

Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment and the MARAC Process

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Aims of Session

- To understand how to approach domestic abuse cases in terms of assessing risk
- To have an overview of the DASH risk assessment form
- To understand where DASH and MARAC fit within a multi-agency response to high-risk victim-survivors
- To understand how to make a MARAC referral
- To learn more about support services for domestic abuse victim-survivors

Prevalence

- 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse in the year 2021-2022: 1.7 million females, and 699,000 males (ONS)
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men aged 16-74 will be subjected to domestic abuse in their lifetime (CSEW)
- 1 in 15 children under the age of 17 live in households where a parent is a victim of domestic abuse (Childhood Local Data on Risks and Needs 2019 - 2020)
- 31% disabled victims were living with the perpetrator compared to 18% non-disabled victims (Safelives)
- In the year 2022-23 there were 242 domestic abuse related deaths recorded. These included 93 suspected victim suicide following domestic abuse; 80 intimate partner homicides; 31 adult family homicides; 23 unexpected deaths, 11 child deaths and 4 classified as 'other'. (ONS data)

REMEMBER: Domestic Abuse can affect anyone

Domestic Abuse Definition (Domestic Abuse Act 2021)

- Both parties over the age of 16
- Personally connected
- Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:
 - Physical or sexual abuse
 - Violent or threatening behaviour
 - Controlling or coercive behaviour
 - Economic abuse
 - Psychological, emotional or other abuse
- Children as victims in their own right

Risk Identification and Assessment

- Distinction between risk identification and risk assessment
- Risk identification requires knowledge and use of tools such as Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour- based abuse check list (DASH) to identify tangible risk factors
- Whereas a risk assessment requires more in-depth knowledge and is more of an ongoing process
- To identify risk, it's vital that professionals understand the harmful behaviours perpetrators will use towards their victims

Why is it important to identify and assess risk?

- To determine whether someone is at risk of serious harm or homicide, make them aware of that risk. Also to inform them of what they can do in terms of building on their own current safety plan and to see what may need to change. For example; routine, walking to work, personal security.
- To inform necessary, proportionate, and appropriate information sharing both internally and with external partners
- To identify what circumstances or future event is likely to trigger an increase or decrease in the risk
- To establish the needs of the individual and the whole family (Think Family)!
- To enable the planning of actions that will reduce risks.

Risk Assessments

C – SPECSS

C: Children

S: Separation

P: Pregnancy / Birth

E: Escalation / Reports

C: Culture / 'Honour' based abuse

S: Stalking and harassment

S: Strangulation and sexual assault

DASH: Domestic Abuse Stalking and
'Honour' Based Abuse Risk Identification
Checklist (Safelives website)

Homicide Timeline – Dr Jane Monckton Smith



Substance Misuse, Suicide, and Domestic Abuse

- Substance misuse is consistently found in a high proportion of those who perpetrate domestic abuse, and it has been found that within intimate relationships where one partner has a problem with alcohol or other drugs, domestic abuse is more likely than not to occur.
- Victims of domestic abuse may also turn to alcohol or drugs as a means of escaping from it.
- It is also a tragic truth that domestic abuse can lead to deaths by suicide of the victim, perpetrator, and children that grow up in abusive households.

Put hand up if you have heard of the
DASH

Keep it up if you have ever completed a
DASH

DASH

- Background
- When safe to complete/how to ask
- Using professional judgement
- What to do with results – designated MARAC officer in your organisation to make the referral
- Distinction – vulnerable adult – need to still do DASH
- Make sure don't forget safeguarding referrals/other support

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zu4rP9wureY>

COMPLETE DASH

Safety planning

- Immediate safety planning i.e. can they go home?
- Encouraging them to engage with domestic abuse support to look at this in more detail
- Needs to be tailored to the individual and link in with the risk factors
- An example of safety planning:

[In Domestic Abuse Safety Planning 8pp DL - 25.5.23 – 2](#)



Break

MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

- Aims are to:
 - Respond to high risk victims of domestic abuse and their children
 - Share all relevant information known to agencies to increase safety, health and wellbeing of victim-survivors and their children
 - Discuss options for increasing the victim's safety
 - Create a co-ordinated action plan
 - Reduce repeat victimisation
 - Improve agency accountability
 - Improve support for professionals involved in high risk DA
- Primary focus of the Marac is to safeguard the adult victim but will also make links with others to safeguard children and manage the perpetrator's behaviour (eg MATAC / DRIVE / MAPPA etc).

MARAC Roles and Information Sharing



Referral Criteria and Process

- **Criteria:**
 - visible high risk (14+ identifiable indicators – potential serious harm could occur at any time)
 - professional judgement
 - potential escalation
 - repeat referral
- **Process:**
 - May depend on your organisation
 - Complete Marac referral –via MODUS (or MASH coordinator) and include completed DASH
 - Also consider if your client is aware of the referral and what you / they would like to gain from the meeting



Information Sharing

- Do you have consent to share?
- Is there a legitimate purpose to sharing?
- Must be Necessary; Proportionate for the Intended Purpose; Relevant; Adequate and Accurate
- Record decision to disclosure

Key Legislation:

The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)

The Human Rights Act (2000)

UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

Action Planning at MARAC



Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust





QUESTIONS

Sources of Support

- Local Services:
- Wokingham domestic abuse service (delivered by Cranstoun)
- Support for victim-survivors, children and perpetrators
- Tel: 0118 402 1921; www.cranstoun.org/dass
- West Berkshire and Reading (BWA): 0808 801 0882
- Thames Valley Wide:
- Kaleidoscopic group based support delivered by survivors for survivors:
www.kaleidoscopic.uk
- Support U for LGBT+ victims of domestic or sexual abuse
- Tel: 0118 321 9111
- Hourglass support for victims of abuse aged over 60
- Tel: 0808 808 8141 (24/7)
- Full directory: www.directory.Wokingham.gov.uk/domestic-abuse

Other issues if time

- Perpetrator risk
- Children
- Who's the victim?
- DHR findings

Thank you
questions...?