LEAVING

A training resource supporting the film ‘Leaving’, giving information and insights into the people who have to deal with abusive relationships.

socialfilmdrama.com







SOCIAL FILM DRAMA

MOVE, INSPIRE & CHANGE

DEDICATION

This film is dedicated to the victims and families of those who have died as a result of domestic violence; and to the many hundreds of thousands more who are looking to escape and survive abusive relationships.

THANKS TO:

Our Partners & Funders

Wiltshire Police
Wiltshire Primary Care Trust
Wiltshire Probation
Wiltshire County Council
Swindon Borough Council
Home Office
Swindon Women's Refuge
SPLITZ
NSPCC
Wessex Association of
Chambers of Commerce
Glennie Communications
Omni Productions
Westlea Housing

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& SAM HEARN
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Director of Photography
RICHARD STEWART
Music by DANIEL BERRIDGE

Our Cast

KIERSTON WAREING Helen
JOHNNY HARRIS Jim
JOE SIFFLEET Liam
FRANCIS LIMA Employer
ROBERT HARLEY HR Manager
SAMANTHA BLAKEY Nurse
JAMES PUDDEPHAT Jim's mate

Our specialist domestic abuse advisers on set

SUE BLACKLOCK
CHRIS FRY

INTRODUCTION

When people first hear about domestic abuse they find the figures shocking:

- Domestic violence will affect 1 in 4 women in their lifetime
- There are more repeat victims for domestic abuse than for any other crime
- On average there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police
- On average, two women are killed every week by a current or former partner. (77% of victims of domestic violence are women)
- One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute

Leaving is a social film drama that tells the story of Helen and her attempts to leave an abusive relationship.

This film aims to:

1) Raise awareness of domestic abuse.
2) Increase understanding of why leaving abuse can often be so difficult.
3) Provide a medium for training people in the public and voluntary sectors to more easily recognise and support people suffering from domestic abuse. The film is supported by a range of training resources available on our website.
4) Improve understanding of domestic abuse amongst employers and provide a catalyst for improved workplace policies and procedures to support victims.

Social Film Drama

This film is part of a series of Social Film Dramas created by GLENNIE COMMUNICATIONS and OMNI PRODUCTIONS.

For more information go to: www.socialfilmdrama.com

Order more copies of this film and resource packs at www.socialfilmdramashop.com or call 0117 954 7176



HELEN'S STORY

The Victim and Survivor

"I used to love Jim and, in some ways, I still do. I used to think that, just maybe, if I kept on loving him, then things would change... Jim would change… and we could keep our family together. Loving… isn't that what a good wife is meant to be after all?"

"Sometimes I lie awake and feel so worthless and so ashamed about what my life has become. I could never tell my family about it. Sometimes I feel like telling somebody but there never seems to be the right time. If Jim ever found out I'd said something he would go mental."

"Jim has told me several times if I ever leave him he would kill me. The last time, when he smacked my head on the kitchen floor, I thought he'd finally done it. I feel lonely and afraid nearly all the time now, even when Jim isn't getting at me. I hate waiting for Jim to come home and unlock the door. Knowing he is angry and waiting for him to get it out of his system is worst of all."

It is when people leave, or after they have left, that they are most at risk of being seriously hurt or killed by their partner.

What can I do?

1) In an emergency ring 999;
2) Call the Domestic Violence Helpline Tel: 0808 2000 247;
3) If you know someone who is living with domestic abuse, you owe it to them to find out about domestic abuse support services in your area and give them the details;
4) If you work in the public sector but aren't a domestic abuse specialist, make yourself better informed;


Rivington

LIAM'S STORY

Jim and Helen's son

"I can't really remember a time when mum and dad haven't been arguing. I feel like the arguments just keep running inside my head, when I'm at school and when I go to bed at night."

"I just wish the fighting would stop. When it suddenly goes quiet, I lie in bed wondering how mum is, but I'm too scared to go down. If only I wasn't so scared I could do something to help. It makes me feel so bad."

"Dad and me are okay together some of the time. He bought me a games console last year. But when it's time to go home after school I feel my stomach getting tight. I know I'll be in big trouble if I'm late but sometimes anything seems better than going home."

- About 750,000 children witness domestic violence every year
- In over 50% of known domestic violence cases, children were also directly abused by the same perpetrator
- In 90% of cases of domestic violence children are in the same or next room

What can I do?

1) Contact one of these organisiations for help, if you are living with domestic abuse:
   - Domestic Violence Helpline Tel: 0808 2000 247;
   - Childline. Tel: 0800 1111; www.childline.org.uk
   - NSPCC Helpline. Tel: 0808 800 5000.
2) Find out more about domestic abuse services in your area:
   - NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
   - Local Safeguarding Children Board



JIM'S STORY

The Perpetrator

"I keep telling Helen if she did what she was told I wouldn't need to get angry. She can be so useless and pathetic. If I didn't keep things under control our lives would be a right mess."

"I know sometimes I can go a bit too far, but Helen makes me so angry and just won't shut up. I say sorry afterwards so I don't see why Helen has to make such a big deal of it. It's not like I don't care about her. If I didn't, I wouldn't have put up with her for so long."

"She seems to get more stupid by the day and snivels a lot of the time. If I didn't let her know who was boss she would just do nothing."

Jim is good at hiding what he does from others. He is careful where he marks Helen so it is not easily seen. He charms his mates so they have little to suspect. After all, it was his charm which attracted Helen to him in the first place.

This is Jim's story. There are many others. There are many ways in which perpetrators of abuse exert their control: from subtle mind games and insults that erode a person's confidence to violent beatings and murder.

If you sense your anger is getting out of control, you can do something about it.

What can I do?

1) Take responsibility for your violence by seeking help to stop;
2) Call the Respect phoneline for domestic violence perpetrators.
   Tel: 0845 122 8609;



CLARE'S STORY

The Healthcare Professional

"I've worked at the Minor Injuries Unit for over a year now. I enjoy the fast pace of the work. I like knowing that I can be a real help to people when they need it most."

"What struck me about Helen was the sadness in her eyes. Although Jim was a little strange, the way he kept staring at me as I treated Helen's wound, he seemed a nice enough guy. Helen looked anxious. I thought about asking Helen what was bothering her but it didn't seem the right moment and there was no opportunity to talk to her privately."

Healthcare professionals – Nurses, Accident & Emergency specialists, Health Visitors, GPs, Dentists – are working with victims of domestic abuse on a daily basis, often unknowingly. They are the eyes and ears through which we can reach out to people who are abused.

What can I do?

1) Download the healthcare domestic abuse training resource from our website: www.womensaid.org.uk
2) Arrange, request or support domestic abuse training in your organisation;
3) Work together with clinical and management colleagues to discuss and clarify issues of 'patient confidentiality', 'information sharing' and 'data protection' to ensure the needs of victims are being met in cases of domestic abuse.



MARIA'S STORY

Helen's Boss

"We operate in a competitive marketplace. We can't afford passengers and people who can't pull their weight. Helen started well but her performance has dropped considerably over the last year. We have followed procedures, giving her verbal and written warnings but, in spite of this, Helen still isn't focusing on her work. We feel quite let down when we consider all the training we have given her."

Domestic abuse costs employers millions of pounds as a result of absenteeism and reduced productivity. Even without obvious violence, abuse is the trigger for stress, illness and depression.

Some employers tell themselves that getting involved in employees' personal lives is like opening a can of worms. But what if a person's life is at risk and the workplace is a victim's only contact with the outside world?

Alert employers are realizing that there is something that can be done as part of their responsibility to their staff and their communities.

What can I do?

1) Download the employer's domestic abuse information pack from our website. www.womensaid.org.uk
2) Arrange a meeting with your council's local DV co-ordinator to learn more about the issue;
3) Set up a consultation group in your company;
4) Don't let any of your employees suffer in silence. Find out about local domestic abuse support services in your area, and use company notice boards to publicise these details;
5) Develop and launch a domestic abuse company policy;
6) Ensure domestic abuse is formally raised as a question in any disciplinary meetings regarding absenteeism or poor performance.



PHIL'S STORY

Jim's Pub Mate

"I've known Jim for donkey's years. We first met playing in the five-a-side football league. Although nowadays we spend more time winding each other up in the pub rather than on the pitch.

"Jim can be an awkward sod at times but I have never seen him take it out on his mates. He went a bit over the top once at a football game but the other guy had it coming to him. Anyway that's all in the past."

"He likes to run the show which can get on your nerves at times. But he's always up for a laugh. He can charm his way into any club we want. Although he's edgy he's always in control."

Being the friend of someone who is a perpetrator of domestic abuse can be very difficult. First of all, you are unlikely to know it's going on at all or not for a long time. Perpetrators don't like to be found out. And who likes to think of their friend doing that sort of thing? If you do find out, who would want to grass on a mate? And what business is it of yours getting involved in their home life anyway? Best to just ignore it, isn't it? They'll sort it out!"

But what if lives are at stake? Your mate's freedom from criminal conviction? Your mate's partner and children?

What can I do?

1) A real friend speaks out;
2) Challenge your friend to take responsibility for his violence by seeking help to stop;
3) Call the Respect phoneline for domestic violence perpetrators. Tel: 0845 122 8609;
4) Don't hope things will work out. If left unchecked, abuse and violence gets worse over time, not better.





Perpetrators want their victims to become cut off from their friends, family, neighbours and work colleagues. You owe it to them to do all you can not to let that happen.











JANET'S STORY

On behalf of Helen's Friends, Family, Neighbours & Colleagues

"I knew Helen well at school. She was popular. She had a nice family. We both started working at the local supermarket in the holidays. When Helen first met Jim she couldn't have been happier. He was good looking and one of the lads. We even went as far as going out for the occasional double date with them."

"But Jim changed and so did Helen. She got more and more moody and bad tempered with me. I tried asking her about her problems but she told me to mind my own business. So I figured, it's her life, it's up to her to sort it out. We drifted apart. Nowadays I rarely see Helen without Jim being there. We say a few words and that's it. She looks so depressed and fed up. I don't know why she doesn't just leave him."

What can I do?

1) If your friend doesn't want to say what's troubling them, give them time and let them know you are there to listen when they are ready;
2) Don't try and solve the problem on your own. Seek advice from local services. Encourage your friend to contact the national domestic violence helpline or a local support agency. They can help your friend deal with what is happening;
3) Visit this helpful website: www.womensaid.org.uk
4) Do respect your friend's request for confidentiality. Leaving an abusive relationship can be dangerous and, at times, life threatening. It therefore needs to happen when your friend is ready;
5) If you are a neighbour or work colleague you don't have to get directly involved. Ask the person suffering abuse what they would like you to do. They may just want you to call someone in an emergency, look out for children or just keep a record of the time and dates of incidents. This can be invaluable if the case comes to court.









JULIE'S STORY

On behalf of Voluntary Sector Agencies

"I started working as a volunteer at our local Refuge six months ago. It can be tough at times but the work is so important. I used to live with an abusive partner and it took me two years to find the courage to leave. I realised I had to do something about the situation or I might not survive."

"I felt so alone at that time. Finally, when I was ready to leave for the last time I found it so helpful being able to talk to other people who really understood what I was going through. They were able to help me leave safely and helped me rebuild my life."

Voluntary sector organisations help people who are suffering from domestic abuse in many different ways. They provide:

- Help and information over the phone
- A safe place to stay
- One-to-one support
- Group work
- Practical help for victims and their families
- Advice to perpetrators on changing behaviour

What can I do?

1) Find out about domestic abuse support agencies in your area.
2) Offer support at whatever level is possible for you.

This could include:

- Financial support and donations
- Sponsorship of specific activities
- Your time, as a volunteer, either working directly with victims or behind the scenes
- Your encouragement and backing: by talking to more people about domestic abuse and the work of local support agencies that are helping victims.









ANDREW'S STORY

On behalf of all Criminal Justice Agencies & Local Councils

"I have worked for a number of different criminal justice agencies over the last 25 years. There have been such huge changes over that time. When I first started, we used to call all incidents in the home, from mild arguments to serious assaults, 'domestics'. We were told not to get involved; it was not our job. It seems so strange looking back. It couldn't be more different now…"

- The Home Office is determined to bring domestic violence out into the open and address its root causes. £14million has been invested to implement a Domestic Violence National Action Plan.
- Targets are set, as part of Local Area Agreements, for increasing the reporting of domestic violence and reducing repeat incidents of domestic violence.
- Locally-based Domestic Violence co-ordinators ensure that local councils, Community Safety Partnerships, criminal justice, health and voluntary agencies work together.
- The Police treat domestic violence in the same way as any other violent crime. The safety of victims is at the heart of policy.
- Magistrates now have specialist domestic violence courts to deal with domestic abuse cases.
- The Probation Service runs programmes to enable perpetrators to recognise and take responsibility for their own abusive behaviour; while also supporting victims.

What can I do?

1) Make sure you find out about current policy and services, if you are not a domestic abuse specialist.
2) Support initiatives to prioritise domestic abuse issues including training.







MYTHS AND FACTS

Myth 1: Domestic violence is always physical

Fact: Domestic violence takes many non physical forms, including verbal, social, racist, psychological, emotional and financial abuse; threats, neglect, harassment and the use of social isolation.

Myth 2: Domestic violence is only an issue for women

Fact: Men are also victims of domestic violence. The 2001/02 British Crime Survey showed that 1 in 6 domestic violence incidents were found to be male victims with just under half of these being committed by a female abuser.

Myth 3: If children don't see it happening they're ok

Fact: Where children are around, nine times out of ten they are in the same room or the next room when violence occurs. So even if they don't see it they hear it, which can be just as traumatic.

Myth 4: Victims are to blame, they provoke the abuser

Fact: Abusers make the choice to hurt. They do not go crazy or lose control, but choose who to hurt, where to hurt, when to hurt and how to hurt to accomplish their ends.

Myth 5: Domestic violence only happens to people on low incomes

Fact: Domestic violence happens to all kinds of families and relationships. Persons of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age and gender can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

Myth 6: It can't be that bad or they would leave

Fact: People stay in abusive relationships for a number of reasons ranging from love to terror, and there also practical reasons why victims don't leave. They may be worried about losing their homes, their possessions and/or their children. They may be afraid of further assaults if they seek help – one of the most dangerous times for a victim is when they try to leave.

Who To Talk To:

Call 999 in an emergency

National Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours)

0808 2000 247

(Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge)

This project has been supported by:

Wiltshire Police

Home Office
BUILDING A SAFE, JUST AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

Wiltshire NHS
Primary Care Trust

National Probation Service
Wiltshire

Wiltshire County Council

Swindon Borough Council

Swindon Women's Refuge

SPLITZ Support Service

NSPCC
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce

Omni productions

glennie communications group

All the people represented in this film and booklet are models and actors.