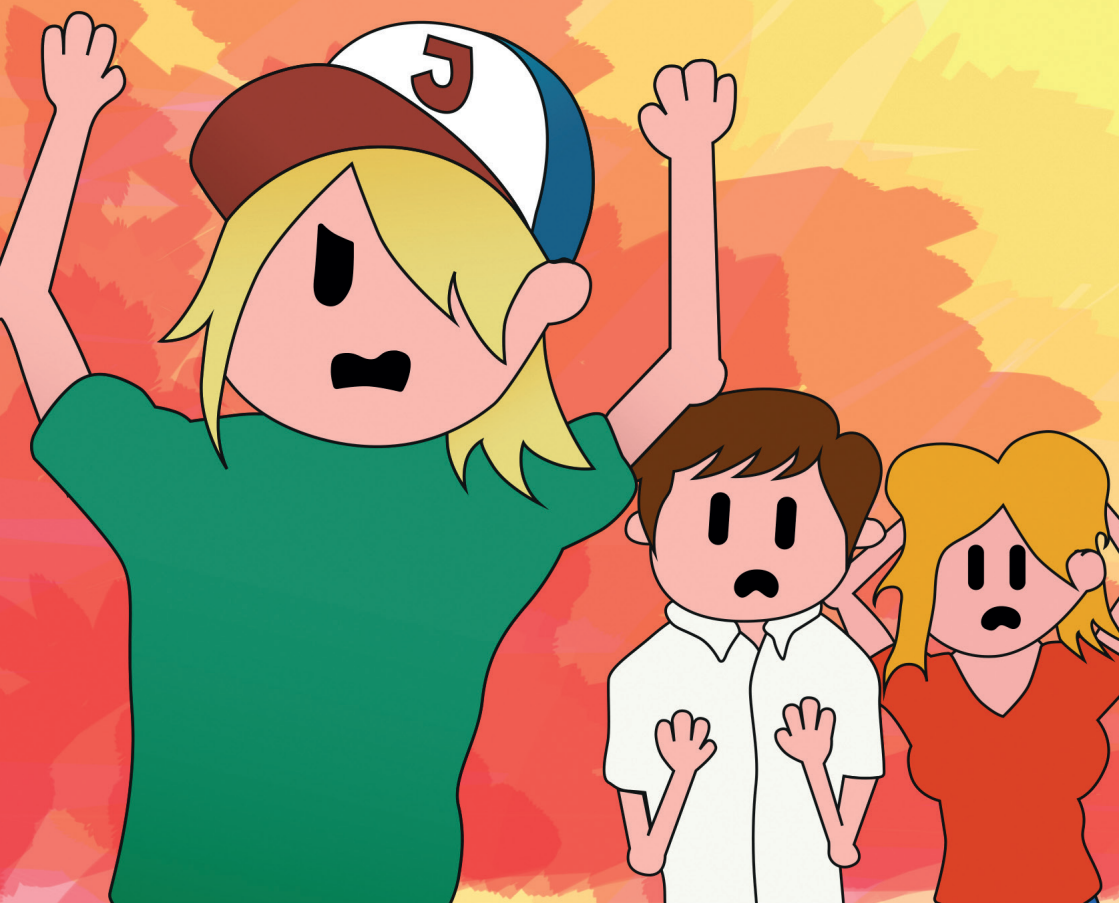


# APVA

## ADOLESCENT TO PARENT VIOLENCE & ABUSE



**A RESOURCE BOOK FOR  
PARENTS AND CARERS**

Violence in family relationships is often hidden from extended family and the wider community.

As parents we often feel a sense of shame that our own child is being violent.

This booklet is about breaking that secrecy and offering some help and advice on how to deal with these situations.

# **What is Adolescent to Parent Violence & Abuse? (A.P.V.A)**

It is normal for adolescents to challenge parents and authority as they head towards an independent life. Adolescents will show healthy anger and conflict along the way, which is different from violent and abusive behaviour.

## **Types of Violence & Abuse**

Violence and abuse is not the same as anger. Anger is an emotion; violence and abuse are about control and power.

Adolescent violence and abuse is any behaviour used by an adolescent in the family to control, dominate, threaten or coerce a parent or sibling.

# **A.P.V.A can include the following:**

## **Physical**

- Spitting, shoving, hitting, kicking.
- Throwing and breaking things.
- Bullying or physical violence to siblings.
- Cruelty to pets.
- Any action or behaviour that threatens a person's sense of well-being and safety.

## **Emotional, Psychological and Verbal**

- Verbal abuse, yelling, screaming, swearing, 'put downs' and humiliation.
- Verbal intimidation.
- Emotional and psychological intimidation.
- Playing mind games.
- Making threats to hurt or kill themselves or run away or to control you and the family.
- Social media threats.

## **Financial**

- Demanding money or things you cannot afford.
- Stealing money or possessions from you, your family or friends.
- Incurring debts that you are responsible for.

## Remember, You are not alone!

Parents who are struggling with their adolescents' violent and abusive behaviour are often confused when confronted. It can be hard to find ways to keep everyone safe, including the adolescent whose behaviour is posing the risk to positive family relationships and safety. It can be difficult to know how to make things better

A.P.V.A exists across all sections of society irrespective of gender, race, culture, nationality, religion, sexuality, disability, age, or educational level.

A.P.V.A is not just against parents. Many adolescents are abusive towards their siblings.

# How do you know if you have experienced or are experiencing A.P.V.A.?

Know your limits: You know when things are not right, go with your own feelings and thoughts.

You may have experienced A.P.V.A if:

- You feel afraid of upsetting your adolescent and you change your behaviour to avoid it.
- You are 'walking on eggshells', trying to predict your adolescents wants and needs.
- Your adolescent ridicules or tries to humiliate or embarrass you, in front of your family or friends.
- Your adolescent constantly criticises you and puts you down.
- Your adolescent blames you for their behaviour.

# Is Your Adolescent Demonstrating A.P.V.A?

How do you know if your adolescent is displaying normal adolescent behaviour and 'acting out' or being abusive?

- Although most people know about domestic abuse and its effects, less attention is given to A.P.V.A and its impact on the family. This makes it very hard for parents to recognise their adolescents behaviour as abusive and to seek out services that can support them.
- A.P.V.A from adolescents is not a normal part of growing up. Most adolescents will 'act out' in some way at some time during their adolescence. When this behaviour is controlling, threatening, or intimidating, it stops being 'normal'.
- A.P.V.A is a complex issue, particularly when adolescents have experienced family abuse themselves, have suffered grief or loss, or have an illness or disability. Whilst these issues mean adolescents and their families need support, it does not mean that A.P.V.A should be ignored or excused.

# What You May Be Feeling

## Denial

Most parents have difficulty accepting that their child is violent and abusive towards them. You may think your child's behaviour is part of growing up, dealing with stress, or normal mood swings.

## Despair and Isolation

- You may feel totally alone and isolated, unsupported and responsible for your situation. Like you have 'hit a wall' and feel that nothing can help.
- Hopeless and helpless because you cannot bring the situation under control.
- You could feel unsupported by a lack of services or information available to you.
- Despair at not having a harmonious family life.
- You cannot think or talk about anything else except your adolescent.

## Fear

Like you are living in fear, both in the present and of what might happen in future when your adolescent is bigger and stronger than you. You may begin to recognise you feel 'unsafe' in your own home.

## Shame and Humiliation

Like a failure and experience a great sense of shame. You may be feeling confused about where you might have 'gone wrong' and questioning your parenting abilities. You may feel that you're entirely responsible for your child's abusive behaviour. You begin to blame yourself and believe you are a 'bad' parent.

## Loss

Heartbroken and a huge sense of loss because the child you used to know, love and enjoy seems to be driving a wedge into the relationship. Grief if your adolescent has had to leave home. The loss of friends and family who do not want or know how to assist you. Worried the young person will leave home and end the relationship entirely.



## **Relationship stress**

Adolescent violence and abuse often leads to arguments between adults in the home as to how the behaviour should be dealt with. You may have different ideas on what helps or on what caused the behaviour. This can place enormous stress on family and partner relationships. You may be upset with people who do not know what you are going through. You may feel undermined by your adolescent's other parent who may take your adolescent's side (particularly if you are a single parent).

## **Loss of trust**

You may feel unable to trust your adolescent, especially when you are not home to supervise them. You may be worried your child may have damaged or stolen property, and whether the other siblings are safe. You may find it difficult to leave the home at all.

## **Sibling concern**

Other children may be affected by their brother/sister's behaviour. Many adolescents who are violent and abusive to their parents are also violent and abusive to their siblings. Siblings may be unsafe because of this behaviour. You may not have the time or energy to give to other siblings because you are dealing with the abusive adolescent. Your adolescent may also use drugs or alcohol or engage in illegal activities. This may mean their siblings are unsafe or at risk of harm.

## **Health issues**

You may be depressed or anxious and this may impact on your health and well-being. You may experience insomnia, physical illness and fatigue.

## **Work issues**

Your worries and anxieties may extend into your workplace, where you may find it hard to concentrate. You may find that you need to take time off work to seek support. You may experience the additional cost of counselling, legal fees and fixing the damage to property caused by your adolescent. This can lead to you not being able to make ends meet or getting into debt.

# Possible Explanations

It may be difficult to understand why your adolescent is being violent and abusive. Some explanations include:

## **Family violence**

Adolescents who witness or experience domestic violence or abuse to a parent may behave in a similar way to the abusive parent or family member. They may have experienced violence and abuse themselves.

## **Social issues**

Adolescents may be influenced by their social surroundings. For example, exposure to images of violence and pornography.

## **Adolescent issues**

Adolescents may be violent and abusive because they have an overdeveloped sense of entitlement. Lack of respect for a specific gender, been bullied at school, have experienced trauma, misuse of alcohol or drugs, have mental health issues or have been abused themselves.

## **Parenting**

Parents may be influenced by their culture or the society in which they live. Parents can be experiencing problems within and outside the family. Parenting practices that can sometimes result in adolescent abuse and violence include: Feeling you should give up everything, including your own happiness and well-being, to make your child happy. Feeling guilty for breaking up the family (if you are a sole parent) and compensating by giving everything to your adolescent. Parenting that gives a child too much freedom. Parenting that is authoritarian. Being unavailable to your child (either physically or emotionally). Conflicting parenting styles so that the adolescent can manipulate his or her parents. Parent's own psychological make up e.g. fear of conflict which prevents parents taking action.

## Things to Remember

- You are not alone, get help early.
- You have probably tried to talk to your child about their behaviour. Give yourself credit for all the things you have tried.
- There are no simple answers.
- The adolescent may not be able to stop their behaviour on their own. With support from others, you can help to facilitate the change.
- You don't have to know why things are happening to enable change to happen. Even a small change may feel like an improvement in the situation.
- All types of abusive behaviour are inappropriate and physical violence and property damage are criminal offences.
- This behaviour may not happen all the time. Adolescents may apologise afterwards, giving you a false sense of hope that things may improve. They usually need more help to change.
- Violent behaviour is never an acceptable or healthy way for the adolescent to solve difficulties in their life, their family or community.
- Adolescents often blame their parents for provoking them or not giving in to their demands. Remember the person being violent and abusive is always responsible for their behaviour.
- We all experience stress and anger from time to time. However, the adolescent may use these feelings to excuse the violent and abusive behaviour. It is important to separate your adolescent's feelings from their behaviour. All feelings are acceptable; violence and abuse is not!
- It may not go away! This behaviour generally worsens over time.

# What can you do if your Adolescent is being Violent & Abusive?

Talk about the behaviour with someone you trust, such as a friend, family member or counsellor.

- Contact MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).
- You may feel that calling the police is totally unacceptable. No parent likes to consider this possibility but the readiness to do so, clearly explained to the adolescent, may indicate you will not tolerate this behaviour.
- If you are at any time in fear for your own or another's safety, call the police. Violence and threats of violence are crimes that can be reported to the police.
- Develop a safety plan for you and your family should you need to use it.
- Use the contact list at the back of this booklet to identify services.

# Preparing a Safety Plan

Sometimes an adolescent's behaviour may mean family members' safety is at risk.

In the event of immediate threat, where you may have to leave home in a hurry, it can be useful to have a safety plan in place. Here are a few suggestions for preparing a safety plan.

- Think about where you could go and who could support you if an emergency arose.
- Always carry a list of numbers you would need to call e.g. police, family members, support services.
- Ensure you have access to a phone or a mobile.
- Try to keep some money aside so that you can use a taxi, or a bus if needed.
- Keep a spare set of house and car keys in a safe place.
- Ensure other children can use a phone and know emergency numbers.
- Keep notes or a diary with dates and brief details about the behaviour. These may be needed in the future if you to take protective or legal action.
- It is important to inform yourself about your legal rights and rights of your child and that you are clear about the full range of options available to you, even if you choose not to take legal action.
- Call the services listed at the end of this booklet for more information and to discuss your options.

## Useful things you can do...

It is best to start making changes when you are feeling strong and if possible, supported by others. Firstly, think about what you can expect from your adolescent:

- Be clear in your own mind about what behaviour is reasonable and unreasonable. Write this down to remind yourself.
- Use 'I' statements - 'I will be very upset if you are not home when you agreed you would be'.
- Clearly state the expectations to your child "I need you to show respect to me if you want me to drive you to your friends, if you swear at me I will not be taking you" or "I will not tolerate you breaking possessions. In the future your pocket money will be used to replace broken things".
- Your child may try and make you change your mind. Don't feel bullied into changing your expectations. Stand firm!
- Don't start with too many expectations, take it a step at a time, addressing the most concerning behaviour first.
- Explain to your adolescent that you love them but will not tolerate being abused.

Secondly, think about what consequences you can put in place to support your adolescent meeting your expectations.

- Consequences must be relevant and important to your adolescent i.e. no access to social media, not going out.
- Decide how and when you are going to impose these.
- Explain to your adolescent that if they do not meet your expectations you will put the stated consequences into action.

Remember,

- It is often difficult to start using a different approach and it might take some time to put into practice. Your adolescent may rebel against any new approach, so for a time things may become worse before things get better.
- If you say you're going to do it, do it! Otherwise your adolescent will recognise that you don't mean it.
- Ignore the behaviours you can live with. Choose your battles.

Think about your own behaviour.

- It is important to think about your own behaviour. You cannot expect your adolescent to change his or her behaviour if your behaviour is inappropriate too.
- Think about how you respond to your adolescent's behaviour, does it make them angrier or calm them down?
- Understand what your adolescent says or does that makes you angry.
- Always treat your adolescent with respect no matter how angry, disappointed or frustrated you are.
- Try to remain verbally and physically affectionate.
- Be quiet and calm, not angry (this can be very difficult to do).

# HOW CAN YOU HELP FAMILY AND FRIENDS?

## **Emotional support**

If a parent experiencing A.P.V.A tells you about it or you suspect they are experiencing difficulties, there are a number of things you can do to support them.

These include:

- Don't be afraid to express your concern to them and offer your support.
- Be there to listen to them and believe in their experience without minimising, blaming or judging it.
- Listen to, believe and offer practical support to a parent who confides in you and ask: "How can I help you?" or "Are there any steps you can take to increase your safety and the safety of family members?"
- Don't criticise their management or lack of management of the situation and don't excuse the abuse.
- Respect their privacy and keep the information confidential unless they give you permission to tell others or you feel someone is at risk of harm.
- Encourage them to care for themselves and to consider their own needs.
- Stay in regular contact with them to show your ongoing support.



## **Practical support**

Providing someone with practical support will help them feel more in control of their situation and better able to make the necessary decisions to start taking control of the family situation.

Practical ways to assist include:

- Encourage them to think about safety planning in the event of a crisis.
- Help the parent find helpful resources or information they may need.
- Offer to accompany them to support services.

## **What NOT to do**

If you are supporting a friend or family member experiencing A.P.V.A there are a number of things you should avoid:

- Don't tell them what to do.
- Don't confront the adolescent—this can lead to further complications and may increase the risk to family members.
- Don't give solutions or lecture to parents, as you do not know what they are going through - 'you are not living through it'. Getting involved does not mean you have to solve the situation. If someone turns to you for help and support, it means helping them find their own answers. It is important not to be disappointed if they do not do what you think they should.

**Support the parent to be confident to make their own decisions and don't tell them what to do.**

The most important message that we want to get across is that this is a difficult situation and you may not be able to tackle this on your own. If your adolescent's behaviour or actions make you feel unsafe or scared, ask for help and support at an early stage by contacting:

## **FOR PARENTS**

### **MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub**

Tel: 519000

Email: Enquiries-MASH@gov.je

### **States of Jersey Police**

In an emergency contact the police on 999

For all other enquiries call

Tel: 612612

### **The Bridge: Parent Support Services**

There is also a drop in service for Parents 9am–11am at The Bridge every Friday morning.

Tel: 449481

### **Jersey Women's Refuge**

Help is available 24 hours through the helpline, free counselling and support. Safe accommodation will also be provided.

Tel: 0800 735 6836

### **Early Help Approach**

The Early Help Approach is a single way of assessing the needs of children, young people and families that can be used by all agencies working with children.

Tel: 449166

### **School Counsellor or E.W.O (Education Welfare Officer)**

Please speak with your child's education department for contact details of school counsellor and EWO.

### **Talking Therapies**

Referral through GP / Parent Support / MIND Jersey.

### **CAMHS**

Referral through GP / Parent Support / MIND Jersey.

### **I.D.V.A**

Independent Domestic Violence Advisory.

Tel: 880505

## **FOR ADOLESCENT**

### **14-25 year olds YES Project**

The YES project is supported by the States of Jersey and helps young people find up-to-date and accurate information and advice that they can use to make informed choices on a range of issues.

Tel:280530

Text 0779777842

Email: yes@jys.je

## **Barnardos Plan B**

We aspire to help as many young people through the different programmes and services we offer.

## **P.M.N.W(Prison me No Way)**

The aim of 'Prison! Me! No Way!!! Jersey' is to raise the awareness of young people in the Island about the causes, consequences and penalties of crime.  
<http://www.pmnwjersey.com/>

## **The Hide Out**

Online website for parents and children to understand domestic abuse.  
[www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk)

## **Love Matters**

Workshops for young people in schools and youth clubs, and supporting work for parents.  
07797 969886  
[www.love-matters.co.uk](http://www.love-matters.co.uk)

## **National Helplines**

### **Women's Aid**

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

## **National Domestic Violence Helpline**

Tel: 0808 2000 247

## **Broken Rainbow**

(Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people) experiencing domestic abuse.

Tel: 0300 999 5428  
[www.brokenrainbow.org.uk](http://www.brokenrainbow.org.uk)

## **Holes in the Wall**

[www.holesinthewall.co.uk](http://www.holesinthewall.co.uk)  
information and support on A.P.V.A

## **Family lives online parental support and 24 hour helpline**

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)  
Tel: 0808 800 2222

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## **Contributions**

**M.A.S.H**

(Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

**Early Help Approach**

**The Bridge:**

(Parent Support Services)

**Safeguarding Partnership Board**

**Women's Refuge**

**C.A.M.H.S**

**Adult Mental Health**

**Education Welfare Department**

**Children's Service**

**I.D.V.A**

(Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor)

**Community Police Liaison Officer**

**P.M.N.W**

(Prison Me No Way)

**Barnardos**

**Youth Service Jersey**

**N.S.P.C.C**

**Love Matters**

**J.E.T**

(Jersey Employment Trust)

**Probation Service**

**Alcohol & Drug Service**

**Brook**

**P.B.S Broadcast**