



# Tips from the **Divorce Support Club**

Leaving an Abusive Partner

# 1 Recognising abuse

Abuse doesn't have to be physical. There are many types of abuse that can take people a long time to recognise because they are so subtle. You may have noticed or questioned things like:

Why does my partner speak to me like that?

Why doesn't my partner act like my friends partners?

I've been putting my needs at the bottom of my priorities to avoid conflict

I've never had access to my finances... Why?

I've been changing my behaviour to manage theirs

Why has my partner changed so much since we first met?

## 2 How do I know **when** to leave?

There is no definitive answer as to when to leave an abusive relationship. Everybody is different and has their own limits. Some leave at the first red flag, others stay for 6 months, 6 years, 30 years and some never leave.

- Some people question if their partner means to act this way and it is important to know that these behaviours are **intentional**. It is a **manipulation** tactic to keep you where they want you.
- "I wish it would go back to how it was at the start". The person you knew at the beginning of the relationship was not real.

**Hope is a big motivator** in keeping people in abusive relationships. It's important to recognise that they were never that person.



# 3 How do I leave?

If you are not in immediate danger, it is better to bide your time before actually leaving your abusive relationship.

Ask yourself:

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- ? What financial rights do I have?
  - ? What rights do I have in relation to our children?
  - ? Do I have anyone that can help and support me?
  - ? What options do I have in relation to moving? How much will it cost?
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You can go to **any** local housing authority and ask for help. They have a duty of care and will help you to gain temporary accommodation.

# 4 How do I leave if I'm in danger?

Some people find themselves in situations where biding their time is not an option and they need to get out immediately.



Your first port of call in an emergency is always the police. Some people may now ask "what if I'm in a situation where I can't speak". The police are trained for this. They will ask you to use your keypad on your phone to answer any questions.

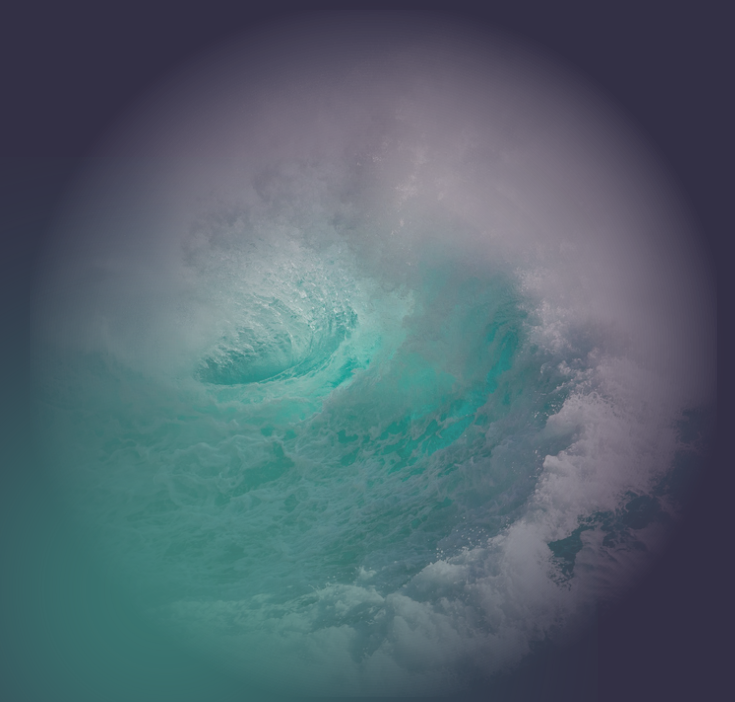
When the police arrive, they will always separate the couple in a domestic abuse situation. You will then have the opportunity to speak and ask for help safely.

The police also have the ability to serve a Domestic Abuse Protection Notice. This notice removes the abusive person from the property for up to 28 days. The police do not need much evidence to serve this notice, just a suspicion of abuse. This can be incredibly helpful as it allows you that bit of time to get the help that you need.

# 5 Living with an abusive ex

Once you have left the relationship, you might find yourself still living with your ex whilst you're in the process of separating. In a situation like this emotions are high.

- Caron Kipping (our guest speaker for this webinar) uses a phrase "**Brave the wave**". Which essentially means trying to be the bigger person.
- It's likely that your ex will say harmful things to try to upset you. The most beneficial thing you can do in this situation is walk away. Go for a walk, move yourself into another room, visit friends or family.
- You are no longer with this person, so you do not need to entertain their arguments or harmful comments.



# 6 Talking to your children about their parent

It can be incredibly difficult trying to navigate discussing your children's parent (your abusive ex) once you have separated.

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- ✓ Allow your children to ask questions and be honest
- ✗ Unnecessarily bad mouth your children's other parent to your children
- ✓ Call out unacceptable behaviours from your children's other parent
- ✗ Allow unacceptable behaviours to go unmentioned. This person is raising your children and partly shaping them into who they will grow up to be