

Support in situations of domestic abuse

Abuse in relationships and families often occurs when a person wishes to gain power and control over someone else.¹ Domestic abuse takes a number of forms: it may consist of verbal attacks, intimidation, emotional or psychological abuse and degradation, enforcement of social isolation, financial control, sexual coercion and/or physical violence. If you are subject to any of these forms of abuse, you have a right for it to stop and it's important that you get support.

If you are subject to domestic abuse

- It can be hard to recognise abuse or admit to yourself that you are going through it. Here is a link that could help you to work out whether you are in an abusive relationship: <https://www.dvrcv.org.au/knowledge-centre/quizzes/quiz-warning-signs>
- We know it's hard right now to confide in your family and friends because the coronavirus situation is making it more difficult than usual to see them. But you deserve help and support, so have a think about who you trust most among friends, a family member, neighbours or other people you know, tell someone what is happening, and ask them to help you.
- You can also talk to a specialised advisory service, by phone, WhatsApp or online chat. They are anonymous and free of charge and can help you find a way out of your situation. The contact details for various services are provided at the end of this document.
- If you're under immediate threat or are afraid for your safety, call the police, who can order the perpetrator to leave the home. Or you can go to a shelter – call 040-8000 41000; the line is open 24 hours a day.

If you are worried about someone else

Don't look away: During the coronavirus crisis, in which we have had to drastically reduce our social interactions, it may be particularly hard for people affected by domestic abuse to get help and support. We all need to look out for one another at the moment. If you notice any of these warning signs about someone you know (adult or child), don't ignore them.

- Their personality seems to have changed: they have become withdrawn, 'not really there', don't want to talk, seem nervous and uncertain, anxious or irritable.
- They are 'too busy' to meet up with relatives, friends or colleagues (socially distanced or online) and make excuses or 'forget' planned meetings, or put them off repeatedly.
- They always need to check with their partner whether they can meet up; their partner won't let them be alone.

¹ Most domestic abuse takes place against women and children, and young LGBTIQ people are also targeted (LGBTIQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer).

- They seem tired all the time or have injuries; they have taken up, or increased, their use of addictive substances; they minimise and say all is well when asked what is going on.

Raise awareness: You can help victims and make your community more aware of the issues by downloading information posters, printing them out and displaying them in your communal hallway, lobby or corridor (you can find flyers in various languages here: <https://www.deine-playlist-2020.de/erwachsene#downloads>). If you are currently supporting people in your community at increased risk from coronavirus, you can put flyers in with their groceries.

De-escalate dangerous situations: If you witness or notice conflict which may turn violent, you can intervene to de-escalate the situation, as long as you do not put yourself in danger by doing so. If you hear trouble at your neighbours', for example, you can ring the doorbell and ask to borrow some eggs or a cup of flour. This may interrupt the situation and stop it from escalating further.

Reach out: Try to talk to the person you believe to be affected by domestic abuse and offer your support. Ask specific questions, such as *'I've been wondering if your partner is threatening/controlling you?'* Let the person see they are not alone, and encourage them to talk about what's happening. If they feel able to talk, show that you value their courage and their trust in you. If they don't want to talk and reject your approach, indicate that they can change their mind and come to you whenever they feel ready: *'Let me know if there's anything you want to talk about or anything I can do for you.'* Tell them about support and advisory services.

Important: You must make sure the perpetrator isn't aware of the conversation. Don't take any action if the victim doesn't want you to. It may be hard to 'stand by and do nothing', but intervening when the victim is not ready can be dangerous. The exception is when the victim and their family are in immediate danger or under severe threat.

You can contact all the services listed at the end of this document if you want to support someone going through domestic abuse. You don't have to be a victim yourself.

If you are worried that you could become a perpetrator

The limitations on our freedom that come with the current crisis are difficult to deal with. In times like these, the risk of losing control increases. There are various services that support and advise people who feel overwhelmed at home or are worried that they might become aggressive or violent to their child/ren or partner. They can help you find ways of releasing stress and anger, and resolving conflicts, that don't harm anyone.

Advice and support for people affected by domestic abuse

We have provided links with English-language information where these are available.

Emergency telephone services at Hamburg's shelters

For adults:

Central emergency number for Hamburg's women's shelters

<https://hamburgerfrauenhaeuser.de/index.php?id=18&L=2>

Tel.: 040 - 800041000 (24 h)

For children and young people:

Emergency crisis number for children and young people (*Kinder- und Jugendnotdienst*)

Provides support in crises; can arrange accommodation for children and young people away from the family home

Tel.: 040 - 428 15 32 00 (24 h)

Refuge for girls; part of the *Kinder- und Jugendnotdienst (Mädchenhaus Hamburg)*

Tel.: 040 - 428 49 - 265 (24 h)

Advice and support hotlines for victims in crisis

Violence against Women Support Hotline

<https://www.hilfetelefon.de/en.html>

Tel.: 08000 - 116 016 (24 h, 17 languages; calls free of charge)

Emergency rape crisis telephone service for women and girls (*Notruf für vergewaltigte Frauen und Mädchen e.V.*)

<http://en.frauennotruf-hamburg.de/>

Tel.: 040 - 25 55 66 (24 h)

Support hotline on sexual abuse

<https://www.hilfeportal-missbrauch.de/en/homepage.html>

0800 - 22 55 530 (24 h; calls free of charge)

Specific service for children and young people:

NummerGegenKummer

(phone line for children and young people to call with worries and problems)

Tel.: 116 111 (Mon-Sat 2:00 pm-8:00 pm, additionally Mon/Weds/Thurs 10:00 am-12:00 noon) (calls free of charge)

Support services for people affected by violence

For adults:

i.bera

Intercultural advice service for victims of domestic abuse and forced marriage; services available in various languages

<https://www.verikom.de/en/gewaltschutz-eng/ibera-beratungsangebot-eng/>

Tel.: 040 - 350 17 72 26

Magnus-Hirschfeld-Centrum e. V.

Support for those experiencing homophobic or transphobic violence

<https://www.mhc-hh.de/angebote/>

Tel.: 040 - 279 00 49 & 040 - 279 00 69

Autonom Leben Hamburg e.V.

Advisory services by people with disabilities for people with disabilities

www.autonomleben.de

Tel. 040 - 4 32 90 - 148

For children and young people:

Kinderschutzbund Hamburg

(child protection support services)

Kinderschutzzentrum Hamburg

<https://kinderschutzbund-hamburg.de/>

Tel.: 040-431 79 48 0

Online advice services (in German)

For young people who have experienced violence and abuse

www.save-me-online.de

<https://krisenchat.de/> (WhatsApp +49 1573 5998143)

Preventative advice services

For parents struggling with parenting and the current situation:

Support hotline for parents in the current coronavirus situation

Tel.: 040 - 428 12 8209

NummerGegenKummer parent support hotline

Tel.: 0800 - 111 0 55 (calls free of charge)

Parent support hotline run by *Deutscher Kinderschutzbund Hamburg*

Tel.: 0800-111 0 550

Advice in Arabic and Farsi: Mon–Fri 10:00 am–12:00 pm

For people who have been, or are worried they may become, violent to their partners and/or children

Hamburger Gewaltschutz-Zentrum

For adults at risk of becoming violent within their relationships

<https://www.hamburgergewaltschutzzentrum.de/>, Tel.: 040 - 284 099 - 0

Designated support officers (*Vertrauenspersonen*) for members of HAW Hamburg affected by sexual harassment and violence

HAW Hamburg's designated support officers can provide assistance and signpost you to appropriate services if you are experiencing domestic abuse. Please contact Andrea Bettels (andrea.bettels@haw-hamburg.de) or Sabine Stövesand (sabine.stoevesand@haw-hamburg.de).