

Domestic Abuse Recovering Together (DART)



Information for mothers

The NSPCC has many different projects across the country that aim to support families through difficult circumstances. This pack tells you about the DART (Domestic Abuse Recovering Together) group and what you can expect from the programme.

What is DART?

DART offers you the opportunity to strengthen your relationship with your child following domestic abuse. It is a 10-week structured group work programme that allows you to explore these issues within a safe and friendly environment. The programme promotes openness and honesty in relation to domestic abuse.

DART is for you and your child to attend together. It is open to one mother and one child per family each time. However, if you have more than one child in your family, you may be offered the opportunity for them to complete the programme at a different time with you. Children must be between the ages of 7 and 11 years* in order to attend the group.

What do we mean by domestic abuse?

The definition that DART works with is:

“Domestic abuse (also called domestic violence) happens when one person hurts or bullies another person who is or was their partner or who is in the same family. It can happen between people who are going out together, living together, have children together or are married to each other. It can happen either when people live together or separately.

Domestic abuse can also happen after a relationship has finished. Usually (but not always) it is the man who is the abuser and the woman who gets hurt. Although domestic abuse happens mostly between adults, young people can be affected by the abuse that they see and hear, and they can be hurt or bullied as part of domestic abuse between adults. Young people may also experience abuse from their own boy/girlfriend."

We believe that:

- children's needs are paramount and that their wishes and feelings should be listened to, respected and taken seriously
- children should be safe from abuse and safe in their own homes
- children should be given the opportunity to recover as much as possible from living with domestic abuse
- children need to feel safe from abuse and be in a supportive environment as they recover
- every child has a right to know about, and be involved in, making plans to help them.

What we will explore in the DART group:

- that it's okay to talk about domestic abuse
- helping to understand what domestic abuse is
- identifying protection strategies if domestic abuse occurs
- helping women and children to know that they are not to blame for the domestic abuse
- helping women and children express their feelings and looking at acceptable ways of expressing emotions such as anger
- helping build women and children's self esteem
- issues affecting women as parents.

It is important that you feel safe enough to participate in the programme. Due to the nature of the programme, the perpetrator of domestic abuse must not be living within the family home and you can only access the service if you are no longer living with domestic abuse.

Each weekly session will last approximately two hours and is designed to offer space for you and your child to work together and separately. Women and children will work together for the first hour of the session before dividing into separate groups.

How does domestic abuse affect children and relationships?

Domestic abuse can have a huge impact on children. Children's responses to witnessing such abuse can be very different, with some children being more affected than others. The effects may be short or long-term and can impact on many aspects of your family's life. Often domestic abuse is not discussed between family members, which can have an impact on how women and children relate to each other.

Getting to know you and your child

Before joining the programme of work we need to find out a little bit more about your family and how the domestic abuse has affected you and your child. In order to do this, your allocated worker will need to meet with you and your child on four separate occasions.

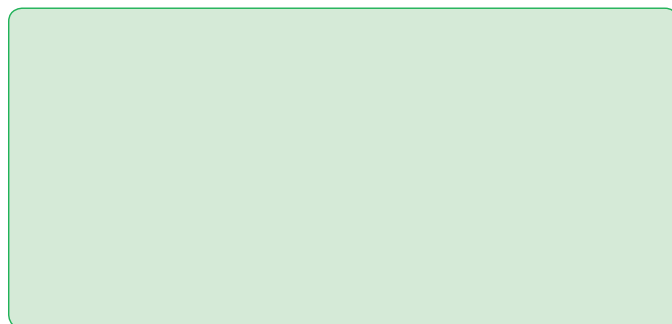
This is also an opportunity for you to get to know us and ask any questions or talk about any worries relating to the programme of work. We sometimes find that families are not ready to start the group, for several reasons. After meeting with you and your child we will let you know if the DART group is right for you. If we think that it's not the best time for you to come, then we will see if we can find some different support for you and your family.

Working together to support you and your child

We believe that you have a vital role to play in supporting your children following their experiences of domestic abuse. We recognise that this can be a difficult time for you because you may also have to deal with your own feelings.

As you complete the programme, you may need to be patient with your child, as they often need more time to make sense of the work we are doing. It will be helpful if you let us know about your child's reaction to the work, or about any changes in behaviour or about significant events.

During the programme of work we recognise that you may need other sources of support than the NSPCC. We are more than happy to speak with you regarding this on an individual basis to seek the additional support you may need, contact:



The NSPCC Helpline

When you're worried about a child, talk to us.

Whatever your concern, the NSPCC Helpline offers advice and support. You don't have to say who you are. You could help us to protect a child.

Call **0800 800 5000** or email **help@nspcc.org.uk**

If you are not happy with the service please contact us. The NSPCC is a charity and donations are welcome.