



# **Women's Resource Booklet**

**by the Women's Shadow Board**

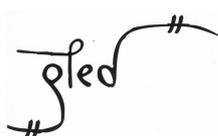






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In partnership with:



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# About Action for Change

The two-year European Union sponsored component of the Action for Change programme aimed to improve outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse who have had or are at risk of having their children removed. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) worked in partnership with six other organisations across four European countries: Romania, Italy, Hungary and the United Kingdom.

RBKC and Advance (the UK delivery partner) piloted a project in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster City Council. Advance is a leading service provider in supporting women who are experiencing domestic violence and women who have committed crimes. Their services are client-led and provide women with options, as well as emotional and practical support to help them in sometimes life threatening situations.

Due to its success, the UK Action for Change service will continue to support parents who have had or are at risk of having their children taken into care in order to prevent future removals, as well as offer a range of emotional and practical support to birth parents.

## UK Action for Change



07977124323



[actionforchange@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:actionforchange@rbkc.gov.uk)

## Advance



0208 741 7008



[advancecharity.org.uk](http://advancecharity.org.uk)

# Foreword

This resource booklet is a culmination of our time as Women's Shadow Board members and our experiences of support as survivors of domestic abuse.

The Women's Shadow Board is formed of women (across the four countries) whose children have been taken into care due to domestic abuse. We have shared our experiences and views to inform the Action for Change project and improve support for survivors of domestic abuse in the future.

The Women's Shadow Board has provided us with an opportunity to spend time with like-minded women who have experienced similar difficulties with domestic abuse. As a group we became creative and our sessions were very therapeutic. Being a member of the Women's Shadow Board was very empowering as professionals sought our advice and really listened – for the first time we truly felt valued.

We hope this booklet will not only support those currently experiencing abuse to understand what is happening to them and to seek help, but also to sow a seed in the minds of younger women to prevent such abuse from happening in the future.

*Jade & Louise*

UK Women's Shadow Board

“

On my journey, the **Power and Control Wheel** was very eye opening. Domestic abuse is about power and control, and this wheel shows the type of tactics used by abusive partners to keep control over you. It helped me identify what was happening and see the different behaviours of my ex-partner for what they were – domestic abuse. It also helped me to know that I was not alone in what I was experiencing; and the **Equality Wheel** outlines what we all deserve from our relationships.

”

*Louise*

# Power and Control Wheel

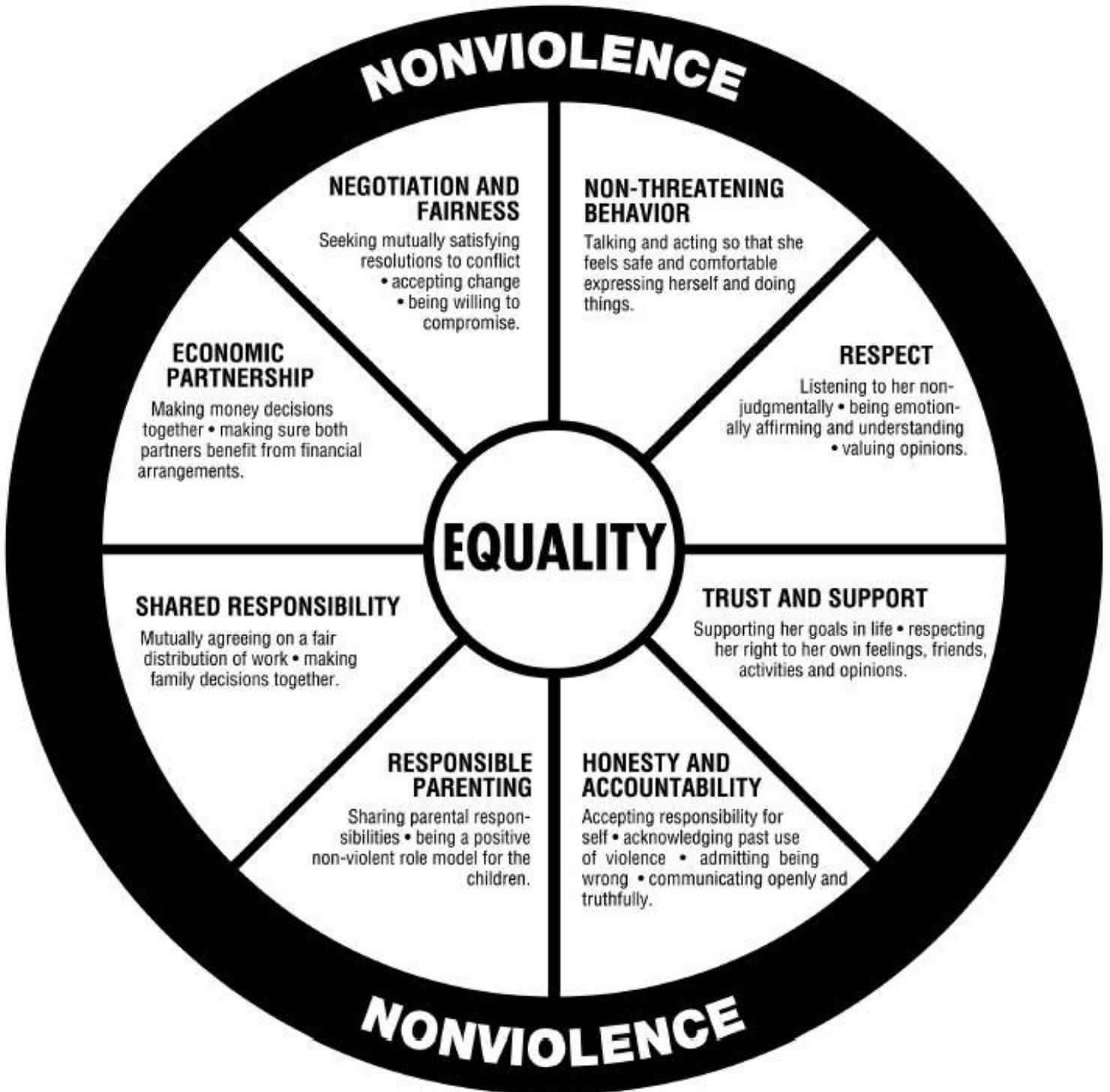


Source:

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

[ncdsv.org](http://ncdsv.org)

# Equality Wheel



Source:  
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence  
ncdsv.org

# Safety

## Safety Planning

Your local domestic violence support service can help you put together a personalised safety plan. This plan will be based on what you want—if you choose to stay in the relationship or if you want to leave. We also have a safety planning checklist in this booklet.

## Civil Justice

You can apply to the civil courts for an order to prevent your partner, ex-partner, or family member from contacting you; and orders to protect your children. \*

## Housing

Your local domestic violence service will be able to talk through your options, which could include making your current home safer, moving home, or going into a refuge.

## Children

It is important to take steps to ensure the safety of your children. This may involve taking legal advice around child contact, or working with social services. \*

## Criminal Justice

If you feel unsafe, the police are there to help you. In an emergency call 999. If a crime is reported then the case may go through the courts, but there are independent services that can support you through this process. \*

\* For more information about the Criminal Justice System, civil orders, and legal advice around child contact please visit [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk), or speak to your local domestic violence support service.

# Wellbeing

## Emotional Wellbeing

The impact of domestic abuse can really affect every aspect of your wellbeing, and many women who have experienced domestic abuse also suffer mental health issues. There is help out there for you - such as counselling, group work, and online resources.

## Substance Misuse and Alcohol

It is common to use alcohol and/or substances to cope with what you are going through. We have both used alcohol to cope, but once we were able to share that, we could get the right help. Speak to your local support service for further information.

## Coping Strategies

We all have to find our own ways to cope. Find something fulfilling and creative, and make sure you schedule in time for yourself. Swimming and poetry are two things we have found helpful.

## Empowerment

The journey to recovery from domestic abuse can take time, but you will get there! Get involved in local survivor forums to have your voice heard, and other local groups to meet women with similar experiences.

For a full list of local support services in Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster, visit: [www.angelou.org/local-services/](http://www.angelou.org/local-services/) or contact your local domestic violence support service.

# The Impact on Children

It is important to recognise the impact of witnessing domestic abuse on children, including not only directly witnessing physical abuse, but growing up in an environment where abuse is taking place.

Children will respond to abuse in different ways, but here are some of the effects. They may:

- become anxious or depressed
- have difficulty sleeping
- have nightmares or flashbacks
- be easily startled
- complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches
- start to wet their bed
- have temper tantrums
- behave as though they are much younger than they are
- have problems with school
- become aggressive or they may internalise their distress and withdraw from other people
- have a lowered sense of self-worth
- begin to play truant or start to use alcohol or drugs (may apply to older children)
- begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves
- have an eating disorder
- feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless, or confused

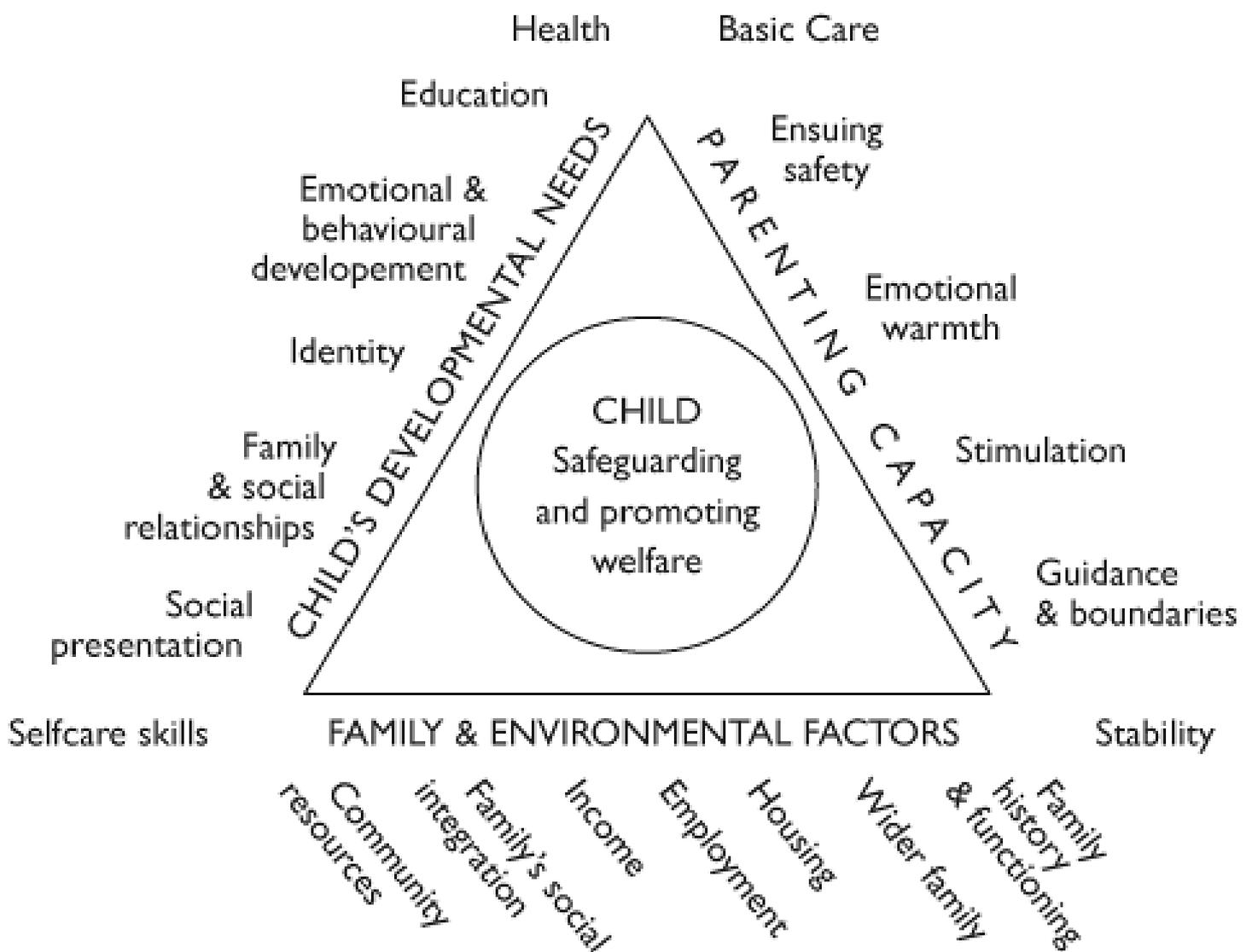
Source: [womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/impact-on-children-and-young-people](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/impact-on-children-and-young-people)

There is support out there for you and your children. For a full list of local support services in the Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster, visit: [www.angelou.org/local-services/](http://www.angelou.org/local-services/) or contact your local domestic violence support service.

# Children's Assessment Framework

It is important to understand how the social care system works. Social services are there to protect your children and with the right support it can be a supportive process.

Children often suffer emotional and psychological trauma from living in homes where they are exposed to domestic abuse. This can be referred to as neglect or emotional abuse. Local Family and Children's Services have a responsibility to carry out an assessment where there are concerns around child safety. The outcome of the assessment is reliant on each individual and family's circumstances. However, the priority is to keep children safe. Below is a diagram (the Children's Assessment Framework, or CAF for short) which identifies the different needs of a child that social services will look at.



# Finding Support

Anyone in the community is able to inform local social services if there are concerns about a child's safety (including neighbours, family members, community centres, nursery, schools and GPs). Your local Family and Children's Services will be able to support and advise you further as to how to keep your children safe and where to get support from. There are also independent organisations you can contact.

**Independent organisations that you could approach...**

## Family Rights Group



Free helpline  
0808 801 0366



[frg.org.uk](http://frg.org.uk)

## NSPCC



Free helpline  
0808 800 5000  
0800 1111



[nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)

## Barnado's



01382 220 446



[barnados.org.uk](http://barnados.org.uk)





“

On my journey I went to a group which I found particularly helpful, called the **Freedom Programme**. For me it was so important to see in black and white that certain behaviours I blamed myself for were actually typical tactics of an abusive partner. Due to my experiences the phrase that really stood out to me from the course was: "The worst thing a man can do is to get your children taken away and he hasn't even had to lift a finger or break a law". It was so shocking to see this as a tactic of abuse.

”

Jade

Your local domestic violence support service should be able to provide you with information about the Freedom Programme or other local groups which look at the dynamics of domestic abuse. To find out more about the Freedom Programme visit [www.freedomprogramme.co.uk](http://www.freedomprogramme.co.uk).

“

Here is one of the resources used in the Freedom Programme. I felt it addressed each part of the abuse I was experiencing, and I hope you will find it helpful too.

”  
Jade

## THE DOMINATOR IS HIS NAME CONTROLLING WOMEN IS HIS GAME

*The Dominator*

**THE SEXUAL CONTROLLER**

- Rapes you.
- Won't accept no for an answer.
- Keeps you pregnant OR
- Rejects your advances.

**THE BULLY**

- Glares.
- Shouts.
- Smashes things.
- Sulks.

**KING OF THE CASTLE**

- Treats you as a servant/slave.
- Says women are for sex, cooking and housework.
- Expects sex on demand.
- Controls all the money.

**THE JAILER**

- Stops you from working and seeing friends.
- Tells you what to wear.
- Keeps you in the house.
- Seduces your friends/family.

*Don't talk to your mother, she's a slag...*

**THE BADFATHER**

- Says you are a bad mother.
- Turns the children against you.
- Uses access to harass you.
- Threatens to take the children away.
- Persuades you to have 'his' baby, and then refuses to help you care for it.

**THE LIAR**

- Denies any abuse.
- Says it was 'only' a slap.
- Blames drink, drugs, stress, over-work, you, unemployment etc.

**THE PERSUADER**

- Threatens to hurt or kill you or the children.
- Cries.
- Says he loves you.
- Threatens to kill himself.
- Threatens to report you to social services, benefits agency, etc.

*what are you?*

**THE HEADWORKER**

- Puts you down.
- Tells you you're too fat, too thin, ugly, stupid, useless etc.

“

This poem depicts my experience of domestic abuse, but I do believe many other women could relate to this story.

”

Jade

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## A Story of Domestic Violence

Here is the story of Domestic Violence  
 Conditioned is the victim and every word silenced  
 Changed until you're unrecognisable  
 Lots of people saying your actions are not advisable  
 Blinded by a sick type of love  
 With every nice thing that's done there's a kick or a shove  
 Such a cycle of uncertainty  
 The future will be defined by adversity  
 The pattern often repeated  
 Your children will feel cheated  
 Every good thing you know about yourself is deleted taken away by someone  
 who's conceited  
 Court cases everlasting pain  
 Will we see our kids again?  
 Once upon a time we were happy  
 Now all we wake up to is a harsh reality  
 We never envisioned that this could happen when we were playing with our  
 dolls when we were five  
 Now everyday we face misery and barely survive  
 All you have to look forward to is deprivation  
 Hopefully there will be some salvation amongst all this devastation  
 A need to feel elation again take away the dominator bring back the friend  
 Just let me feel the unfamiliar wave of tranquillity  
 The person I was, the Jade I used to be

“

The Women's Shadow Board has enabled me to overcome my fears. I realise that by accepting support and sharing experiences with women in similar circumstances, you can move forward and continue to grow - becoming whole again as a survivor and not a victim. This piece of work is about that journey, the events, and the people I have met along the way.

”

Louise

## Louise's Journey in Jeans



# Useful Numbers

## National



National Domestic Violence Helpline  
0808 2000 247



Gallop (LGBT survivors of abuse)  
0800 999 5428



Men's Advice Line  
0808 801 0327



Police  
999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency)

## Local



Action for Change  
0797 712 4323



Advance  
0208 741 7008

**For a full list of local support services in Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster, visit:**

**[angelou.org/local-services](http://angelou.org/local-services)**

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