

LAST DATE



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

How to make the best use
of *Last Date*



Building
stronger
families



MOVE, INSPIRE & CHANGE

A training resource supporting the film *Last Date*, giving information and insights into the beginning, progression and repetition of abusive relationships and how subtle the original warning signs can be. This can be used to raise awareness with young people about coercive and controlling behaviour and help them make better-informed decisions to avoid entering abusive relationships. This behaviour can be much harder to detect than overt violence but still causes harm.

LEAD SPONSOR



PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH



ADDITIONAL SUPPORTERS



DISCLAIMER

This film contains scenes involving moderate violence and strong language which some viewers may find upsetting.

Last Date is purely for educational purposes, and any individual concerns should be voiced to a professional who can provide advice.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

2. YOUNG AND FEMALE AUDIENCES

3. MALE AUDIENCES

4. LORI'S STORY

5. JACK'S STORY

6. GENDER STEREOTYPES

7. COERCIVE CONTROL

8. BEHAVIOUR

9. ISSUES WITH LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

10. STATISTICS

11. SEE THE SIGNS

12. RESOURCES

1. INTRODUCTION

Last Date is a social film drama that tells the story of Lori and Jack, showing the steps in which their relationship develops from initial meeting to Lori being exposed to tactics of coercion and control which escalate to violent abuse as if the events were speeded up and happened during their first date.

This film aims to:

1. Raise awareness of the signs that a relationship could become abusive and explore tactics used by those who engage in domestic abuse
2. Increase understanding of the point of view of both partners in this kind of relationship.
3. Provide a medium for training in schools, colleges, universities (and the public and voluntary sectors) to prevent young people from entering unknowingly into potentially abusive relationships through ignorance of the warning signs.
The film is supported by a range of training resources available on our website.
4. Improve understanding of domestic abuse amongst educational institutions and provide a catalyst for improved policies and procedures to support victims.

Whilst the film shows a heterosexual couple, abusive behaviour can exist in any type of relationship, whatever the partners are male, female, non-binary or genderfluid, straight, gay, bisexual or transgender. The couple shown are white but abusive behavior can happen in any relationship including those where either or both partners are BAME. Abuse can also happen where one or both partners experience disability, are older or where there is a difference in age.

The material in this film may bring to light experiences of abuse in the present or the past in those watching it, whether students or staff. Please ensure that support is in place for anyone affected by it. There is a list of useful links at the end of this training pack.

SOCIAL FILM DRAMA

This film is part of a series of Social Film Dramas created by **OMNI PRODUCTIONS** and **FAMILY ACTION**

For more information go to www.socialfilmdrama.com



2. YOUNG AND FEMALE AUDIENCES

WHY THE LAST DATE IS AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF TRAINING MATERIAL FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES:

- 13% of 16-24-year-olds think it is acceptable at least some of the time to abuse their partners. (1)
- 23.7% of women (3.9 million) and 10.3% of men (1.7 million) have experienced partner abuse since the age of 16. (2)
- 1 in 5 teenagers have been physically abused by their boyfriends or girlfriends.

In over 90% of domestic abuse incidents, a child is present or in an the adjacent room, even if they don't 'see' they still 'hear'. (3)

- Around 1 in 5 children have been exposed to domestic abuse. (4)

WHY LAST DATE IS AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF TRAINING MATERIAL FOR WOMEN:

- 3 women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner – 1 woman killed every 3 days. (2)
- One in four women suffers from domestic abuse in their lifetime. (1)
- One study found that 95 out of 100 domestic abuse survivors reported experiencing coercive control. (5)

3. MALE AUDIENCES

WHY LAST DATE IS AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF TRAINING MATERIAL FOR MEN:

- 'By constantly pushing men towards certain traits – and away from others – we shove them into the “Man Box.” This can be extremely limiting for boys and men. It’s also incredibly destructive to men, and a root cause of gender-based violence.' (6)
- 'A study in the American Journal of Men's Health found that men who repress their emotions have an increased risk of self-harming behaviours, depression, anxiety, and aggressive attacks on others. This may be why the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC) has determined that the suicide rate is 4 times higher in men than in women.' (6)
- The definition of manhood has primary aspects that promote and support a culture of violence and discrimination against women and girls. It teaches that women are of less value than men, the property of men and sexual objects. (7)
- We can all work on acknowledging feelings and allowing children to express a full range of emotions. By working to make a change, we can end these cycles of destructive behaviour and violence – and make a difference in our community. (6)
- 23% of young people exposed to Domestic Violence are also demonstrating harmful behaviours themselves. (added to data) (27)
(This data includes harmful behaviours towards parents as well as intimate partners)



4. LORI'S STORY

THE VICTIM

'When I saw Jack for the first time he swept me off my feet. He was generous, attractive, funny and had a bit of a dangerous edge to him that I liked; no one wants to be with someone boring, do they? Things moved really fast and he seemed totally into me, wanting me all to himself so that I spent nearly all my time with him. It felt like something really special, really meaningful. He wouldn't let me out of his sight, he texted me dozens of times a day. I thought this was it, the One, the guy who couldn't get enough of me. I was really happy at the start.'

'But over time I realized I was somehow disappearing from the picture. If I said or did anything he didn't like, he'd go ballistic. I thought he was just sure of himself, passionate about everything like he was about me, but I saw he was only happy if I did exactly what he wanted all the time. At first, he would apologise for losing his temper and sometimes I felt really sorry for him. And I loved him, so I forgave him.'

Things would get better for a while but then they'd get worse all over again. He made my life smaller and smaller, controlling where I went, what I did, what I ate, how much money I had, who I could see. It wasn't romantic and sweet any more, it was terrifying. If I didn't do what he wanted he became threatening and then openly violent. I didn't see any of it coming. Without noticing, I became an expert on making sure I didn't upset him so that in the end I didn't know who I was any more.'



**“I was in a loop, and it was never-ending,
and eventually you lose a sense of your
own identity.”**

FALIANA LEE

The Most Dangerous Time, 5 women tell their stories of leaving abuse
The Guardian

**“And so the cycle would continue.
Things would be great until they weren’t,
and we’d start it all over again.”**

LAUREN WELLBANK

Author and survivor of domestic violence
Huffington Post

It’s not always easy to spot abusive behaviour at the beginning of a relationship. It can be very subtle and the perpetrator may be extremely charming and apparently loving when you first meet them. They may try to justify the coercion and control they exercise over you so that you are no longer sure whether their behaviour is ‘your fault’.

Learning about what a healthy relationship looks like can help you avoid abuse because you’ll have a better idea of what to look for from the start.

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. In an emergency ring **999**
2. Call the Domestic Violence Helpline Tel: **0808 2000 247**
3. If you know someone who is in an abusive relationship, find out about domestic abuse support services in your area and give them the details.
4. If you work in the education sector but aren’t a domestic abuse specialist, make yourself better informed.



5. JACK'S STORY

THE PERPETRATOR

The first time I saw Lori I thought she was absolutely perfect, nothing like the women I'd met before. She was beautiful, bright and sexy. I bent over backwards to give her what she wanted. I spoilt her; wined and dined her, let her talk, ignored her flaws, made allowances for the times she let things get in the way of our relationship or let me down over something. Nobody's perfect and I gave her as much space as I could. I loved her, I really did.'

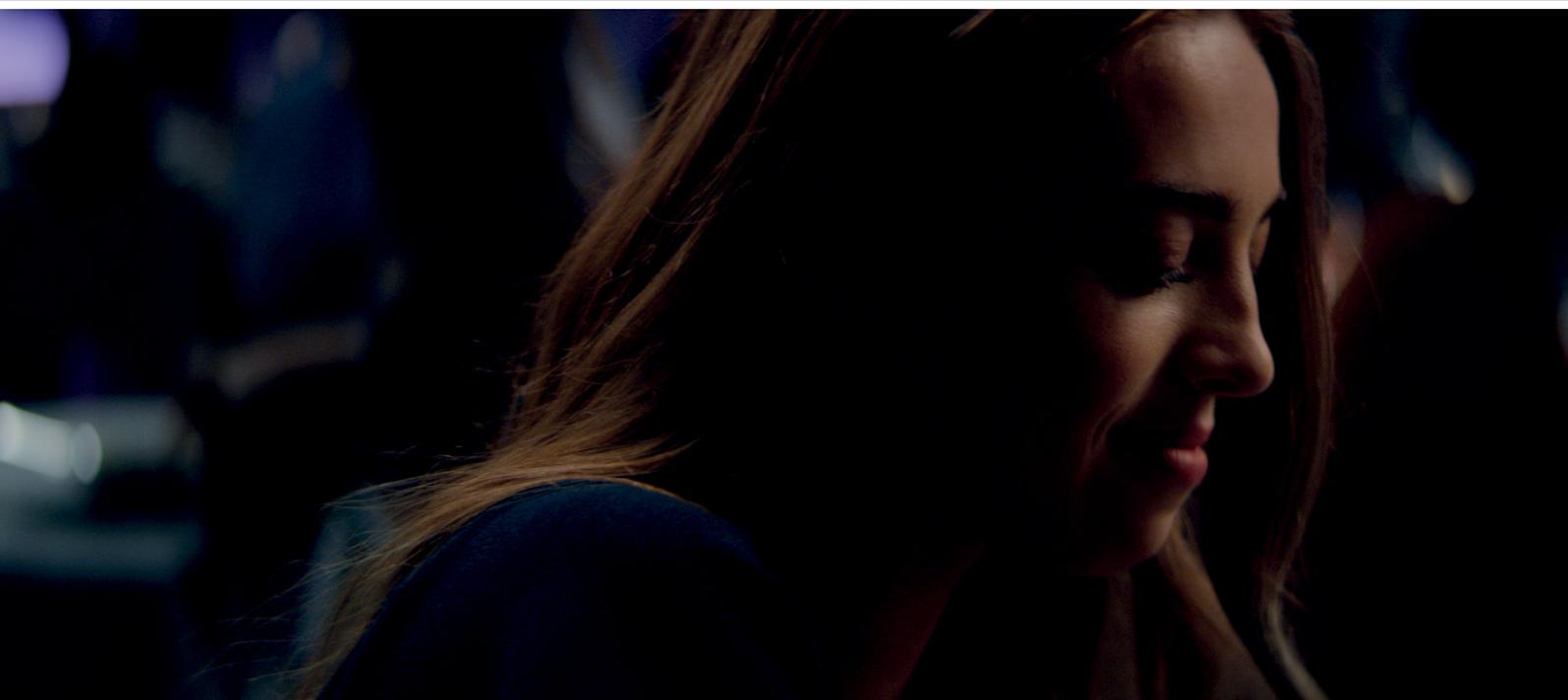
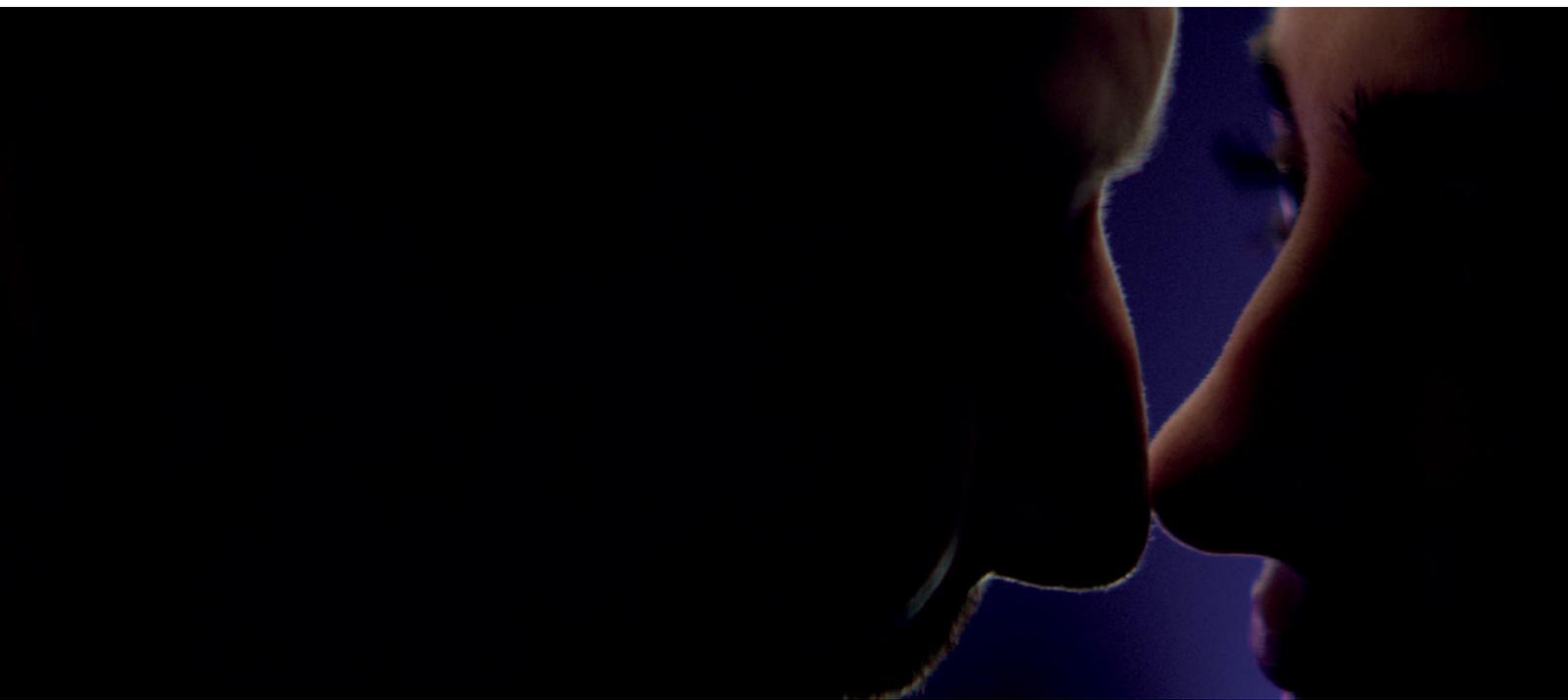
'I thought she'd be different but she wasn't. Whatever I did, it was never enough, she was never happy or grateful for anything. I tried to be the kind of man women want, to show her I wasn't one of those pathetic weak guys who are always getting things wrong but that I was strong, that I knew who I was, that I would hold my Ground.'

'It didn't work. She didn't give a fuck about me: it had all been an act. She was just out to bleed me dry and then when she'd got everything she could out of me she'd have walked out on me. I tried to show her how a relationship is meant to work but she never listened. All I wanted was a bit of respect, a bit of warmth but she was completely self-centred. I just hadn't seen it coming. I admit I lost my temper a few times but anyone else would have done the same: anyone would have been pushed past their limits by the way she behaved.'

If you recognise in yourself any behaviours which could be abusive to another person, you can get help to change them. Understanding yourself, your life experiences and what you have learnt about relationships while you were growing up can help you be in a healthy relationship where both partners can respect and get to know each other without abuse.

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Take responsibility for your violence by seeking help to stop.
2. Call the Respect phoneline for domestic violence perpetrators Tel: **0845 122 8609**



6. GENDER STEREOTYPES

GENDER STEREOTYPES AND HOW THEY AFFECT HOW WE FEEL IN RELATIONSHIPS

Gender stereotyping means assuming an individual woman or man will have specific roles in life and behave in a particular way purely because of the fact that they belong to that sex.

In the past there have been rigid views about what boys and girls should like including what toys they should play with, what colours they should wear and what jobs they should do when they grow up. These ideas put children into boxes so that when they grow up men were in a 'man box' and women in a 'woman box'. In fact our feelings have no gender. We all need to be able to feel the full range of emotions including fear, uncertainty and tenderness. We can all be strong, assertive and independent. Most of our experience has very little to do with whether we're a man or a woman; it's to do with our makeup as a full human being with a whole range of thoughts and feelings. Accepting our feelings fully can protect us from getting into relationships where we're put (or put ourselves) in a 'man box' or 'woman box'. A good relationship is made up of two equal partners whose feelings and needs are equally important, no matter their gender or sexuality.

Gender stereotyping can be very limiting to both women and men, and can contribute to specific harm such as the fact that women are more likely to experience domestic abuse.

The idea of gender seems straightforward at first. You would think it's perfectly simple to identify whether someone is a man or a woman and that this would tell you a lot about how you'd expect them to behave or feel.

However a person's sex is different from their gender. A person's sex relates to their biological attributes: their genitals, their hormones and their chromosomes. And sex itself, whether someone is a man or a woman, isn't as simple as it looks. Some people are born intersex, somewhere between male and female in terms of their genitals. And our bodies on the outside don't tell the whole story. Some people's chromosomes do not fit into the standard male and female model, and their hormones might be different too.

You can't work out a person's gender directly from their biology. Their gender relates to their self-expression, their behaviour and their feelings. These could be anywhere on a spectrum between feminine and masculine, and are specific to each person. Science tells us that there are more than two genders: in fact there are many gender identities.

Most people feel happy with their gender but some people feel that they're not in fact the gender that matches their sex. This can cause them serious distress if they're not able to live as the gender they feel they belong to.

In the end we are all individuals. We all need to be heard, respected and treated as equals. Our gender makes no difference to that.

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7. COERCIVE CONTROL

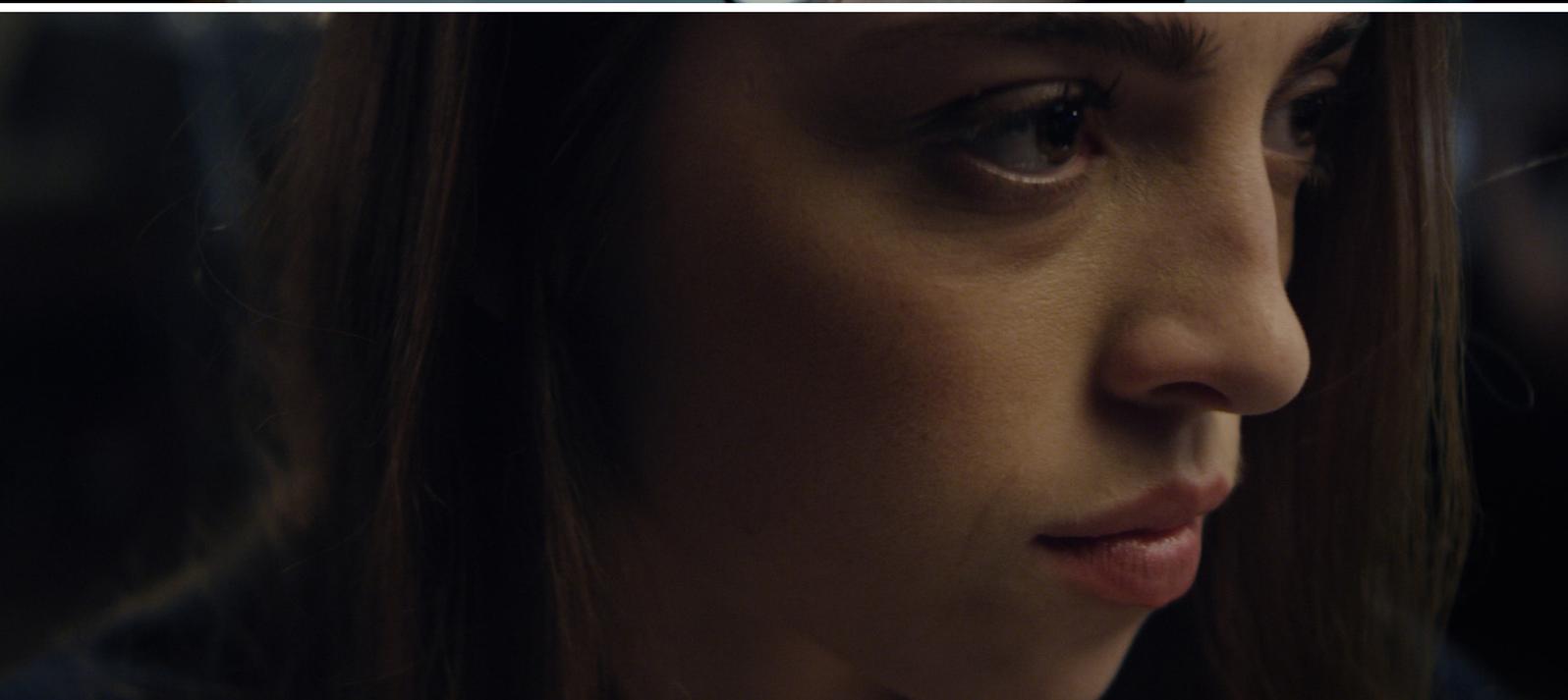
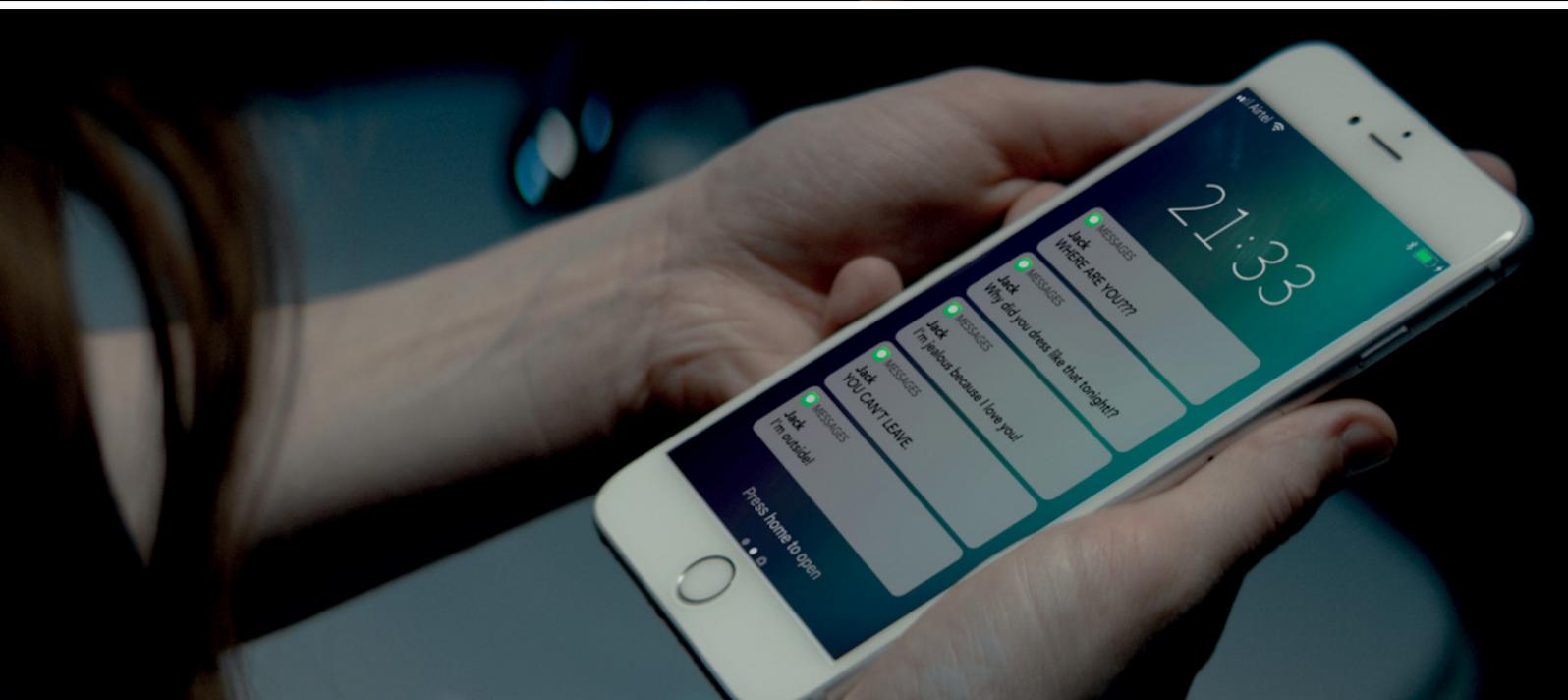
WHAT IS COERCIVE CONTROL?

1. Isolating you from friends and family
2. Depriving you of basic needs, such as food
3. Monitoring your time
4. Monitoring you via online communication tools or spyware
5. Taking control over aspects of your everyday life, such as where you can go, who you can see, what you can wear and when you can sleep
6. Repeatedly putting you down, such as saying you're worthless
7. Humiliating, degrading or dehumanising you
8. Controlling your finances
9. Making threats or intimidating you

REFERENCE:

Women's Aid. What is Coercive Control?

Available from: <http://bit.ly/2ZhCCKE>



8. BEHAVIOUR

CHARM

Charm is a way someone can make you feel good but it might not relate to their real feelings. They may be unable to see you as a separate person, more as someone whose job is simply to fulfil their needs, and being charming is a way of persuading or grooming you to do that; or they may have rushed in to say things before they've given themselves time to get to know you. This is often the way people believe they should behave on a date.

In a healthy relationship, someone might give compliments but they wouldn't need to overwhelm you either by impressing you with information about themselves or by overpraising you. If you've just met someone, you don't know them yet, so you need time to find out more about them and see how you feel around them. You would feel there was space and time to do this, and the other person wouldn't be hurrying you or pushing you into anything.

PROPOSAL

If someone tries to rush things along in a relationship, telling you they instantly know you're the one for them, or wanting to instantly commit to being together or to moving in together, this would be a warning sign. It could feel very romantic but in real life it takes time to get to know a person and in fact someone who really cares about you would not need to hurry you along at a pace you weren't happy with. If a relationship works there's no need to rush it, it will happen at its own pace without forcing.

JEALOUSY

Jealousy is another behaviour which can seem flattering. Surely someone must really love you if they can't bear it if you talk to someone else or if you're out of their sight. But in fact it's a sign of that person's insecurity about themselves and lack of trust in you. In a healthy relationship a person could feel jealousy but they would take responsibility for their own feelings. They might tell you they feel vulnerable or insecure and they might try to work out why they felt like that. Partners who get on well and have agreed to be exclusive should be able to trust that the other person means what they say when they make a commitment to them. If your partner breaks that commitment you would have to decide whether you want to stay together but it would have to be out of free choice, not because someone else was making you do something.

POSSESSIVENESS

Possessiveness can feel like very romantic togetherness: no-one else matters but the two of you, the world outside your relationship is unimportant. This can be a lovely feeling you experience when you fall in love with someone and are totally focussed on each other. But is something else happening too?

If your partner doesn't like you seeing your friends and family, criticises and judges them and wants to control what you do with your life (where you go, when you do things, how much time you spend with other people, what they want you to tell them) and this makes you feel they are putting pressure on you to do what they want rather than asking you what you want, then they are being possessive. This is not loving behaviour since they seem unable to treat you like a separate person with needs, thoughts and feelings of your own. Someone who wants to control you like this is afraid that if they didn't behave like this, you wouldn't stay in the relationship.

In a healthy relationship your partner would be glad that you had friends and family and would be interested in getting to know them because those people are part of your life. Someone who feels they will lose out if you spend time with other people is insecure and is scared there isn't enough love to go around. A person who feels like this needs to try to understand why they feel they're not worthy of love and why they can't trust that you want to be with them for who they are. A mature partner knows that you are a separate person who has a right to live their own life without being told what to do.

ENTRAPMENT

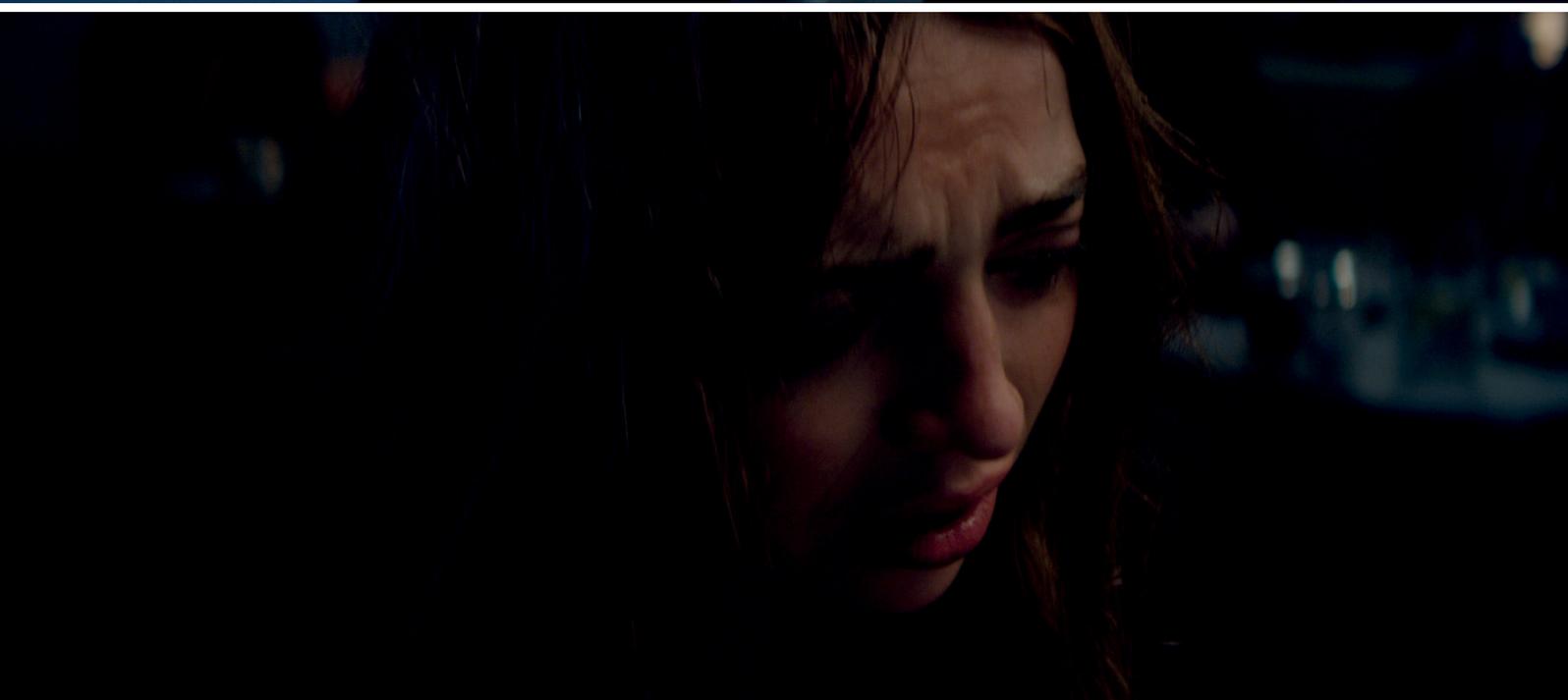
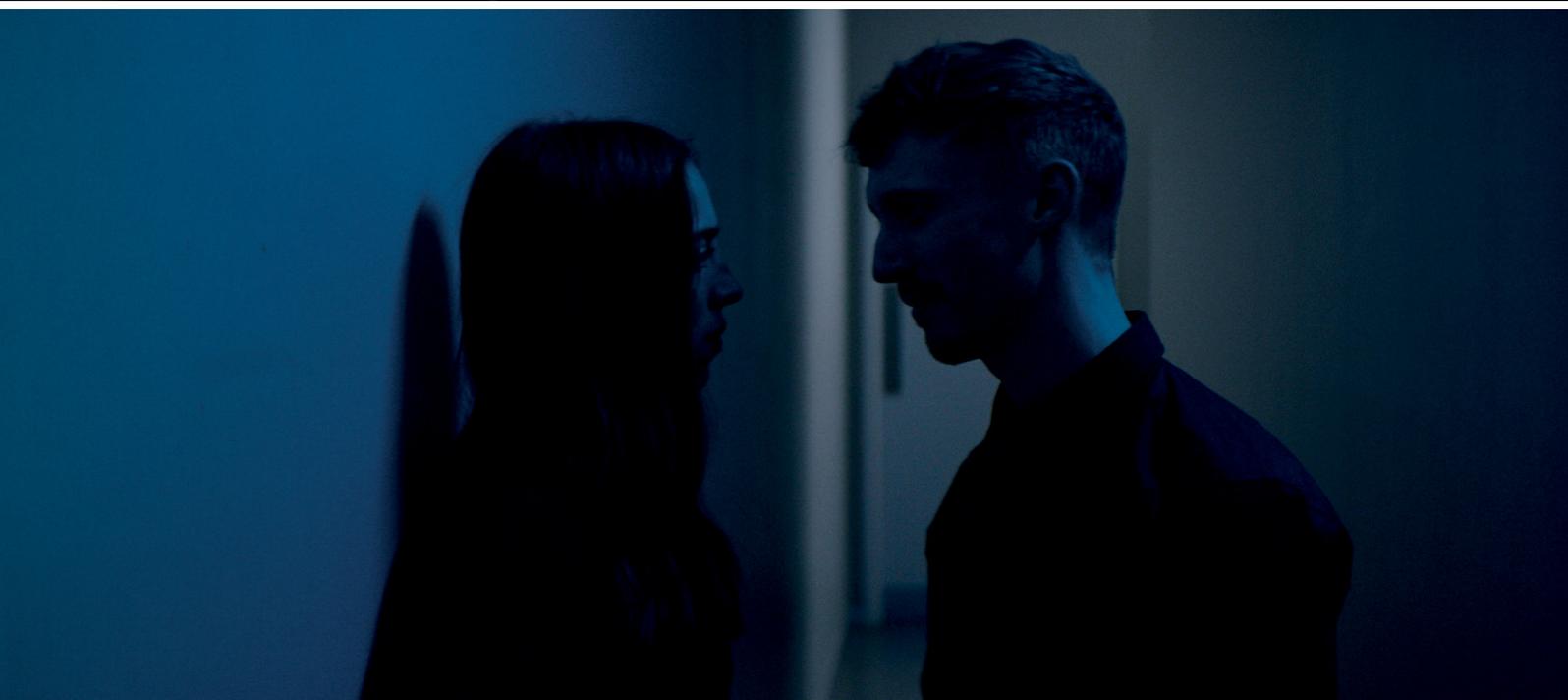
If you're in a relationship with someone who makes you feel scared or unhappy and who you have to appease to make sure they don't get angry with you, you may be entrapped in that relationship. Your partner's moods may swing between being loving or apologetic and angry and controlling.

In a healthy relationship people will naturally disagree and have conflict with each other but you will be able to talk about the problems and try and solve them together, with outside help if necessary. A person who cares about you wouldn't switch between scaring you and then making up for it. This is a toxic cycle which harms both of you.

ASSAULT

It is never OK for people to assault each other at any time, no matter how upset or angry they are. Relationships can stir up a lot of emotions in us but hurting someone is never acceptable. In a healthy relationship, someone who is finding things difficult would discuss this with you or get outside help, for example from family, friends, your GP or a trained counsellor, either for themselves as an individual or for you as a couple. It is possible for someone to end abusive behaviour if they are willing to learn more about themselves and why they feel the need to act in this way.

If you're in a relationship where someone is physically, emotionally or sexually hurting you, please talk to someone you trust about what to do next. You can call the Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247.



9. ISSUES WITH LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

WHY DON'T PEOPLE JUST LEAVE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

1. It may be dangerous or frightening to leave

It can be very dangerous to leave an abusive relationship without proper support. The fear is real: risk of violence increases greatly after separation.

2. You may be isolated

An abusive partner often isolates their victim so they have no one to turn to for help.

3. You may feel ashamed, embarrassed or in denial

Victims may find it very difficult to accept they are in an abusive relationship. Perpetrators may be well respected and liked by people who have not witnessed their abusive side, and this makes it harder for the victim to be believed.

4. The effects of being in a traumatic situation affect how you function

Being in an abusive relationship wears down a person so that they can feel worthless and unable to make proper decisions. Fear and constant criticism erode a person's self-belief so that they find it much harder to see a way out of their situation.

5. Practical problems

With little control over their own life, the victim of abuse may lack practical resources such as money and be unable to support themselves or their children outside the relationship with the abuser.

Source: www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/women-leave

Abuse often happens in cycles. When the relationship is going well an abuser may be a very different person, for example, loving, kind and generous, so that the victim believes the relationship has a future. It can be difficult to see that a repeating pattern of abuse is taking place and that it can't be fixed without understanding why it's happening and getting help.

One of the biggest problems in dealing with abuse is the fact that it's often not spoken about. Whatever the type of abuse, emotional, physical or sexual, people are often aware it's taken place but don't speak out, even when it takes place in public. This could be because they feel they are protecting the victim from further assault which might result from drawing attention to it and angering the perpetrator. But if the abuse is not named and brought in to the open in a safe and responsible way, it remains hidden.

It takes skill and patience to support someone in an abusive relationship to get help and if necessary to leave safely. If you know someone in this situation, offer support but let them make their own decisions in their own time. Help them to get medical or legal support and to make a plan to leave safely if they want these things.

Source: www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/im-worried-about-someone-else

WHAT CAN I DO?

If you think you might be in an abusive relationship, or are concerned for a friend, please speak to somebody who will offer you trust and confidentiality such as a safeguarding professional within your school or college.

10. STATISTICS

1. Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Helpline, 2019. Available From: www.familycrisis.co.uk
2. Two women are killed each week by a current or former partner in England and Wales
Office for National Statistics (2016) Compendium – Homicide (average taken over 10 years)
3. Barter et al (2009) Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships.
NSPCC
4. Anonymous. September 2016. Why Do I Love My Abuser?
Available from: <https://bit.ly/2Z6K4Ph>
5. Women's Aid. What is Coercive Control? Available From: <http://bit.ly/2ZhCCKE>
6. Blackburn Center. Available From: <https://bit.ly/2ID3STZ>
7. MCGRATH, Vivan. Why We Keep Going Back to Abusive Relationships.
Available From: <https://bit.ly/2UwiflH>

11. SEE THE SIGNS

Use this page to identify the signs of coercive control whilst watching the film.

- Charm
- Declaration
- Blame
- Jealousy
- Possession
- Control
- Gaslighting
- Instinct

12. RESOURCES

USEFUL RESOURCES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

www.safelives.org.uk

www.womensaid.org.uk

www.refuge.org.uk

LGBT RESOURCES

www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/criminal-law/domestic-violence

www.galop.org.uk/domesticabuse

MEN AND WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER TO END DV

www.respect.uk.net