

Safety planning with children and young people



The MASH team are aware of the Domestic Abuse incident. They will be managing the risk and safety planning with the family accordingly.

You can complement their work by helping the student to consider potential dangers and how to try to stay safe.

You can use the safety 'conversation starters' in the resource pack to help you.

We can help the child to develop practical, age-appropriate skills to help them to stay safe but we should be mindful not to add extra guilt or anxiety if they do not feel able to follow their safety plan.

In a domestic violence incident we should encourage children –

- Not to try to intervene
- Try to find a safe place
- Try to find some help

There might be a room in the house where the child feels safest, like their bedroom. If they have brothers and sisters they might feel safer if they all stay together in one room. They should avoid rooms where there are objects that could be used as weapons, such as the kitchen and also avoid being at the top of the stairs.

If possible they should stay in the safe place and ring 999 and then wait until a safe adult comes to help them or until the perpetrator has left the building.

In case the child feels that it is not safe to stay in the house, we can help them to plan where else they could go to stay safe. Is there a neighbour, friend or family member close-by who they could go to for help? Or perhaps a school, community centre or even a shop?

Remember that the child may have been told by family members not to tell people about the abuse, which may be confusing for them.

There is nothing that is so awful, so BIG or so small that we can't talk about it with someone.

Encouraging the child to seek help

Reiterate that-

- the abuse is not their fault
- they are not going to get in trouble because of it
- people like the Police and Social Workers are there to try to keep people safe
- there are people who care about them and their family
- the problem will not go away without the right help
- talking can help to make us feel better and to solve problems

Help the child to identify safe adults who they can contact in an emergency or if they are feeling unsafe.

LISTEN to the child!

Ask the child who they would choose to go to if they had a problem and ensure that any person that the child identifies knows what to do in case of disclosure.

Help the child to work out how they would contact someone if they needed to- do they have access to a phone? If so do they have credit on the phone and is it always charged up?

Help the child to make up a code word so that in an emergency the child just has to say the code word and the other person will know that the child needs help.

Make sure that the person helping knows the child's address and phone number and that they've agreed what they should do if the child calls.

Help the child to identify back-up plans for if they cannot get in contact with the first person that they try to contact.

Make sure that the child knows that they can ring 999, knows how do to it and what to say including knowing their own address.

You can explore these options with the child and record them on a safety plan (which you will find in the safety conversation starter resource pack). You can share this safety plan with the child's non-abusive carer and any other safe adults that it may concern.

