

# Types of DOMESTIC ABUSE: Signs and Behaviours CARDS

Making sexual  
comments, jokes  
or insults

SEXUAL ABUSE

Calling names,  
mocking, or  
insulting

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Forcing sharing of  
location or  
constant calls

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Destroying  
belongings to  
punish

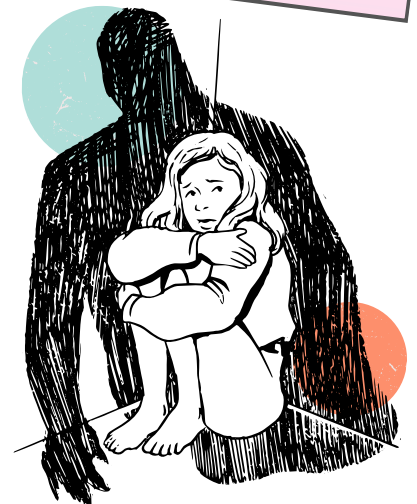
PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Using children to  
spy or pass  
messages

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Using  
status to scare or  
control

IMMIGRATION ABUSE



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# About this Resource

These Domestic Abuse Signs and Behaviours Cards are a practical resource to help people understand the different types of domestic abuse and how they can appear in everyday life. Each card shows a behaviour linked to a category of abuse such as physical, emotional, financial, sexual, isolation, threats, stalking, digital abuse, pregnancy and health, children and parenting, minimising and blaming, honour-based abuse, immigration abuse, and pets or property abuse.

## PRACTICAL WAYS TO USE THIS RESOURCE

- **Awareness sessions:** Use the cards in domestic abuse training or workshops. Spread them out and ask participants to group the cards into the different types of abuse.
- **One-to-one work:** Practitioners can go through the cards with someone who may be experiencing abuse. The person can pick out cards that match their situation, which may help disclosure.
- **Group discussions:** Use the cards to spark conversation about the signs of controlling behaviour and how abuse is not only physical.
- **Support planning:** Survivors can use the cards to reflect on their experiences and identify areas where they may need more support or safety planning.
- **Awareness displays:** Place the cards on a stand or noticeboard in schools, GP surgeries, community centres, or offices to show the different forms of abuse in a clear, accessible way.
- **Education:** Use the cards with young people to teach about healthy and unhealthy relationships. The simple wording makes them easy to understand.
- **Professional training:** Social workers, teachers, health workers, and community leaders can use the cards to build confidence in recognising and naming abusive behaviours.

Hitting, slapping,  
punching, kicking,  
or biting

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Pushing, grabbing,  
or shaking

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Strangling or  
choking

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Hurting with an  
object or weapon

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Stopping someone  
from leaving a  
room or home

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Holding someone  
down

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Not giving medical  
help after injury

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Hurting during  
pregnancy

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Forcing alcohol or  
drugs

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Stopping sleep,  
food, or care

PHYSICAL ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Calling names,  
mocking, or  
insulting

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Shaming in private  
or public

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Blaming the victim  
or downplaying  
the abuse

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Threatening to  
leave or throw out

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Turning friends or  
family against a  
person

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Isolating or making  
someone feel  
worthless

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Playing mind  
games or lying to  
confuse

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Making up or  
changing rules  
without agreement

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Scaring with looks,  
gestures, or silence

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Ignoring or giving  
the "silent  
treatment"

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

EMOTIONAL AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Stopping work or  
study

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Taking or  
controlling wages  
or benefits

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Blocking access to  
money or bank  
cards

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Giving strict  
allowance and  
checking spending

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Forcing loans or  
debt in another  
person's name

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Leaving debts  
behind for another  
person

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Not allowing  
money for food or  
essentials

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Checking bank  
accounts without  
consent

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Stopping someone  
learning about  
money

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Forcing signatures  
on papers  
against will

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

FINANCIAL AND  
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Pressuring or  
forcing sex

SEXUAL ABUSE

Making someone  
do sexual acts  
they do not want

SEXUAL ABUSE

Touching sexually  
without consent

SEXUAL ABUSE

Filming or taking  
sexual photos  
without consent

SEXUAL ABUSE

Threatening to  
share sexual  
images

SEXUAL ABUSE

Withholding sex to  
punish or control

SEXUAL ABUSE

Forcing sex as  
punishment or  
proof of love

SEXUAL ABUSE

Making someone  
have sex with  
others or for  
money

SEXUAL ABUSE

Making sexual  
comments, jokes,  
or insults

SEXUAL ABUSE

Controlling choices  
about pregnancy,  
contraception, or  
sexual health

SEXUAL ABUSE

SEXUAL ABUSE

Stopping contact  
with friends,  
family, or support

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Controlling who  
someone talks to  
or where they go

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Forcing sharing of  
location or  
constant calls

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Timing or checking  
journeys

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Checking or  
taking phone or  
messages

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Not allowing use of  
car, keys, or  
transport

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Making someone  
ask permission for  
daily tasks

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Discouraging from  
getting help

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Following inside or  
outside the home

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Setting curfews or  
strict routines

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

ISOLATION AND CONTROL

Threatening to harm  
self, children, or others

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Threatening to hurt  
pets or damage  
home

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Threatening to  
report to services  
or immigration

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Threatening to  
share private  
information

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Using threats of  
suicide or self-  
harm to control

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Scaring with  
shouting, glaring,  
or smashing things

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Forcing apologies  
or humiliating acts

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Using weapons or  
objects to scare

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Threatening to kill  
or seriously hurt

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

THREATS AND INTIMIDATION

Following or  
watching near  
home, work, or  
school

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Sending constant  
unwanted calls or  
messages

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Tracking with GPS  
or apps

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Turning up at  
places uninvited

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Contacting  
friends, family, or  
work to check on  
someone

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Spreading lies or  
rumours

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Showing up at  
court, work, or  
events uninvited

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Breaking orders or agreements repeatedly

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Leaving unwanted gifts or notes

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Using others to spy or pass messages

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Using phone or accounts without consent

DIGITAL ABUSE

Forcing or changing passwords to block access

DIGITAL ABUSE

Spying through apps or smart devices

DIGITAL ABUSE

Sharing or threatening to share private images

DIGITAL ABUSE

Creating fake accounts to harass

DIGITAL ABUSE

Sharing or threatening to share private details online

DIGITAL ABUSE

Adding to group chats to shame or control

DIGITAL ABUSE

Tracking through apps like banking or shopping

DIGITAL ABUSE

Hacking email or social media accounts

DIGITAL ABUSE

Recording calls or messages without consent

DIGITAL ABUSE

DIGITAL ABUSE

Pressuring pregnancy or abortion

PREGNANCY AND HEALTH ABUSE

Stopping  
contraception or  
health visits

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Hurting or  
threatening during  
pregnancy

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Blocking medicine  
or health care

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Using disability or  
mental health to  
control

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Stopping or  
interfering with  
treatment or aids

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Forcing alcohol,  
drugs, or medicine  
misuse

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Stopping rest or  
recovery after  
illness

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Refusing help with  
health needs

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Scaring someone  
about health or  
pregnancy

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

PREGNANCY AND  
HEALTH ABUSE

Undermining  
parenting in front  
of children

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Using children to  
spy or pass  
messages

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Using child  
contact to control  
or harass

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Threatening to  
take or abduct  
children

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Calling someone  
a bad parent

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Breaking routines  
to upset children

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Destroying toys or school things

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Making false reports to services to cause trouble or control

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Scaring children with shouting or violence

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Blaming children for adult problems

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Forcing children to take sides in adult conflict

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Using children to demand money or benefits

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Refusing to care for children to cause stress

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

Saying abuse did not happen

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Blaming the victim for the abuse

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Calling someone "crazy" or "too sensitive"

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Saying sorry but not changing behaviour

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Using culture or religion to excuse abuse

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Saying no one will believe the victim

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Saying abuse is caused by stress, drink, or drugs

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Claiming the victim is to blame for anger

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Saying abuse is  
"normal" in  
relationships

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Pretending abuse  
was a joke

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

MINIMISING AND BLAMING

Controlling to  
protect "family  
honour"

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Using threats of  
shame, exile, or  
punishment to  
control

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Involving family or  
community in  
control

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Pressuring or  
forcing marriage

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Taking someone  
abroad to force  
marriage

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Taking passports  
or ID to stop  
leaving

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Using threats or  
violence for  
“dishonour”

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Forcing clothing,  
behaviour, or  
lifestyle choices

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Stopping  
friendships or  
education for  
“honour”

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Monitoring  
movements  
through family or  
community

HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

Hurting or  
threatening pets

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Destroying  
belongings to  
punish

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Changing locks or  
locking in rooms

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Cutting off  
heating, water, or  
power

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Stopping safe  
space to sleep

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Taking or opening  
mail

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Using pets to scare  
or control

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Refusing to feed or  
care for pets

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Breaking furniture  
or damaging the  
home

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Selling or giving  
away belongings  
without consent

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

PETS, PROPERTY, AND HOME

Taking or hiding  
passports, ID, or  
documents

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Threatening  
deportation or visa  
loss

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Stopping access  
to help due to  
status

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Blocking legal  
advice or  
translation

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Forcing unsafe or  
illegal work

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Forcing signatures  
on documents  
against will

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Using immigration  
status to scare or  
control

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Threatening to  
separate families

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Keeping someone  
dependent on  
visas or papers

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

Stopping learning  
of English or local  
laws

IMMIGRATION ABUSE

IMMIGRATION ABUSE