

## Respect in Relationships

### Overview

This lesson deals with violence and abuse within relationships. It builds on previous lessons by making the links between different forms of violence and abuse in the context of all abuse involving the misuse of power, and controlling behaviour. It provides young people with the opportunity to have accurate information and some understanding of the range, impact and consequences of abusive and violent behaviour. It will be important to point out during this lesson that abuse occurs in same sex relationships too, and that men can also be the victims of domestic abuse. It is important that teachers recognise that some young people may have experienced or will be experiencing some of the abuse or had to deal with some of the issues covered in this section.

### Aim of the lesson

- To increase understanding of the nature and prevalence of 'gender-based violence'.
- To challenge the myths and stereotypes about gender-based violence and raise awareness of causes of gender-based violence.
- To involve young people in challenging the acceptability of violence and explore prevention.
- To increase understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on women and children and why women (and men) stay with abusive partners.
- Explore the wider impact of violence and abuse on everyone.

### Learning outcomes

In this lesson students will have the opportunity to think about gender-based violence and challenge prevalent myths and stereotypes. The material aims to encourage young people to think critically about the acceptability of their own attitude and behaviour in relationships with their peers.

### Activity 1: True or false quiz

1. Women abuse their husbands and partners just as often as men abuse their wives and partners.  
Answer: False. 82% of reported domestic abuse incidents are male perpetrators and female victims. It is important to point out to students that men can also be the victims of domestic abuse, and that domestic abuse also occurs within same sex relationships. (source: Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin 2010)

2. Once a woman leaves a man who is abusive to her, she will then be safe. Answer: False. 41% of recorded domestic abuse incidents were committed by ex-partners or when the couple were no longer living together. (source: Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin 2010)
3. When a man is aroused, he can't help what he does as he is not in control. Answer: False. Just because a man is aroused sexually does not mean that he is not in control either physically or mentally. A man does not need to have sex once he is aroused.
4. Every year over 100 women are murdered by their partner or ex-partner in the UK. Answer: True. In the UK, statistics show that a woman is murdered by her partner or ex-partner every three days. This is equivalent of 122 murders per year. (source: UK Home Office 2009)
5. Many girls aged 13-17 years have experienced physical violence from their partners. Answer: True. A study carried out by the NSPCC and Bristol University in 2011 which questioned 1353 young people in Scotland, England and Wales, showed that 25% (or 338 girls) had been physically abused by their boyfriends. (source: NSPCC/Bristol University study 2011)
6. As long as young people are not physically harmed by an abuser, they are not affected by domestic abuse between parents/carers at home. Answer: False. Children and young people are always affected by domestic abuse, even if they are not physically targeted by the perpetrator. Figures from Scottish Women's Aid show that 100,000 children and young people in Scotland are living with domestic abuse and nine out of ten young people are in the same room or the next room when domestic abuse incidents are happening.

### **Activity 2: Why doesn't she leave?**

This discussion will focus on the reasons why some women will not leave abusive relationships and/or go back to live in an abusive situation.

**This may not be considered age appropriate for some primary school students, and discretion should be applied by the teacher.**

It is also important to point out throughout the lesson that men can live with domestic abuse too, and that same sex couples also experience domestic abuse. It is very important that no one misunderstands the information given in the quiz and, for example, leaves thinking that women are to blame in some way for being abused.

It is always the perpetrator's responsibility. Bring up Activity 2: Why doesn't she leave? Break up into small groups and ask the groups to discuss and add any other reason they can think of. Then ask the groups to think about what a woman and her children would lose if they left their home/partner and also what would they gain. The aim of this exercise is to think about what can be lost and gained both in the immediate and long term. Consider why women and children often go back to men who abuse.

*Janet is 35 years old and she has three children aged 12, 8 and 3 years old. She has been married to Colin for 14 years. Over the last five years, Colin has been physically abusive to Janet and she has had to go to the local accident and emergency department a couple of times with the more severe cuts and bruises. Janet feels that Colin is under a lot of pressure at work and tries very hard to keep home life as easy to cope with as possible. Janet has never told anyone about Colin's behaviour. Janet did have a job but had to give it up because she found it difficult to hold down her job and keep the house and family to a standard that Colin liked.*

- *Colin says he will change, and Janet believes him.*
- *Janet doesn't have anywhere to go.*
- *Janet doesn't want to upset the children.*
- *Janet loves Colin and believes that Colin loves her.*
- *Colin has always said he will find Janet if she leaves as he will always love her.*
- *Janet doesn't want to leave Colin – but just wants the violence to stop.*
- *Janet thinks her family would be ashamed if she was a lone parent.*
- *Janet thinks people will think it is her fault for not keeping the family together through hard times.*
- *Janet is afraid of what Colin might do if she leaves – what he may do to her, the children or himself*

Finish lesson by asking the class if they now believe that it is easy for an individual to leave an abusive partner