	0300 300 1199
Inverclyde	01475 717 171	01475 715 365

Women's Aid Services:

Region	Telephone No	Region	Telephone No
Clydebank	0141 952 8118	Glasgow	0141 553 2022
Drumchapel and West	0141 944 0201		
Dumbarton District	01389 751036	Glasgow East	0141 781 0230
East Dunbartonshire	0141 776 0864	Hemat Gryffe (Asian, Black and Ethnic Minority Women and Children)	0141 353 0859
South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire	01355 249897		
		Monklands	01236 432 061
Inverclyde Women's Aid, Greenock	01475 888 505	Renfrewshire Women's Aid, Paisley	0141 561 7030

Police Scotland:

Emergency: 999

Non-emergency: 101

[HOME | WSP \(womenssupportproject.org.uk\)](https://www.womenssupportproject.org.uk) Glasgow based support service for refugees, immigrants and asylum-seeking women. Will accept referrals

ASSIST Offer advocacy and support to victims of domestic abuse who are engaged with the criminal justice process. Call 0141 276 7710

Non-consensual sharing, or threatening of sharing of intimate images

www.safer.scot

Appendix 2: Local MARACS

Also found on SafeLives website (safelives.org.uk)- click top right 'Find a Marac' and enter password 'refer2marac'

- Renfrewshire: [0141 618 5886](tel:01416185886)
- Glasgow: MARACenquiries@glasgow.gov.uk
- East Dunbartonshire : greaterglasgowDAIU@scotland.pnn.police.uk, T : 0141 532 5547
- North and South Lanarkshire: LanarkshireMARACs@wasler.org.uk, T: 01355 249 897
- Inverclyde: Community.Safety@inverclyde.gov.uk and the Marac Coordinator will contact you to discuss your referral. In order to protect the information of victims of Domestic Abuse and their children, please do not send referrals or personal data to this generic email address.

Appendix 3: Patient helplines

Women's Support Project aim to reduce harm caused by prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

[HOME | WSP \(womenssupportproject.org.uk\)](https://www.womenssupportproject.org.uk) 0141 418 0748

Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline 24 hours, 7 days a week:
0800 027 1234

Women's Aid National Helpline: 0808 2000 247

The Men's Advice line: 0808 801 0327 www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Hourglass Scotland for vulnerable older people affected by harm and abuse, 0808 808 8141

Rape Crisis Scotland: Helpline 08088 01 03 02 (daily 5pm to midnight) or text 07537 410 027. Email support@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Galop: for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse. 0800 999 5428 (Monday- Friday 10am-5pm) email help@galop.org.uk

Childline Helpline, 24 hours, for Children and Young People: 0800 1111

Daisy project: Provide an integrated domestic abuse advocacy and support service for families across the South of Glasgow. Based in Castlemilk Community Centre, call 0141 634 4053

Shakti Women's Aid: help for BME women, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse 0131 475 2399

Karma Nirvana – helpline for those affected by, or threatened by, honour based abuse. 0800 5999 247 www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Acute Mental Health Support:

Breathing Space: National helpline for those >16yrs who are experiencing low mood, anxiety or depression: 0800 838587

Samaritans: 116 123

The Men's Advice line: 0808 801 0327 www.mensadvice.org.uk

Fearfree – support for people experiencing domestic abuse who identify as male or are from the LGBTQ community: 0131 624 7270

Safer Scotland. Website with information covering all types of abuse: Domestic abuse, Intimate image abuse, Spiking, Hate crimes, Commercial sexual exploitation. www.safer.scot

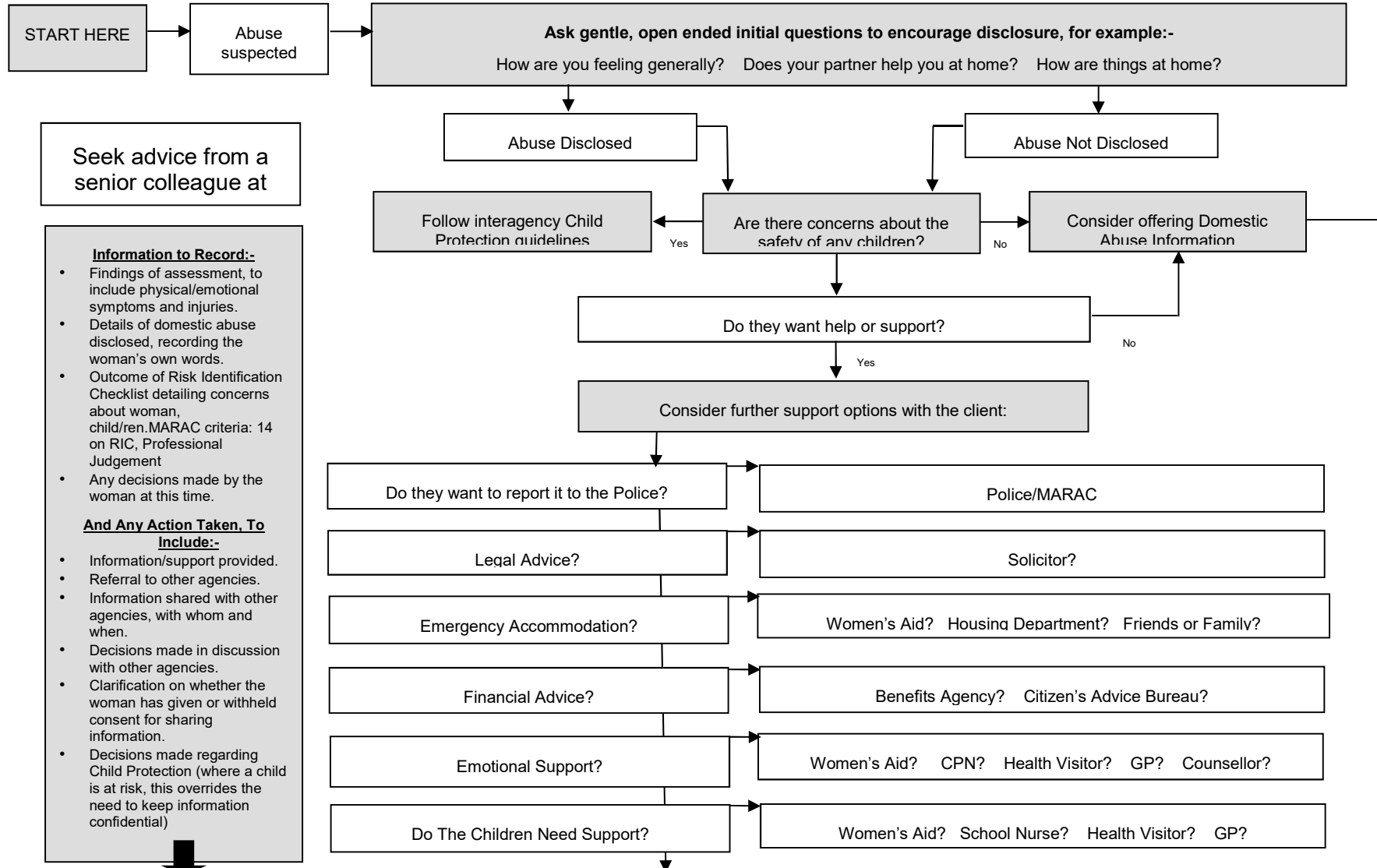
Specialist advice regarding stalking:

National Stalking Helpline: 0808 802 0300 www.stalkinghelpline.org

Information for perpetrators of domestic violence:

Respect phone line 0808 802 4040 <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/>

IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE – A GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE



Seek advice from a senior colleague at

- Information to Record:-**
- Findings of assessment, to include physical/emotional symptoms and injuries.
 - Details of domestic abuse disclosed, recording the woman's own words.
 - Outcome of Risk Identification Checklist detailing concerns about woman, child/ren. MARAC criteria: 14 on RIC, Professional Judgement
 - Any decisions made by the woman at this time.
- And Any Action Taken, To Include:-**
- Information/support provided.
 - Referral to other agencies.
 - Information shared with other agencies, with whom and when.
 - Decisions made in discussion with other agencies.
 - Clarification on whether the woman has given or withheld consent for sharing information.
 - Decisions made regarding Child Protection (where a child is at risk, this overrides the need to keep information confidential)

Remember to RECORD all discussions, disclosures of domestic abuse, any actions taken and OFFER the chance to come back at any time