

# The Wish Centre Behaviour Change Programme Newsletter



*Welcome to the latest installment of the WCBCN. This is an opportunity for us to share with you, the referrers, information relating to our perpetrator work monthly – namely the Gateway to Change workshop and the Make the Change programme. This will allow us to share case studies with you, not only on how the programme works, but how important your referrals are to making a difference in the lives of those affected by DA/DV by enabling them the chance to make changes to their behaviours and, ultimately, their lives and the lives of those affected.*

## Important Updates for September 2023

Please note that we can attend team meetings to give more information on our programmes and referral pathways. Please email Karina on [karina.bentham@thewishcentre.org](mailto:karina.bentham@thewishcentre.org)  
I have also attached a copy of our Annual Report for you to take a look at.





## INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING REFERRALS

We understand that time is precious when supporting people in the work we all do. In order to save you waiting time with referrals, there are a few key bits of information you may need to know.

- *There is a distinction between Make the Change and Gateway to Change. Gateway is a 2-session awareness raising workshop and comes with no report on completion. Make the Change is the full perpetrator programme which runs between 16-22 weeks (depending on the outcome of the assessment) which comes with a court accepted report upon completion.*
- *Make the Change and Gateway to Change are not anger management courses. They are for behaviour change in relation to DA and DV.*
- *We can only look at referrals relating to DA/DV towards an intimate spouse or ex/current partner.*
- *It is vitally important to complete the referral forms in as much detail as possible, providing relevant contact details where applicable. This saves time when processing the forms and enables the facilitator to have as clear a picture before going into any assessment.*
- *Men must acknowledge that their behaviour is or could be classed as abusive and want to change this.*
- *It's important to know that a referral does not guarantee a place. Acceptance on GTC and MTC is subject to assessment.*

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Blackburn & Darwen District Without Abuse

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## **Domestic Abuse in the Media**

### **Domestic abusers tagged on release and blocked from harassing victims from prison.**

A new programme launching in the Midlands will require potentially dangerous offenders, especially those who threaten former partners or their children, to wear electronic monitoring tags upon release from prison. Offenders who breach these conditions can be sent back to prison. Over 2,700 victims have already been protected from harassment by imprisoned abusers through the Unwanted Prisoner Contact Service. The service has seen a significant increase in usage since its relaunch, with domestic violence charities able to file reports on behalf of victims. These measures align with the government's broader monitoring efforts, aimed at preventing further crimes by offenders. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner and victim support organizations applaud these steps, reinforcing the government's commitment to ending violence against women and girls, as exemplified by the Domestic Abuse Act and increased funding for victim services.

To stop unwanted prisoner contact, go to: [www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact](http://www.gov.uk/stop-prisoner-contact)

### **Family courts: Children forced into contact with fathers accused of abuse.**

A recent study has revealed children have been forced into contact with fathers accused of abuse, some being convicted paedophiles. Fathers have been allowed to use the disputed concept of "parental alienation" in court. This concept is linked to the deaths of five women after courts allowed alleged abusive fathers to seek contact. The University of Manchester study, reported by the BBC, involved fathers claiming mothers turned the child against them without cause. Experts see this as a tool for abusers and deem its court acceptance a "national scandal." The study reported that 45 mothers, who were part of the study, suffered health issues due to family court stress. Domestic Abuse Commissioner Nicole Jacobs calls for urgent and wide-reaching family court reform, highlighting abusers' use of "parental alienation" to deflect from their abuse. The Ministry of Justice is investigating further action, and new draft guidelines have been issued for consultation, though some experts find them lacking.

<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/shocking-impact-of-family-courts-on-womens-health-exposed/>

### **Project launched in St. Albans to help domestic abuse survivors gain sustainable employment.**

St Albans City and District Council, in collaboration with Morgan Sindall Property Services (PS), has launched the Phoenix Programme to assist domestic abuse survivors in gaining sustainable employment. This initiative aims to rebuild confidence and develop job skills for women victims looking to enter or re-enter the workforce. It aligns with the Council's White Ribbon status award for combating male violence against women and includes services like job aspiration assessments, digital skills training, CV preparation, interview coaching, and financial guidance. Morgan Sindall PS will also provide interview opportunities within its business and with some suppliers. The program was developed with Addressing Domestic Abuse, a community interest company, and will be administered by Morgan Sindall PS's social value team in partnership with the Council.

Helen Sheen, Head of Social Value at Morgan Sindall Property Services, said:

*"Domestic abuse causes women to leave their abusive situation with very little, making it challenging for them to build an independent life. The Phoenix Programme will allow us to share our support and resources, which will provide survivors with more choices and opportunities, helping rebuild their confidence and skills so they can gain long term employment. This is also a great opportunity for Morgan Sindall PS to increase workplace diversity by recognising the value of women affected by abuse and removing stereotypes."*

## Domestic Abuse in the Media

### 'Making a difference in people's lives': 1000 domestic abuse reports made via Essex Police video tool.

More than 1,000 reports from victims were taken over video call by specially trained officers since March 2023, providing stronger evidence for cases of domestic abuse.

The process, called **Rapid Video Response (RVR)**, is a victim-focused investigative tool which provides another way for domestic abuse victims to report an incident – without having to come to a police station or have officers visit their home in a marked police car. Victims supported by the team have said they appreciated having someone to speak to so quickly, not being rushed on the call, and having the option to speak at home without attending a police station, which can often feel intimidating. One person who reported their incident through RVR said: *"If it hadn't been for this service, I may not have had the confidence and courage to say what I wanted to as I was reporting historic abuse and it had taken me a long time to speak to anyone. Because I was spoken to so quickly and it was dealt with all in the same day, I felt confident and listened to."*

#### ***So, how does RVR work?***

Call handlers first make sure a victim is safe to engage with the RVR Team via video call and that no suspect is present at their property. Then, the RVR coordinator checks they can carry out the call via a link that can be sent to the caller's device.

Through the link, victims will speak to a specialist member of the RVR Team who can:

- take the victim's account of the incident.
- provide safeguarding advice or make safeguarding referrals.
- remotely collect evidence such as screenshots or photos of injuries; and
  - create an investigation using the information collected.

This process means there is an officer in contact with a caller from start to finish, and evidence can be collected as quickly as possible after an incident. The police firmly believe that the faster they can gather evidence, the stronger it is when used to prosecute suspects of domestic abuse.

### Education about domestic abuse improves knowledge and motivation to respond to victims.

Education about domestic abuse equips and empowers friends, colleagues, and neighbours to respond in positive and helpful ways when someone discloses experiences of abuse, finds a new study by researchers from UCL and SafeLives. The study, published in the journal *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, synthesised the findings of 11 existing studies from around the world that examined the effects of domestic abuse training for colleagues, neighbours, or faith leaders. It concluded that educational activities tailored towards friends, colleagues and neighbours improves their awareness and understanding of domestic abuse, knowledge of how to respond, and motivation to do so, especially in the short term. This increases the likelihood that they will take action to support individuals experiencing abusive relationships. Based on research, Dr Schucan Bird and SafeLives identified four steps for responding positively in the form of "four Rs":

**Recognise:** Become aware of the signs of domestic abuse.

**Respond:** Listen without judgement and show empathy.

**Reassure:** Convey belief and validate the experiences of your friend, relative or neighbour.

**React:** Find out about local sources of support and offer to help.

**We need to talk about...**  
**Notifying Domestic Abuse Victims about Perpetrator Release**







Domestic abuse remains a pressing issue that affects countless lives around the world. Beyond the physical and emotional trauma inflicted on victims live through, the aftermath of abuse can continue to haunt survivors even after the perpetrator has been held accountable. One crucial aspect of supporting survivors is ensuring they are informed when their abuser is released (or due to be released) from custody or jail. In England, if you are the victim of a violent or sexual crime, and the offender is sentenced to 12 months or more, you will be entitled to join and receive support from the Victim Contact Scheme (VCS). Joining the scheme means a victim will be allocated a Victim Liaison Officer who will go through the process with you –

- ***Explain how sentencing works.***
- ***Keep you updated on the offender's prison sentence and release.***
- ***Tell you if the offender is eligible for a Parole Board hearing.***
- ***Tell you how to make a statement to be submitted to Parole Board hearings.***
- ***Help you request 'license conditions', such as stopping the offender from contacting you or coming near your home.***
- ***Help you request a summary of the parole decision.***
- ***Help you challenge a parole decision if the Parole Board decides the offender is safe to release.***

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- ***You choose whether to join the scheme, and you can change your mind about joining at any point during an offender's sentence.***

In Scotland, the Victim Notification Scheme provides victims of crime with similar information about the release of offenders currently detained in prison. This month's article delves into the significance of this notification process and explores the benefits it can bring to survivors, their healing journey, and society at large.

## **Understanding the Trauma of Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse, encompassing physical, verbal, coercive control, emotional, psychological, and financial harm, can have long-lasting impacts on survivors. Impacts that can last a lifetime. Victims often experience fear, anxiety, depression, and a sense of helplessness. Many survivors are forced to alter their lives to escape their abusers and find safety, which can disrupt their daily routines and social networks. The presence of a perpetrator in their lives can be a constant reminder of the trauma they endured, hindering their ability to heal and rebuild.

## **The Importance of Notification**

When a perpetrator of domestic abuse is released from custody or jail, it can trigger a range of emotions for survivors, including fear, uncertainty, and anxiety. It is crucial for survivors to be informed about their abuser's release in a timely and sensitive manner. Here's why:

1. **Safety and Empowerment:** Knowing that their abuser has been released empowers survivors to take necessary precautions to ensure their safety and that of their loved ones. It allows them to proactively plan and seek support, whether it's through obtaining restraining orders, moving house, or adjusting daily routines.
2. **Control Over Healing:** Receiving information about the perpetrator's release gives survivors a sense of control over their healing process. This awareness helps them mentally prepare and seek the relevant support in advance such as counselling or therapy if needed, thereby minimising the shock and potential re-traumatisation that an unexpected encounter could cause.

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3. **Legal Protections:** In many cases, survivors may have legal protections in place, such as restraining orders, which need to be revisited or reinforced upon the perpetrator's release. Timely notification enables them to engage with the legal system to ensure these protections remain effective or to implement new protective measures with ample time.
4. **Community Support:** By informing survivors about their abuser's release, they can reach out to their support networks, whether it's friends, family, or advocacy/DA organizations, such as The Wish Centre. This network can provide emotional support, resources, and guidance on navigating the challenges that might arise.
5. **Preventing Revictimisation:** Being blindsided by an unexpected encounter with the perpetrator can trigger a resurgence of trauma and revictimisation. Notification allows survivors to prepare mentally and emotionally, reducing the potential for further harm.





### **Safeguarding Society**

Beyond the immediate benefits to survivors, notifying victims of domestic abuse about perpetrator releases serves a broader societal purpose:

1. **Breaking the Cycle:** Equipped with information and support, survivors, their families, and friends are better positioned to break the cycle of abuse. They can make informed decisions that contribute to their long-term safety and well-being.
2. **Promoting Accountability:** Ensuring that perpetrators know their actions have consequences—both through legal penalties, post-CJS support, and survivor empowerment—sends a powerful message that society stands against domestic abuse. This is why the perpetrator work of organisations like The Wish Centre are important from the very beginning. The earlier the intervention, the less likely it is to develop into something far more serious. Men can be referred into our service for either the 2-session awareness raising workshop Gateway to Change and/or our full, more in-depth behaviour change programme,

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Make the Change. The Wish Centre will now also be facilitating the CARA programme. CARA (Cautioning and Relationship Abuse) is a Domestic Abuse awareness raising intervention consisting of two workshops held 4 weeks apart. CARA supports offenders to make better behaviour choices in their relationships. (Police referral is the only route into CARA.) Following on from this, the men can be referred into our Make the Change programme for more in-depth behaviour change support. It is important that more is done to engage perpetrators in behaviour change as early as possible. Charities have also suggested that if in prison, work is started prior to their release. Post-prison, engaging with services be made part of their release.

3. **Raising Awareness:** The practice of notifying survivors can contribute to raising public awareness about domestic abuse. It highlights the urgency of addressing this issue and encourages discussions about prevention, support, and legal reforms.
4. **Policy and Legal Reforms:** Effective notification systems can shed light on gaps in current policies and practices, prompting lawmakers and authorities to consider reforms that better protect survivors' rights and making perpetrators engage with services.

Informing victims of domestic abuse about their perpetrator's release from custody or jail is an essential step towards empowering survivors and safeguarding their healing process. By granting survivors the knowledge and agency they need to protect themselves, society can work together to break the cycle of abuse, promote accountability, and create an environment where survivors can thrive. It can also prevent serious crimes such as murder. Additionally, this practice shines a light on the broader issue of domestic abuse and encourages meaningful conversations that drive positive change. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of early interventions and behaviour change programmes such as Make the Change. Your referrals are helping to protect victims and their children and can also change the direction of a perpetrator's life.

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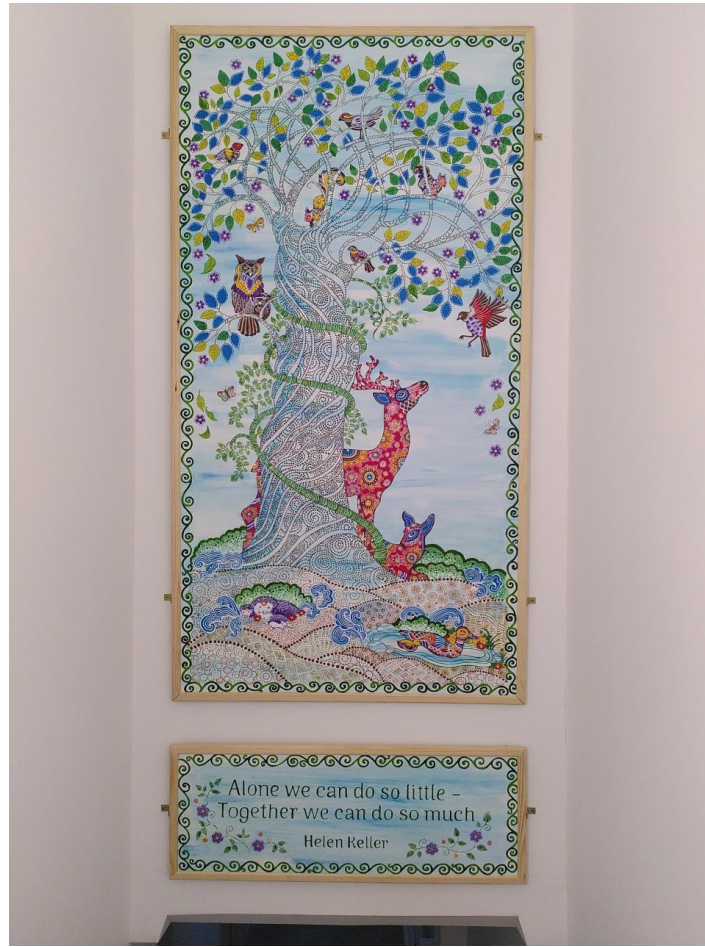
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## Domestic Abuse Survivor Gifts Artwork to Charity That Helped Her



Community artist Helen Golden was inspired to create artwork for the offices of Cambridge Samaritans, after experiencing first-hand the support they offer.





"Twenty years ago, I was living with domestic violence and abuse on a daily basis. I felt so ashamed, I could not confide in anyone, not even my closest friends," says Helen.

"In the early hours of the morning, I would wait till the coast was clear and call the Samaritans, never daring to speak above a whisper. Those phone calls literally changed my life. They gave me the courage to escape from domestic abuse, file for divorce and begin my life over again."

"Today my life has completely changed. I can honestly say I could not be happier. But I have never forgotten those dark times when I did not know where to turn, and Cambridge Samaritans were there for me. At long last I have found a small way to say thank you."

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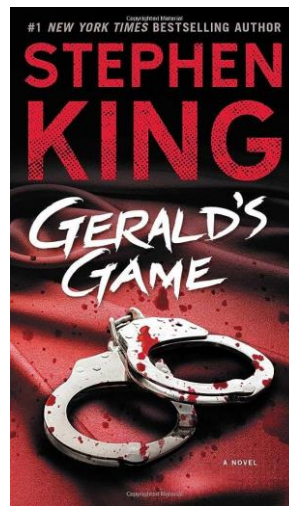
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## **Domestic Abuse in the Media**

### **"Gerald's Game"**







Stephen King, a master of the horror genre, is known for his ability to delve into the darkest corners of the human psyche. In his 1992 novel, "Gerald's Game," King takes readers on a harrowing journey that goes beyond the supernatural, exploring the very real and terrifying issue of domestic abuse. Through the lens of his protagonist, Jessie Burlingame, King provides a chilling portrayal of the psychological and physical torment endured by victims of domestic violence. "Gerald's Game" was turned into a just as powerful and stirring movie in 2017, starring Carla Gugino, Bruce Greenwood and Kate Siegel.

### **The Isolation of Jessie Burlingame**

The novel's premise is deceptively simple. Jessie and her husband, Gerald, embark on a weekend getaway to their remote lake house in an attempt to rekindle their failing marriage. However, their romantic escape takes a horrifying turn when Gerald handcuffs Jessie to their bed as part of a forced sex game. What initially seems like an erotic adventure quickly devolves into a nightmarish ordeal when Gerald suddenly dies of a heart attack, leaving Jessie trapped and utterly alone. This physical confinement serves as a potent metaphor for the emotional and psychological captivity experienced by victims of domestic abuse. Jessie is forced to confront her traumatic past, which includes years of emotional and verbal abuse from her husband, revealing how the scars of abuse can linger long after the physical wounds.

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have healed. Her struggle to break free from her restraints mirrors the difficult journey many survivors face when trying to escape abusive relationships.

## **The Ghosts of Abuse**

As Jessie battles her physical restraints, she also confronts the "ghosts" of her past, which manifest as hallucinations and memories of her abusive father. King skillfully weaves these elements into the narrative, highlighting the lasting impact of childhood trauma and how it can shape an individual's future relationships. Through Jessie's experiences, readers witness the profound psychological toll that domestic abuse inflicts, emphasising that the scars of abuse often linger beneath the surface, waiting to resurface in unexpected and terrifying ways.


## **Empowerment and Survival**

Despite the nightmarish circumstances, "Gerald's Game" ultimately becomes a story of empowerment and survival. Jessie must summon all her inner strength and resourcefulness to break free from her physical and emotional restraints. Her determination to survive and confront her traumatic past reflects the resilience of many real-life survivors of domestic abuse. King paints a vivid picture of the human capacity to overcome even the most horrific experiences and emerge stronger on the other side.

Stephen King's "Gerald's Game" is a powerful exploration of domestic abuse that goes far beyond mere horror fiction. By delving into the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by his protagonist, King sheds light on the pervasive issue of domestic violence and its lasting effects on survivors. Through the character of Jessie Burlingame, he offers a harrowing yet ultimately empowering narrative that underscores the importance of breaking free from the chains of abuse and finding the strength to confront one's past. In doing so, King not only terrifies his readers but also compels them to confront the real-world horrors of domestic violence and the resilience of those who endure it.

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**Prof Michael Flood - Engaging Men and Boys: Theory and Evidence**



“Now and Men” is a podcast developed by Durham University that engages in conversations about the lives of men. What is it like to be a man in the 21st century? How are feminist issues relevant to men and boys? These questions are being discussed more than ever. The monthly podcast delves into these issues with experts such as practitioners, activists, and academics. In each episode, you will hear in-depth conversations about masculinity, gender equality, and the lives of men and boys, with topics ranging from preventing violence against women, to promoting active fatherhood, to supporting men's health. The synopsis of the latest episode, titled above is -





*Work with men and boys has been growing rapidly in the last 30 years, especially around the issues of preventing violence and abuse, building gender equality, promoting fatherhood, and health and wellbeing. To what extent is this a positive development? What are some of the opportunities, challenges, and problems that engaging men and boys brings? And how can this work be delivered most effectively, to have a serious impact in tackling issues such as gender-based violence? There are few experts around the world better equipped to provide answers to these questions than Prof Michael Flood. He gives an in-depth, critical overview of the ‘engaging men’ field, and discusses his own story of being an anti-sexist activist since the 1980s. He also explains why it’s vital to think about issues like pornography and online misogyny in this work and gives some pointers for parents in how to address these issues with children, and sons in particular.*

Here is a direct link to the latest episode -

<https://now-and-men.captivate.fm/episode/michael-flood>

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## **Songs About Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault**

Music possesses a tangible influence on society, serving as a catalyst for social interaction and connection. Our personal encounters with the music we listen to remain profoundly intimate and emotionally charged yet the rhythm, tone, and phrasing evoke sensations and convey significance that transcend mere lyrical content and have a way of allowing people to empathise and relate to somebody's experience more in depth. Since starting work at The Wish Centre, I have been hearing songs all over the place which have struck me quite intensely with their descriptions of DA/DV and thought it would be interesting to share some of these with you each month.

### **Bessie Smith**







#### **“Outside of That”**

Blues legend Bessie Smith detailed DA in her 1923 song "Outside of That." In this song, she dismisses her lover's abusive behaviour as just a minor flaw in their relationship. Despite acknowledging that he is "the meanest man in the land" and "heartless and cruel," she remains deeply engrossed in their passionate love affair, willing to overlook his violent outbursts. However, it raises the question: is she truly forgiving him? When, somewhat playfully, she mentions leaving him, he responds by violently assaulting her, leaving her

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blinded, and pawning everything he had ever given her. Yet, Bessie Smith concludes with the assertion that "outside of that, he's all right with me."

As the song progresses, with her labeling him a "dirty thief" and him causing further harm by knocking out her teeth, the irony becomes increasingly palpable. The song transforms from a bluesy love ballad into a biting commentary on the choices made by women who opt to remain in relationships where they endure such mistreatment.

**Outside of That** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PpuyhITRhk>

### Hozier



#### **"Cherry Wine"**





The song was written by Hozier from the male perspective of an abuse sufferer. The violence is excused by the victim as he is apparently captivated by her raw emotionality. The track was released as a charity single on February 12, 2016, to benefit domestic abuse charities worldwide, including Women's Aid in the UK.

Hozier said: *"With the song 'Cherry Wine,' I tried to get across the difficulty of coming to terms with and facing up to domestic violence and the dynamic of an abusive relationship."*

**Cherry Wine** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdSCCwtNEjA>

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**Pink**



**“18-Wheeler”**

“18-Wheeler” featured on Pop-rock sensation Pink's second album, “Missundaztood” Her music is very much feminist at its core and this song in particular conveys a powerful message of confronting one's abuser, emphasizing that abuse cannot break the spirit of a resilient woman. Her songs serve as a rallying cry for women, urging them to tap into their inner strength and determination.

**18-Wheeler** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwnEML8z6qc>

## **End of Programme Participation Feedback – CS**



**MAKE THE CHANGE**

**What has been the main thing you have learnt from attending the Make the Change programme?**

The main thing I think I have learnt from attending this programme is the "Iceberg". I've learnt the concept of the iceberg, which is what can be seen above the water, then under the water, which is three stages. The first is, feelings / emotion, the second stage is thoughts / self-talk and the third is beliefs and expectations / fears.

**Looking back, do you recognise your role in perpetrating abuse in relationships and do you accept responsibility for it?**

Yes, I do recognise my role in being the perpetrator in the relationship. I do now accept responsibility for my actions.

**Do you feel you have a better understanding and control of your own feelings?**

Completing this programme has given me a better understanding and how to also control my feelings.

**Do you feel you have a better understanding of other people's feelings and perspectives?**

Yes, I do, I have done the 3 chairs activity, it has helped me to do this.

**What do you hope to achieve in future relationships?**

A better and more loving relationship.

**What part are you going to play in having a non-abusive relationship in the future?**

Using techniques from this programme to help with future relationships.

**How do you feel about the victim now you have completed the programme?**

That she is a strong person.

**What was difficult for you on the programme?**

Doing the storyboard which entails standing up and giving a recount of the events which lead up to me coming on the course.

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### **What did you find less helpful / relevant?**

To be honest I found the programme to be helpful.





### **Further recommendations for the programme e.g., content resources etc,**

Could host the programme closer to home.

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send referrals for  
GTC/MTC to  
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