

When you contact the Helpline, one of the team will take your information and complete a risk assessment with you if applicable. They will also be able to provide safety planning advice and direct you to other services if you need them, including our Outreach team if you are at current risk.

A professional such as a social worker, police officer, housing officer or your GP can also refer you. Professionals who would like to make a referral can find a copy of our referral form on our website:

[www.berkshirewomensaid.org.uk](http://www.berkshirewomensaid.org.uk)

## WHAT HAPPENS ONCE I HAVE BEEN REFERRED?

Once we have received your referral, our group work team will make contact with you to confirm the programme you have been referred to and give you some information about what will happen next.

The team will let you know when the next programme is running and whether there is a waiting list. They will complete a risk assessment with you about whether you attend in person or virtually and arrange to send you a consent form.

If there is a waiting list for the programme you have been referred to, you will receive another call from the team to let you know when a space is available. You can get back in touch with the BWA Helpline at any point whilst you are on the waiting list if you need further support from one of our other services or would like information about where else you can access support.

**We may call from a private number and may not always leave messages. If you think you have missed a call from us, please call us on our Helpline:**

**0808 801 0882**

## DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE MY INFORMATION?

Information that you share with us will be confidential within BWA unless there are exceptional circumstances. We aim to get your consent to share information unless it is considered that doing so will increase someone's risk.

Although we aim to get your consent to share your information, in exceptional circumstances we may have to override your consent for example, if we believe you or someone else may be at risk of significant harm.

against domestic abuse  
**bwa**

## GROUP WORK PROGRAMMES

### WHO ARE BWA?

BWA are a specialist provider of domestic abuse prevention and intervention services. Our mission is to provide domestic abuse support and advocacy services to everyone who comes to us experiencing domestic abuse.

**We aim to listen, support and empower people to act for themselves and believe everyone should be able to live free from fear and domestic abuse in their own lives.**

### HOW DOES DOMESTIC ABUSE AFFECT US?

Domestic abuse can have significant short term and long term impacts on those who experience it. Each person is individual and survivors can experience emotional and physical effects of domestic abuse in different ways:

- Mental health support needs, such as depression, anxiety, or low mood
- Symptoms of trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder



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- Low self-esteem, self-worth or reduced resilience
- Difficult sleeping, flashbacks, nightmares or panic attacks
- Isolation from family, friends and support networks, or withdrawal from other people
- Questioning their interpretation of reality, or blaming themselves for the abuse
- Physical symptoms of stress such as headaches, insomnia, tension, change in diet or palpitations

Survivors may also experience fear, anger, confusion, shame, resentment or sadness.

It is important to realise that those who experience abuse are not powerless or weak; they are courageous and resourceful. It takes great strength to live with an abusive partner and survivors have to adopt all kinds of coping strategies to survive each day.

## HOW CAN BWA HELP?

We offer a range of group work programmes which are designed to provide guidance and peer support helping you to understand domestic abuse and how it can affect you.



Group work provides a supportive, safe and non-judgemental environment for those who have experienced abuse to be able to explore their experiences and build resilience.

Groups are either run virtually or face to face and we will work with you to find out what the best option is for you.

**BWA group work programmes can offer the following:**

Education based sessions to help you understand the dynamics of domestic abuse, control and its effects

Sessions to build self-esteem and confidence

Help you develop techniques for managing feelings around anxiety and distress

Create a space for peer support from other women who have also experienced domestic abuse

For those who require more in depth therapeutic support, our team can help you identify counselling and support services who may be able to help.

## WHO CAN ACCESS BWA GROUP WORK PROGRAMMES?



Group work is open to women who are currently experiencing abuse or have experienced abuse in the past.

Group work runs in different areas and for different lengths of time.

The BWA Helpline will be able to tell you what group work is available in your area and help you explore what would be best suited to your needs. Alternatively, you can find information about the groups we are running on our website:

[www.berkshirewomensaid.org.uk](http://www.berkshirewomensaid.org.uk)

## HOW CAN I ACCESS THE BWA'S GROUP WORK PROGRAMMES?

You can refer yourself for support by calling the BWA Helpline on:

**0808 801 0882**

This number is free to call from UK mobiles and landlines and does not show up on itemised bills.