2024

Wholeness Counselling & Psychotherapy

Coercive control

Steps to protect yourself

Coercive control is a form of emotional and psychological abuse where one partner seeks to dominate and control the other. Here are some strategies to help protect yourself:

1. Recognize the Signs: Be aware of behaviours that indicate coercive control, such as constant monitoring, isolation from friends and family, manipulation, and intimidation.

2. Document Everything: Keep a record of incidents, including dates, times, and details of abusive behaviours. This can be helpful if you decide to seek legal action or support.

3. Create a Safety Plan: Develop a plan for how to leave the situation safely. This includes identifying a safe place to go, having an emergency bag ready, and knowing who to call for help.

4. Reach Out for Support: Talk to trusted friends, family members, or professionals about your situation. They can provide emotional support and may help you find resources.

5. Seek Professional Help: Consider speaking with a therapist or counsellor who specializes in abuse and trauma. They can help you process your experiences and develop coping strategies.

6. Know Your Rights: Familiarize yourself with local laws regarding domestic abuse and coercive control. This knowledge can empower you and inform your decisions.

7. Utilize Resources: Look for local shelters, hotlines, or organizations that specialize in helping individuals facing coercive control or domestic violence. They can provide assistance and guidance.

8. Limit Communication: If safe to do so, reduce contact with the abuser. Use messaging apps or emails that can be easily saved or documented.

9. Consider Legal Action: If necessary, seek a restraining order or other legal protections against your abuser.

10. Focus on Self-Care: Engage in activities that promote your well-being and mental health. This could include exercise, hobbies, or mindfulness practices.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please contact local authorities or a crisis hotline for immediate assistance.

If you are in Central Scotland and need support regarding coercive control, here are some resources and hotlines you can reach out to:

1. **Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline**:
	* Phone: 0800 027 1234
	* Available 24/7 for anyone affected by domestic abuse.
2. **Women's Aid**:
	* Local branches provide support and advice. You can find your nearest Women's Aid organization through their website.
	* General contact: 0131 226 6606.
3. **Men's Advice Line**:
	* Phone: 0808 801 0327
	* A helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse.
4. **Victim Support Scotland**:
	* Phone: 0800 160 1985
	* Provides support for victims of crime, including domestic abuse.
5. **Police Scotland**:
	* In case of immediate danger, call 999. For non-emergency situations, you can contact them at 101.
6. **Local Council Services**:
	* Many councils offer support services for those experiencing domestic abuse. Check your local council's website for specific resources.

Make sure to seek help if you are in a situation of coercive control or domestic abuse. You are not alone, and there are professionals ready to assist you.

In Scotland, domestic abuse and coercive control are addressed through specific legislation aimed at protecting victims and holding perpetrators accountable. Here’s an overview of the relevant laws and measures:

1. Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

 - Definition: This act specifically defines domestic abuse as a pattern of abusive behaviour by one partner towards another, which can include physical violence, emotional abuse, and coercive control.

 - Coercive Control: The act recognizes coercive control as a form of domestic abuse, allowing for prosecution when a perpetrator engages in behaviour that restricts a victim's freedom, independence, or ability to engage with others.

 - Sentencing: The act includes provisions for harsher penalties for perpetrators, including longer prison sentences for serious offenses.

2. Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016

 - This act made significant changes to how crimes are handled in Scotland, including provisions related to domestic abuse.

 - It allows for the introduction of "domestic abuse aggravators," which can lead to increased penalties for crimes committed in the context of domestic abuse.

3. Protection from Abuse

 - Victims of domestic abuse can seek protection through various orders:

 - Non-Harassment Orders: These can prevent the abuser from contacting or approaching the victim.

 - Interim and Full Orders for Protection\*\*: These can provide immediate safety measures for victims.

4. Police Response

 - The police in Scotland are trained to respond sensitively to incidents of domestic abuse. They have protocols in place for dealing with such situations, including risk assessment tools to identify high-risk cases.

 - Police Scotland has a dedicated Domestic Abuse Unit that focuses on tackling domestic abuse effectively.

5. Support Services

 - Several organizations offer support to victims of domestic abuse, including:

 - Women’s Aid: Provides refuge and support services for women and children.

 - Men’s Advice Line: Offers support for men experiencing domestic abuse.

 - Local authorities: Often have dedicated services for survivors of domestic abuse.

6. Educational and Awareness Campaigns

 - The Scottish Government has initiated campaigns to raise awareness about domestic abuse, emphasizing that it is a crime and that support is available.

7. Legal Aid and Assistance

 - Victims of domestic abuse may be eligible for legal aid to pursue protection orders or other legal remedies.

8. Impact of COVID-19

 - The pandemic highlighted the challenges faced by victims of domestic abuse, leading to increased funding and resources for support services in Scotland.

Conclusion

Scotland has established a robust legal framework to address domestic abuse and coercive control, focusing on victim protection and the prosecution of offenders. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, it’s vital to seek help from appropriate services and authorities.