



The Caledonian System

***An integrated approach to address men's domestic abuse
and to improve the lives of women, children and men***

***Working with men who abuse their partners
in the context of the COVID-19 crisis***



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Caledonian System



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Introduction

The exercises contained within this document have been adapted from the Caledonian System Men's Programme. The work on this manual and the original Caledonian manuals was sponsored by the Scottish Government. The Caledonian System adopts a gendered analysis of understanding and working with domestic abuse perpetrators. As such, it is understood that the majority of domestic abuse behaviour is perpetrated by men and experienced by women and girls. It is expected that the vast majority of workers using this manual will be working with male perpetrators and female victims and the language used in this document will reflect that. Workers should use their own professional judgement as to the suitability of these exercises for use with female perpetrators or within same sex relationships.

Please note that these exercises are mostly adapted from the Caledonian System Men's Programme and Caledonian 1:1 manual and written in a way that allows them to be delivered over phone or video calls. They should only be used in this form during the exceptional circumstances created by COVID-19 and the lockdown. This manual should be read alongside the document, COVID-19, Guidance for Working with Abusive Men, issued by the Caledonian central team and available on the Community Justice Scotland website, available at this link:

<https://communityjustice.scot/news/covid-19/>

Most of these exercises will be familiar to Caledonian workers, however they do not require specific training and could be used by any worker with abusive men on their caseloads. It is hoped that all workers using this document will have a basic understanding of the dynamics of domestic abuse. If any worker would like an update on the gendered analysis of domestic abuse, please refer to the Scottish Government Equally Safe Strategy, available at this link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/equally-safe/>

These exercises do not need to be carried out in the order that they are written, nor do all exercises need to be completed. The worker's approach should be empathic, warm and kind. It is important that the worker is gently challenging, but not judgemental nor dogmatic. Workers should use their own professional judgement on the suitability of each exercise for the client they are supporting. Please note that if delivering these exercises from the workers own home we do not recommend using any form of video link.

It is assumed that a risk assessment, ideally SARA v3, has been undertaken before any of this work is undertaken.

If anyone accessing this document needs further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact:

Gill Mckinna, Caledonian National Trainer and Advisor:

Gill.Mckinna@communityjustice.scot

07901111635

Rory Macrae, Caledonian National Co-ordinator:

Rory.Macrae@communityjustice.scot

07901103852



Exercise 1 Exploring Concerns around COVID-19

Addressing concerns and stress caused by COVID-19 (Kindly shared by Chris Huffine of “Allies in Change” in Oregon) (Adapted).

Aim

To help men plan for the stressful situations that will come up due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to support them in finding ways of dealing with the extraordinary situation in a non-abusive way.

Step 1: Ask the man to state the things that are stressful or concerning for him about the COVID-19 pandemic and note them down.

Step 2: Ask the man to brainstorm ways of dealing with these concerns/stresses.

Step 3: Discuss the situation and the solutions that the man highlighted.

Potential COVID-19 concerns that workers may be faced with:

- Social isolation
- Fear of getting sick
- Public transportation fears
- Getting sick
- Misinformation
- Not getting adequate supplies
- Not getting medical help
- Appointments getting cancelled
- Slower economy/stock market
- Work shutting down
- Not going on vacation
- Public entertainment/events getting cancelled
- Not being able to travel
- Fear of loved ones/children getting sick/dying
- Loved ones getting sick/dying
- Concerns for elderly/medically vulnerable getting sick/dying
- Not knowing who is sick/infected
- Being in quarantine
- Being in close quarters with family members
- Kids out of school and having to stay at home
- Additional childcare demands
- Feeling imprisoned at home
- Loss of income/unable to pay bills
- Unable to comply with probation/child welfare requirements
- Dealing with other people’s fear
- Risk of losing medical benefits

Potential ways to manage COVID-19 concerns:

- Talk about your feelings/concerns with others
- Know the facts and symptoms
- Stay current on the latest information
- Pace yourself/limit news consumption
- Keep perspective—this, too, shall pass
- Manage your own distress
- Allow others to have their distress
- Acknowledge/validate people’s fears



- Support your loved ones in their distress in the ways they wish to be supported
- Identify and practice practical ways to reduce infection risk
- Focus on what you can do rather than on what you can't
- Keep a clean/safe environment
- Identify positive family activities
- Take breaks from parenting/support the other parent taking breaks from parenting
- Brainstorm ways to get out of the house while practicing social distancing (e.g., going for walks/hikes, garden, have the kids play in an open area)
- Identify practical ways to co-exist when at home for long periods of time
- Identify projects to keep busy
- Prioritize what aspects of self-care that you can
- Use stress reduction techniques (e.g., conscious breathing, progressive relaxation, meditation)
- Reach out to others via the phone, email, texting, FaceTime, etc.
- Utilize community resources—both existing ones as well as new ones that may become available during this time
- Ask for assistance from others—emotional, practical, etc.
- Remember that you are not alone with this
- Practice self-compassion
- Practice compassion towards others—this is a hard time for all of us
- Reach out to those who are isolated and/or need assistance
- Be mindful of your emotional intensity and stress level
- Take time-outs as needed
- Be vigilant about becoming abusive and controlling—identify those situations/circumstances you are most likely to be tempted to behave that way

Outcomes

- The man will have the opportunity to discuss his concerns around COVID-19
- The man will have the opportunity to use problem solving techniques
- The man will have considered the need for him not to be abusive given the current stressors



Exercise 2 Self-Calming and Taking a Breather

Aim

The aim of this piece of work is to explore specific skills that can assist the man, in the short-term, to remain calm and in control of himself in potentially risky situations.

Step 1: Start the phone call by checking in with the man on his current situation. Ask him who is in the house with him, and check that he is able to talk freely on the phone. It may be helpful for the man to have the conversation with you in a separate room to the rest of his family, to help get the most from the exercise.

Step 2: Explain to him that you are going to carry out an exercise that will enable him to be more aware of his feelings and the behaviour that can result from negative emotions. Advise him that engaging fully in this exercise will enable him to identify when he is feeling difficult emotions and to react to them in a way that will prevent him from being abusive.

Step 3: Ask the man to recall and describe the build-up of feelings that he has experienced before a specific occasion on which he was violent or abusive towards his partner. Take time to help him with this memory so that he can recall as many feelings as possible and note them down on a piece of paper. It is important to use the words and language that the man is using. Following this, go through each of the emotions mentioned and ask the man where he feels these emotions in his body. Help the man with this part of the exercise and give some examples. If discussing the emotion 'anger' for example, you could use the following:

- *Some people describe getting a sore head when they are angry, does this fit with you?*
- *Some people have told me that they go really red in the face when they get angry, or can feel the colour 'drain' from their face. What is your experience?*
- *People have described gritting their teeth, or clenching their fists when they get angry. What is your experience of this?*
- *Some people describe getting a 'churning' sensation in their stomach or start to feel sick when they get angry. Does this resonate with you?*
- *Some people describe feeling really 'shaky' when they get angry and have described feeling their legs go weak. What are your thoughts on this?*

Note down where on the man's body he is saying that he 'feels' the emotion being discussed and feed this back to him, for example:

- *So Pete, you have said that when you get angry, there are things that happen in your body that you are aware of, that you can feel your face going red and that you feel your legs shaking, and that you know you grind your teeth. Have I got that correct?*



Step 4: Thank the man for discussing this with you and advise him that as he has been able to identify physical changes that occur in his body when he feels anger, he now has the CHOICE, as to how he reacts when he notices these changes in his body. For example:

- *What I am suggesting Pete, is that as soon as you notice that your stomach is churning, or that you are clenching your fists, you have to make a choice. You can choose to do nothing, which may result in you being abusive toward Michelle, as you have told me this has happened before. Or you can choose to do something else, which can help you be non-abusive, which is what you have told me is the type of man you want to be.*

Step 5: Introduce the idea of ‘taking a breather’ or ‘removing himself from the situation’ when the warning signals are present (the sensations he has described occurring in his body) and he feels that he is becoming risky toward his partner or child/children. This would involve him deciding, in advance, to remove himself from the high-risk situation for a time-limited period in order to keep his partner and child/children safe. In discussing this strategy with him there are points you must emphasise:

- He should ‘plan’ where is going to remove himself to if he notices warning signs. Discuss with him, where he could realistically go during periods of ‘lockdown’ or self-isolation. Could he go out into his garden and take time to himself, or could he go upstairs, into the bathroom etc.
- Remind the man of the importance of leaving the vicinity of his partner when he notices the warning signs. If he is not in her immediate vicinity he cannot be physically violent to her. Ensure that you stress the importance of not shouting or being abusive from other parts of the home where he has removed himself to.
- Discuss what he is going to do after he has left. Discuss how long is he going to wait before returning (it is important that it should be a significant length of time, not less than 15 mins). It is also important to highlight to the man that he uses the ‘time out’ constructively and that he does not ruminate over what was being discussed with his partner. If he feels that he is particularly risky, he should leave the property and go for a walk (whilst maintaining all social distancing guidelines). He should also consider if there is anyone he can call that could assist him in winding himself down.
- Advise the man that he should not consume alcohol/other substances whilst ‘taking a breather’.
- Advise him that he could use the self-calming exercise (discussed below) to assist in managing his own emotions.
- Discuss what he would plan to do when returning to his partner, to ensure that he does not ‘pick up’ where he left. If he feels that his behaviour is escalating again, he should leave again.
- Taking a breather should only be used as an emergency measure to achieve a non-abusive solution to the situation; not to avoid discussion of the issue over the longer term or hearing criticism.

Step 6: Ask the man if he has ever heard of, or had any experience of mindfulness techniques. Discuss with the man the benefits that many people gain from meditative/mindfulness techniques in terms of both physical and mental health, such as stress reduction, improved sleep, increased focus, and improved relationships with others. Advise the man that you would like to try out a self –calming exercise with him over the phone so he can get an idea of whether it might be



helpful for him. You should expect him to express some doubt but take time to gain his agreement. If he agrees inform him that you do not require him to speak to you during this, and that there will be periods of silence. Advise him that he will know that the exercise is finished because you will tell him.

Ask him to sit in an upright position in his chair with his hands relaxed on top of his thighs - with the base of his spine into the back of the seat and feet firmly placed on the ground. Suggest that he closes his eyes if he feels comfortable doing so and use the following script:

"We are now going to conduct a self-calming exercise, just for a few minutes to try and help you feel calm and relaxed.

I'd like you to sit upright with your feet flat on the ground and your knees bent roughly at right angles. I would also suggest that you rest your hands on your legs with the palms facing upwards. I'd now like you to close your eyes. I'd like you to take deep breaths and, if you can, breathe from as low in your stomach as you possibly can. Ideally you will feel your stomach get bigger when you breathe in, and smaller when you breathe out. It's ok to put one hand on your stomach to feel this.

If you can, breathe in through your nose at a rate you feel comfortable and then breathe out through your mouth at a rate you feel comfortable. As you breathe out really push the air out of your stomach and your lungs, try to empty them for the next set of air that you are about to breathe in. Keep doing this for at least three to four breaths. Try and bring your focus to your breathing. As you breathe out it might help to say the words 'AND R-E-L-A-X' to yourself inside your head"

Keep a short silence while the man practices this.

After about approximately 20 – 30 seconds continue:

"I would now like you to visualise a scene which you associate with either peace or happiness, it can be any scene that you choose as long as it's associated with these two feelings and does not involve you or anyone else being harmed. While focussing on your breathing check to see if there are any muscles or any tension in your body and take your breath to that point and, on breathing out, let the tension go.

Notice the scene that you associate with peace or happiness, focus on the scene as if it were just in front of your eyes and imagine with each breath drawing yourself deeper into the scene. As you breathe in and out you can imagine your mind and body being totally connected to that scene. Think about what you can see, what



you can hear, what you can feel, what you can touch, what you can smell, in this peaceful or happy scene”.

Leave the man for 10 seconds to keep this visualisation in mind before continuing:

“Gradually I would like you to re-focus on the room that you are in now, hearing the sounds around you and then gradually opening your eyes. This exercise is now finished”.

Suggest to the man that this strategy is one which he can use in his everyday life. Over time he should be able to develop the ability to use these breathing control skills quite quickly in lots of situations to achieve calm without necessarily having to close his eyes and/or imagine a peaceful happy scene. Ask him when he might use this type of strategy. Encourage him to think about situations where he experiences relevant emotions such as anger, tension, stress or anxiety, as he described earlier, and how the ability to calm himself down might help.

Finish the call by recapping the work you have undertaken today. Remind him that identifying his feelings, taking a breather, and self-calming are all tools that he can use with immediate effect to reduce his likelihood of being abusive to his partner.

Outcomes

- The man will understand self-calming, and be aware of how it could be useful currently in his life at times when he is becoming stressed, frustrated or angry with those around him
- The man will understand what taking a breather means and why it is of value to him
- He will be able to explain the steps to taking a breather and have some idea of what he might do/where he might go if ‘taking a breather’ in the context of his current living circumstances



Exercise 3 Support Networks

Aim

To help the man identify social networks and explore how they can help him be the man he wants to be, even during lockdown, self- isolation or social distancing.

Explain to the man that whilst he is responsible for managing his own emotions and for being a non-abusive partner, he does not have to do this on his own. The support he receives from those around him is also crucial. Advise him that it is also important to recognise the increased stress that the current COVID -19 pandemic may be creating for him, and to remind him that he does not have to manage his concerns and fears alone. Loneliness and boredom are also real hazards in the current situation. However, it is also important to acknowledge there may be people in his life who might be unhelpful and who might collude or go along with his abusive behaviour and he may need to learn how to avoid them.

Ask the man to consider who is in his social network. Encourage him to consider who is supportive of him being a non-abusive partner and who may get in the way. Ask him who he can turn to for support in light of the current circumstances and who he should perhaps avoid. The following can be used as prompts:

- *Who do you spend time with generally in normal times?*
- *How would you describe this relationship?*
- *Who would you talk to if you had a problem? Who would support your efforts to change behaviour that could lead to you abusing your partner?*
- *Which of the men that you know is the most supportive of/respectful to his partner?*
- *Who, within this network, might try to stop you changing your behaviour?*
- *How would you describe this relationship?*
- *What would prevent you from being able to confide in this person?*
- *How would you like these relationships to change?*
- *Who can you talk to about the current crisis?*
- *What methods do you have for staying in contact with people in your social network during lockdown? – discuss apps and platforms that he could use*
- *Are there activities you can do with these people using communication apps that are just about staying in touch and having fun?*

Ensure that you discuss each of the people the man highlights in depth and explore how close he would consider them, i.e. are they someone close who they can trust and confide in or a mere acquaintance. Be sure to remind the man that he can consider social work and other public service bodies as a source of support. Use this opportunity to provide the man with a list of agencies that are available to him at this current time. Workers should be aware of services available in their local areas and their current ability to provide a service. National helpline details should be provided to the man and include (not an exhaustive list):



The Samaritans

<https://www.samaritans.org/?nation=scotland>

Tel: 116 123

National Debtline

www.nationaldebtline.org

Tel: 0808 808 4000

Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Tel: 03444 775 774

Alcoholics Anonymous

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Tel: 0800 917 7650

Citizens Advice

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/>

Outcomes

- The man will have identified his social networks
- From within this network the man will have separated out those he feels can assist his process of change from those that will obstruct it
- The man will have increased knowledge on support services available to him



Exercise 4 Self Talk

Aim

The aim of this session is to introduce the man to the concept of 'self-talk' and to explore how managing his self-talk effectively can positively impact on his feelings and can result in safe and non-abusive behaviour.

Step 1: Start the phone call in the usual manner by checking in on the man and by managing any fears or concerns that may have arisen since your last phone call. Advise the man that today you would like to discuss his self-talk or his 'thought patterns' because you know from experience of working with lots of people that understanding how we think, can be a very useful way of feeling in control of ourselves. Check out that he is happy to go with you on this.

Explain to him that our thoughts affect our feelings, which in turn affect our behaviour (the basic principle of cognitive behavioural therapy), and that by noticing and managing our thoughts, or self-talk, we can directly manage how we feel and ultimately how we behave. It can be helpful to explain to the man that everybody has self-talk all of the time – it's that inner monologue that goes on constantly in your head as you go about your day to day business. It can also be helpful to give the man some examples in order to clarify that the concept of self-talk is understood. Examples could be:

- *You are getting ready to go out for the day and you are running through a list of things you need to do in your head before you leave the house – that's your self-talk at work*
- *You are outside and you notice that the sun is shining and that it feels nice to have the sun on your back – that's your self-talk at work*
- *You are out for a walk and you notice someone walking with their dog off the lead and you think to yourself how well behaved the dog is – that's your self-talk at work*

Inform the man that as human beings, we are in a constant loop of thoughts linking into feelings thus impacting on our behaviour, and that by stopping to notice and acknowledge what our thoughts are, we can influence how we feel and have much more control over how we behave. Discuss with him the fact that we tend to have two forms of self-talk, positive self-talk and negative-self talk. Advise him that research has shown that humans tend to focus more on negative self-talk and are more likely to remember the negatives from any event as opposed to the positives and not to panic if this is the case for him. Inform him that we can train our brains to reverse this, and to notice our self-talk, and make it more positive if required. Give the man some examples of negative self-talk such as:

- *You are walking down the street and you see a guy looking at you and you think 'what's his problem, who does he think he's looking at'*
- *You are in work and your boss gives you a task to do and you think 'why do I always get given the extra jobs to do this is so unfair'*
- *You are in a rush to get somewhere in your car and you get caught at every red light and you think 'the world is against me today, why is this happening!'*



Ensure that the man understands this concept before moving on to the next step by checking in on his understanding of the examples that you have just given.

Step 2: Advise the man that you are now going to ask him to consider his own self-talk, particularly in situations when he has behaved in a way that he has been unhappy with. Inform him that this piece of work can be difficult, but by working through it, he can learn so much about himself and make positive steps towards becoming the man he wants to be.

Ask him to describe an event whereby he has been unhappy with his behaviour towards his partner or ex-partner. Note down what the man is saying - this does not need to be done verbatim, just note salient points or distinct points of interest as the man is describing the situation. After the man has finished telling you about the event, go back to the points that you noted down, and ask the man what he was thinking at that exact time, and how he was feeling. Take time to explore the man's thoughts and notice if the man has negative self-talk and highlight this to him. For example:

'John, I noticed that you said Mary just was not listening to you when you were trying to tell her that she didn't have the right to tell you whether or not you could see your son, could you tell me exactly what your thoughts were at that time, and how that made you feel'?

'O.K., so you were thinking 'who the hell does she think she is saying what I can and can't do and that you were raging at this'?

'Let's have a look at your self-talk here 'who the hell does she think she is.....' do you think that was positive or negative self-talk?

Encourage the man to explore his own self-talk statements. It is more than likely that it is negative if he behaved in a manner that he is unhappy with / and or was abusive to his partner.

Step 3: Advise him that it is always possible to reframe your self-talk as long as you take the time to notice what your self-talk actually is, and notice how it is making you feel. Give him the following example (and be clear that is just an example and not your actual thinking):

'I am really worried about the current COVID-19 pandemic. I could think to myself, this is terrible and life will never be the same again and I am going to have no money, or I could think, this is a terrible situation we are all in, I am going to do what I can to make the most of my situation for myself and my family at this time'.

It is important that when you make the distinction between the positive and negative self-talk, that it is made realistic. If it is realistic, there is more likelihood that it will become an embedded way of thinking. Refer the man back to his negative self-talk statement and ask him a version of the following question:



'What were you hoping that day with your partner would have been like'?

When you receive his answer ask him if his negative self-talk that he described to you earlier helped him to have the day he was hoping for. It is likely that the answer will be no! Then encourage the man to reframe his negative self-talk statement he identified earlier into something more positive. It is important that the man's own words are used when doing this. Each time he reframes his statement, ask him if thinking that thought would have assisted in him having the day he had hoped to have. Ask him how it would make him feel if he thought that new positive self-talk statement. Examples of reframed self-talk could be:

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- *Who does she think she is telling me what to do : I will try to find a way of letting her know how I feel when she tells me what to do*
 - *They are my kids I can do what I like : She is their mother and has as much right as I do*
 - *All she does is moan at me all of the time : I need to take more responsibility for what I am doing*
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Encourage the man to reframe his negative self-talk statement into one which would have resulted in him feeling less angry/resentful and ask him how he thinks he might have felt if he had been able to use this reframed self-talk. Remind him of the continuous loop of thoughts, feelings and behaviour and ask him how he would likely have behaved had he had this more positive self-talk and felt more positive emotions. Remind him that it is highly unlikely that positive self-talk would result in abusive behaviour. Ask the man to notice his self-talk over the coming days and to try and reframe any negative self-talk that he has and to notice the impact that this has on his feelings and is behaviour.

Step 4: Finish the session by asking the man to state 3 positive statements about his partner, followed by 3 positive statements about himself. Following this, ask the following questions:

- *Given the positive self-talk statements you have made about yourself, how able are you to contribute to your relationship at present?*
- *Given the positive self-talk statement you have made about yourself, how able are you to support your family through the COVID-19 pandemic?*
- *Given the positive statements you have made about your partner, how can you support her through these difficult times?*

Outcomes

- The man will understand, and be able to explain, the concept of self-talk (what an individual 'says to himself' or thinks in any situation), both negative and positive

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- The man will understand the ways in which thoughts and feelings influence how we behave
- The man will feel that he can be more in control of his thoughts, feelings and behaviour in future, even in difficult circumstances
- The man will have developed more empathy for his partner



Exercise 5 The Whole Person

Aim

The aim of the session is to encourage the man to consider different aspects of himself and to think about how he can meet his own needs positively and responsibly.

Advise the man that humans have certain needs that require to be met in order to keep us as healthy fully functioning adults. Explain and discuss the concept of human need, paying particular attention to the following points:

- All humans have needs.
- Some are essential (such as food and shelter) while others are desirable (such as enjoyable work and friendships).
- Just because you don't get a need met it doesn't mean that the need goes away.
- As adults it is our responsibility to ensure that our needs are met whereas children need to have their needs met for them.

Suggest to the man that it is helpful to consider that adults are a mixture of different human aspects (or selves) that contribute to their whole being. Advise him that when we are fully functioning and healthy, we tend to be addressing all of our 'selves'. Discuss the 'selves' with the man and explain what each of them mean. Encourage him to identify any 'selves' that he thinks may be missing from the list that are important to him:

Physical:	Eating well (and regularly), sleeping enough, attending to illness, not abusing drugs/alcohol, keeping fit.
Social:	Having a support network of friends/ family.
Spiritual:	Our belief about how to relate to the world around us – where the 'meaning' of life is found – our sense of belonging – our connection to something 'bigger' than ourselves. For some men it could include specific faith beliefs or practices such as meditation.
Emotional:	Identifying and managing feelings.
Creative:	Hobbies, interests, work, play and experimentation.
Psychological:	Being able to be at ease with self, dealing with problems, thinking that results in choice of behaviour.
Sexual:	Ensuring good sexual health, practicing safe sex, feeling good about self sexually, being sexually respectful
Intellectual:	Stretching and challenging your brain e.g. taking an interest in current affairs, watching documentaries – it does not relate solely to academic activity.



Advise the man that you would like him to take a personal MOT and to think about how well he is doing in taking responsibility for meeting his needs in relation to each of the selves.

Ask the man the following:

- *Which of your 'selves' scores well and which are you neglecting?*
- *How well are you doing in taking responsibility for meeting your needs (as opposed to getting others to take this responsibility)?*
- *What kinds of ways do you behave when you can't get your needs met?*

Following on from this, ask the man to consider how he can continue to ensure that he is taking responsibility for his 'selves' despite restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Advise him that he could use this time as an opportunity to consider 'selves' that he may have been neglecting up until now. Be prepared to give the man suggestions as to how he could do this. Examples could include:

- Ensure that you are eating as healthily as possible and get out walking for the one period a day that you are allowed out of the house.
- Take up a hobby that you can in the house that you have always wanted to do.
- Spend time reading, or if he has children, reading with them.
- Engaging in periods of quiet time – there are numerous free apps that can assist with this.
- Notice how he is feeling and discuss this with people in his support network.

Advise the man that whilst it is our responsibility to ensure our own needs are met, we can ask others for help in doing so. Inform him that he can also be available to help his children and his partner meet their needs. Ask the man to provide examples of how he could do this. It is important to ensure that the man's ideas are not methods by which he could abuse or control members of his family. If he does provide such examples, explore these in depth and encourage him to consider non abusive ways in which he could support his family.

Outcomes

- The man will have a greater awareness of what his needs are and a greater understanding of his responsibility for meeting them and not expecting others to do so
- The man will have undertaken an "MOT" of his wellbeing and will have a plan in place to address any deficits



Exercise 6 Shields

Aim

The aim of this exercise is to introduce the man to the concept of minimisation, denial and blame and to explore how he uses these avoidance tactics as 'shields' to prevent himself from taking responsibility for his behaviour. The exercise will also encourage him to reflect on how the use of minimisation, denial and blame can arise from feelings of shame and guilt which the man may be experiencing. The man will be supported to recognise that he can move forward and manage his feelings of shame and guilt in a constructive manner. This piece of work may take more than one session on the phone to complete.

Some men will use minimisation, denial and blame more than others when describing or thinking about their abusive behaviour. When discussing this, the worker should not be confrontational; the intention is not to evoke shame but rather to promote accountability and to recognise the likelihood of shame and to assist the man to detoxify it to ensure it does not interfere with his process of change.

Step 1: Start the session by advising the man that you are going to ask him in general how people describe behaviour that they know themselves to be in the wrong. Examples can include:

- When they are late for something
- When they have forgotten to do something or missed an appointment
- When they have broken something belonging to someone else
- When they have argued with someone
- When they are stopped by the police for speeding

It is highly likely that answer will include explanations along the lines of 'my alarm clock never went off', 'the bus was running late', 'it wasn't me', 'it wasn't that bad'. With each answer ask him to consider what he thinks the person is trying to do by using these tactics and introduce the concept of shields; things we use to avoid dealing with difficult feelings. It is also an attempt by people to abdicate responsibility for what they have done. Suggest that the most common shields are minimisation, denial and blame. Explain each of these concepts to the man.

Minimisation	downplaying something, or making it seem less important than it is
Denial	stating that something did not happen, or refusing to accept that something did happen
Blame	to state that someone else is responsible for a wrongdoing

Ask the man to recall some of the ways he has described his behaviour when he knows that it has been in the wrong. This can be done in a light hearted manner to start with, and you could encourage him to explain the shields he has used when he has missed appointments with you in the past! Explain to him that it is human nature to use these shields, we all use them all of the time (even if we don't realise we are doing it). Advise him that we can start to change our behaviour, and



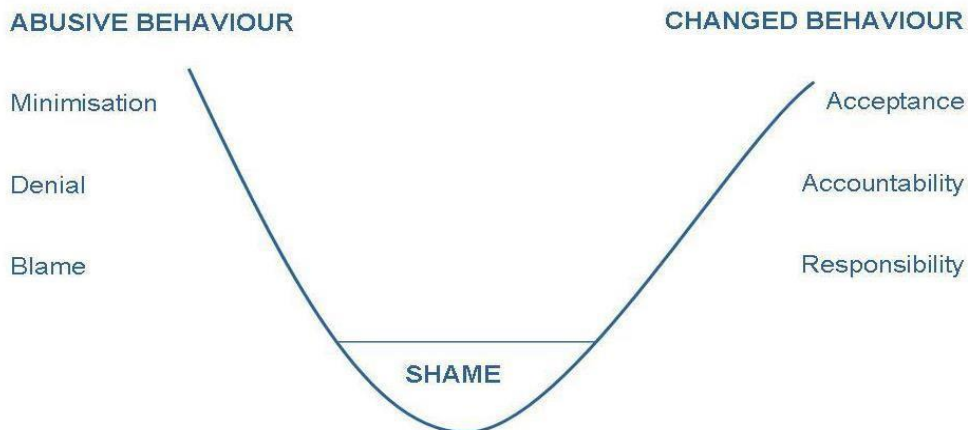
take responsibility for it when we recognise the shields that we are using and take steps to address this.

Step 2: Ask the man to now describe how he has explained his use of abusive behaviour towards his partner. People he might have discussed his behaviour with could be his partner/ex-partner, parents, siblings, children, friends, police, and his worker. If he says that he has not discussed his offence with anyone explore this further. At the very least he would have had to describe it to the police if he is on a Court Order and as you are working with him it is likely that he has already described it to you. Return to his description of his abusive behaviour and ask him to consider which of the shields may apply to each of the explanations he gave to different people. Invite him to consider what feelings he may be trying to avoid by using his shields and what impact he feels this might have on his chances of changing his behaviour.

Step 3: Ask the man the following question:

“What is the feeling that you would have to feel, if you were honest about your abusive behaviour”

It is likely that his answers will include variations on guilt and shame. Advise the man that this is completely normal, and that in order to avoid these feelings, people often use the shields that were discussed previously with him. Explain to him that we know that the majority of people do not want to be abusive to their partners, and that they want to be loving, kind and caring partners and fathers. Advise him that you are going to explain an analogy to him that men have used in the past to describe their feelings and actions when they are trying to change their behaviour. Ask him to imagine that there is a curve drawn in front of him – like a big letter U and describe it to him as being a pit. Advise him that on the left hand side of the pit (as he is looking straight at it) are the shields denial, minimisation and blame that were discussed earlier. On the right hand side of the pit are more positive actions such as being accountable, taking responsibility and honesty. However at the bottom of the pit are his feelings of guilt and shame. The following is an image of what you are trying to describe:





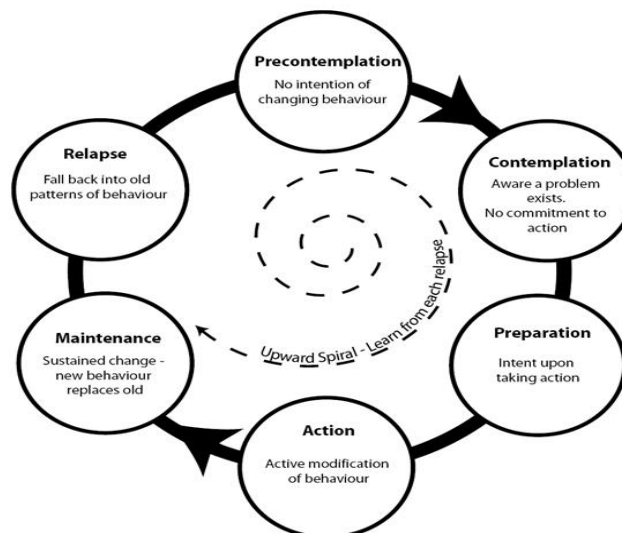
Extend the analogy further to describe how people will often do anything to avoid falling into the 'pit of guilt and shame', they will use their shields to try and help them climb out, or they will try build a bridge across the pit to the other side. Inform him however that these tactics are only ever temporary, and that they will not enable him to truly move forward with his process of change. Acknowledge that the process of change is not easy and there are no short cuts. Explain that in order to move forward it may be inevitable that he will dip into the pit. It should be highlighted that in doing so, the courage required to face the shame, regret or guilt can be used positively in order to make changes and become an accountable and responsible person, taking an active part in controlling their behaviour.

Continue to develop the analogy by asking him to identify some thoughts and positive self-talk statements relating to change that would enable him to journey through the pit towards his desired change in behaviour.

Step 4: It is important to acknowledge with the man that change can take time, and not to be disheartened if he reverts to using 'shields' or further abusive behaviour. Explain to him that it does not mean he cannot change if he does this and that he should just accept that that is who he is! It can be helpful to describe the Cycle of Change (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1983) with the man and explain that although it was developed to be used in the field of addictions it can also be helpful for men undertaking a process of change in relation to domestically abusive behaviour. Point out that the model recognises that change is not simple and that sometimes relapse might happen. Use analogies such as smoking, drinking, working excessively to bring each stage of the cycle to life.

The stages of change are as follows:

**Stages of Change - The Transtheoretical Model
(Prochaska & DiClemente)**



Ask the man to highlight what a person may think, feel and say if they were in the pre- contemplation stage regarding their abusive behaviour. Repeat with the other stages. Between each stage take



time to discuss what would motivate someone to move through to the next stage. In highlighting barriers within each stage it is important that equal emphasis is placed upon the choices available to the man in each stage. Encourage the man to consider what 'stage' of the model he is in in relation to changing his behaviour and use the following table to tailor your responses to him:

Man's Stage	Workers Task
Pre-contemplation	Raise doubt; increase the man's perception of risks and problems with current behaviour
Contemplation	Tip the balance – evoke reasons to change, risks of not changing; strengthen the man's self-efficacy for change of current behaviour
Preparation	Help the man to determine the best course of action to take in seeking change
Action	Helping the man to take steps toward change
Maintenance	Help the man to identify strategies to prevent relapse

Outcomes

- The man will have a better understanding of the process of change
- The man will be able to explain what minimisation, denial and blame are and why people might use them
- The man will have identified his own emotional obstacles to change including the desire to avoid the painful feelings of shame and guilt
- The man should be more aware that while it may be difficult, change is possible and within his capacity



Exercise 7 Alcohol Use

Aim

The aim of this session is to highlight and increase understanding on the effect of substance use, particularly alcohol, on thinking, choices and motor skills - and its relationship to abuse.

For many men there is a clear correlation between domestic abuse and substance use, particularly alcohol. This is a useful exercise for exploring the links between alcohol and abuse particularly for a man who believes that alcohol makes him abusive and thinks all he needs to do is to stop drinking. It is important not simply to dismiss this interpretation but to allow him to explore more fully what the link is for him. It is also useful for men who may be increasing their alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 crisis and periods of lockdown. Consider also those who may be increasing their drinking in the house with their partner.

Step 1: Ask the man whether he thinks of alcohol as a stimulant or a depressant? Suggest that while it can feel like either, it is, in fact a depressant that affects the functioning of the brain. It reduces the efficiency of the brain. Explain that the brain can be split up into three parts, front middle and back:

- The thinking part of our brain is nearest to the front and is responsible for our thoughts and memory.
- The middle part of our brain manages our motor skills and assists us to move in a co-ordinated way.
- Our reflexes are at the rear base of our brain and help us to stay alive without us being conscious of it. It means we can breathe, blink, vomit etc.

Explain that even the smallest amount of alcohol affects the brain. It will affect it from the front of the brain, increasingly towards the rear, depending on how many units have been consumed. That is why we don't start staggering or dropping things until we have had a lot to drink and also why it is dangerous to leave an unconscious drunk person on their back as their vomit reflex may be impaired and they may ingest their sick. Ask the man to consider this and ask how much he has to drink before his motor skills are affected, even slightly. At this stage his thoughts will already have been impaired. Discuss the ways in which he feels his thinking functions less well than normal. Useful descriptions of cognitive malfunctioning include:

- Sloppy thinking
- Not considering consequences
- Not remembering past mistakes
- Only able to focus on one or a few topics
- Unrealistic/exaggerated thoughts

Step 2: Ask him to think of an occasion when he has been abusive while drunk. What were the triggers or events he was reacting to? Then ask:



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- *Describe your thoughts as you built up to being abusive*
 - *Now describe your feelings*
 - *How did you behave?*
-

Note the man's answer to these questions and then explore this further with the man using prompting questions such as:

- *Why do you think these thoughts happen when you've been drinking?*
- *What's the difference between these thoughts and your sober version?*
- *Have you any observations about the abuse you used?*

Some men will maintain that they are only ever abusive when drunk. In these instances it can be helpful to draw out the discussion on why they are abusive, when most men who drink are not:

- *What is it about you that makes you think this way when you have had a drink but most other men wouldn't?*
- *Are you abusive every time you consume alcohol? If not, what's different on those occasions?*
- *If you are abusive when you consume alcohol, what do you need to do about your alcohol use, given that you have said this is not the man you want to be?*

Step 3: Acknowledge that people often use alcohol as a coping mechanism during periods of increased stress. Point out that supermarkets are experiencing higher than normal sales of alcohol during this period of enforced lockdown. However ask the man to consider how his partner and children (if he has any) may feel when he is drinking. Be aware that it may be that both he and his partner are increasing their drinking during this time and this might increase risk. Explore this, but be cautious about any tendency he might have to blame his partner. Ask him to consider steps he could take to reduce his alcohol use. Steps that he could take and you may wish to explore these with him are:

- Refrain from consuming alcohol completely – what supports would he need to help him do this?
- Cut down his alcohol use
- Discuss his alcohol use with his partner
- Ensure he has other things he can do instead of drinking alcohol

Outcomes

- The man will have a greater understanding of the links between his alcohol consumption and his thinking, his emotional self-regulation, and his self- management, specifically the decisions he makes about abuse
- The man will have considered the impact of his alcohol use on his partner and children



Exercise 8 Being the best dad you can during the COVID-19 pandemic

Aim

The aim is to encourage the man to consider the needs of his children and to explore the ways that he can ensure that his child's needs are being met. It may be that the activities described in this exercise need to be done over two phone calls/sessions. Please note that this exercise is written in general for men who live with, or have contact with their children.

Step 1: Ask the man to consider what he feels that his child needs in general. Encourage the man to consider all aspects of their child's needs including the basic need for food and shelter as well as the need to feel loved, cared for, be provided with an education and a stable home free from abuse. Allow this discussion to flow and encourage the man to consider the needs of children at different ages and note down what he is saying. If the man is struggling to identify needs, you can ask him what he himself needed or would have wanted when they were children and note this on the list.

Step 2: Explain to the man that the needs of children are understood in Scotland through Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), and highlight that the man has responsibilities to his children in this regard. Explain each of the needs to the man:

Safe	Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.
Healthy	Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices.
Achieving	Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.
Nurtured	Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting
Active	Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, that contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community
Respected	Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and be involved in decisions that affect them.
Responsible	Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them.



Included	Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.
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Go through each of the indicators with the man and ask what he is doing to ensure each need is met for his child. Acknowledge that we are in strange and difficult times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but highlight that he still has a responsibility to address each need. Encourage him to ‘think outside the box’ as to how he could provide opportunities for his child to develop in each of the aforementioned areas. Discussions could include:

Safe	Refrain from being abusive
Healthy	Try to ensure child has a balanced diet and that all medical needs are being addressed
Achieving	Accessing educational materials whilst child is home from school (e.g. BBC have free educational programmes on each day)
Nurtured	Ensuring that the child feels comfortable in their home
Active	Be inventive with the activity time allowed outside home each day, go for walks together, be active within the family home at other times
Respected	Involve the child in any discussions that impact on them
Responsible	Give the child the opportunity to contribute in the family home, by helping to make dinner for example or helping with chores. Perhaps encourage them to make a timetable/schedule for their day including school work, play time, family time and exercise
Included	Include the child (age appropriate) in discussions on how the family is managing periods of lockdown

Step 3: Advise the man that you are going to introduce him to two different types of parenting. Suggest that one type is father-centred parenting and that this takes no account of the needs of the child and focuses more on meeting the needs of the father. Provide the man with specific examples of parent or father centred fathering, ranging from less harmful behaviours or actions, to more damaging examples. Examples of this could include:

- Taking a child to a football match when they do not enjoy football
- Encouraging a child to play with their phone/devices rather than spend time with them
- Using children to threaten partner ('if you report me I'll make sure you lose the kids')
- Turning children against their mother
- Causing fear
- Not adhering to bail conditions/contact agreements/child's plans
- Using children to gain information on partner
- Using child to gain access to (ex) partner
- Not contributing financially for your child (regardless of contact)



Then introduce the man to the concept of child-centred parenting, during which the needs of the child are being met first and foremost. Advise him that examples of this could include:

- Playing games with children such as 'dress up' or hide n' seek
- Providing children with appropriate boundaries
- Encouraging children to participate in activities that they have stated they enjoy
- Adhering to bail conditions
- Adhering to children's plans
- Contributing financially for your child (regardless of contact)

Advise the man that at times many actions/behaviours can be considered both parent-centred and child-centred. Use the analogy of a continuum (a line) to describe this, explaining that there are two ends to this line, parent-centred at one end and child-centred at the other, but that there is all the space in-between, where many actions/behaviours could be considered both parent and child-centred. Advise him that it is the intention behind a particular behaviour or action that can often determine whether it is more parent or child-centred. Highlight that as a parent, the man has a 'choice' in how he chooses to parent his children – he can choose to be more parent or child-centred. Suggest that being domestically abusive is indeed a parenting choice and highlight the parent-centred nature of this type of behaviour. Ask the man to consider his parenting, and where he thinks he currently is on the 'continuum' i.e. is he more parent-centred or child-centred. Ask him which of his attitudes and behaviours need to change to help him become more 'child-centred'. Stress that if parenting styles are choices, then the man has the ability to choose to be more child-centred and thus move towards his children having a more positive experience of his fathering.

Please note that the concept of the parenting continuum is borrowed from the Caring Dads programme with their kind permission

Step 4: Acknowledge how daunting it can be being a parent, and how there is no 'guidebook' that explains how to be a parent. Explain that the aim for the next piece of work is to think about some of the principles or general points which he would want in his guide to positive fathering. Use the work carried out earlier in the exercise ('what do children need') to bolster this piece of work. Ask the man what principles he would like to have if he were to develop his own 'guide to parenting' and jot the points down. Encourage the man to have statements around the following in his 'guide':

- General principles of child-centred parenting such as providing love, protection, boundaries, encouragement, support and allowing an increasing degree of independence
- Accountability for their abuse (however expressed)
- Demonstrated change
- A willingness to listen to their children's expression of anger, hurt and fear whether expressed verbally or otherwise
- Predictability and consistency in moods and behaviour
- Dependability and reliability



- A demonstration of respect for other important adults in their children's lives especially the child's mother and support for the mother/child relationship

Ask the man if there is anything specific that he thinks he would want to be in his guidebook in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Encourage him to consider the father he would want to be remembered as through this difficult time. Points for discussion could include:

- Explaining the current crisis in a child centred and age appropriate manner
- Shielding the child from excessive news on the topic
- Ensuring that things other than COVID-19 are discussed in the family
- Maintaining as much of a regular routine as possible
- Spending more time with children to help alleviate any fears they may have

Step 5: Ask the man to look forward to when their children are adults and to imagine that those adults are writing to them to tell them the positive things they did for them during their upbringing and in particular during this pandemic. What would they hope their children would be able to say to them if they were to start now to be the kind of fathers they would like to be? Encourage the man to start his statements with the following:

If it hadn't been for you...

The gift you gave me...

The best thing you taught me...

Finish the exercise by reminding the man of the importance of play in a child's life. Discuss how it is essential for brain development and highlight that it is through play that babies and children best learn and develop. Advise the man that they have a role within their child's play (if appropriate) and to provide the opportunity for play by providing a safe environment in which to play with age appropriate toys and activities.

Ask the man what activities they do currently with their children and encourage him to explore what he could do in addition during periods of lockdown/social isolation to ensure that his child has the opportunity to play. Activities could include:

- Singing songs with children
- Home schooling or helping with set work
- Activities in the garden with children
- Arts and crafts
- Cooking with children
- Family board games
- Movie nights
- Playing computer games together (time limited!)



- Reading stories
- Making up stories together

Outcomes

- The man will have an understanding of children's needs and his responsibility to play his part in ensuring that these needs are met
- The man will understand the concept of child-centred parenting and will recognise the choice he has in being more child centred in his actions
- The man will have considered the importance of play in his child's life and will have considered activities he could do with his child/ren
- The man will have visualised himself as the father he wants to be



Exercise 9 Personal Plan

Aim

The aim of this exercise is to assist the man to develop a personal plan that enables him to have a specific set of goals that encourage him to be the man that he wants to be generally and in the current crisis.

The personal plan is a tool that should be used to help the man plan and track the changes he is making. It should be an individualised plan relating to specific personal targets for change and which encourages him to be in control of the changes he makes. This plan should be an ever evolving piece of work in which realistic goals are set that can realistically be attained.

The process

Remind the man of the 'whole person' illustration and the work he completed in an earlier exercise with you. Remind him of all the different 'selves' that we have and discuss the concept of human need, explaining the following points:

- Humans all have needs.
- Some are essential (such as food and shelter) while others are desirable (such as enjoyable work and friendships).
- Just because you don't get a need met it doesn't mean that the need goes away.

Recap that as adults it is our responsibility to ensure that our needs are met whereas children's needs must be met for them. Explain to the man that you want him to create a personal plan that sets out his goals for meeting his needs, and the needs of others.

Advise the man that when devising a personal plan, it can be helpful to consider more than just the goals that he wants to achieve. Suggest that it is useful to have six headings that can be explored when developing a plan to ensure that he gives himself the best chance of achieving his goals. These headings are:

What is the goal?

Why this goal – what's the motivation?

How and when are you going take action?

What resources are available to help?

What obstacles may get in the way / how can you manage these?

How will you know when you are en-route to achieving your goal?



Encourage him to identify his own goals and associated motivation linked to meeting the needs of his various 'selves'. For example; giving up alcohol will improve my physical health (physical self) but will also stop me feeling so anxious and depressed when I am hung-over (emotional/psychological self) and I get on better with my family when I am not drinking (social/emotional self). If a man is planning on giving up alcohol it's important to recognise the losses and how he might meet the needs that were met by the behaviour in more positive ways.

Use the subsequent sections to translate these goals into a task focussed action plan commensurate with SMART principles (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited). The following is an example of a written personal plan to help workers have a visual representation of what this could look like. Workers could encourage the man to write down his own personal plan as he is on the phone with them.

What (Goal)	Why (motivation)	How and When (Action)	What resources do I have?	Obstacles / solutions	I will know I've achieved my goal when...
Do something about my drinking	My wife wouldn't feel so scared. The kids would be happy.	Go back to the alcohol counsellor. Phone before next session	I've done it before. My friend Dave would support me.	I might not get an appointment right away. I could start by keeping a drink diary. Go out with Dave. Take the kids out.	Drink isn't my first thought when I've got problems.
Get control over my feelings	My wife wouldn't feel so scared. The kids would be happy.	Practice the calming exercise once a day for 7 days	I'm on my own at work during breaks	I'll be looking for quick results and get disappointed-. Think long term. Try Xmas. Talk to my C. Manager	My wife goes out without me and I'm happy and secure about it.
Be more caring	My wife wouldn't feel so scared. The kids could relax and maybe love me	Keep attending the programme Tell the kids what I am trying to do and why.	My wife is still with me. My kids are still with me	I've always given up before. Read my "Why" column every time I feel like that.	I haven't been violent for a year. The kids don't jump if I happen to drop something
Start enjoying life	I might like myself again	Phone Tam tomorrow evening and ask if I could play again.	I was a good footballer and played in a team. They'd still have me.	I don't deserve to enjoy life Does it help the children if I am unhappy?	I wake in the morning and look forward to the day



What (Goal)	Why (motivation)	How and When (Action)	What resources do I have?	Obstacles / solutions	I will know I've achieved my goal when...
Be more supportive of my partner as a mother	My partner will feel better about herself as a mother and the children will benefit	Agree a shared approach to parenting and take equal responsibility for putting it into action	I can identify when I've deliberately undermined my partner, so I can identify opportunities to be supportive.	I got a lot out of only doing the "fun" bits of parenting My kids will respect me more when they're older	My partner feels supported as a parent My kids don't expect me/try to get me to overrule their mum

Encourage the man to consider goals that he would like to add to his personal plan in relation to the current COVID-19 pandemic. These could include goals along the lines of:

- Ensuring that my family feel safe and supported during this time
- Ensuring that I am the best partner I can be during lockdown periods
- Ensuring that all of my kids needs are met during isolation periods
- Being as informed as I can be about the current situation
- Being an approachable person during this crisis

Outcomes

- The man will have constructed a detailed, realistic personal plan