

JWA SHABBAT PRESENTS

Myth vs Reality

22-23 NOVEMBER 2024

This Shabbat we invite you to join the conversation on common myths about domestic abuse in our community.

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JEWISH WOMEN'S AID

Jewish Women's Aid supports and empowers Jewish women and girls aged 14+ who are experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence.

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Charity No. 1047045

Shabbat shalom!



Welcome to Jewish Women's Aid Shabbat 2024

This year we have chosen a 'Myth vs Reality' theme, because despite the information overload we all experience daily, many core myths about domestic abuse continue to exist.

Our aim is to open conversations and help to reduce the stigma associated with domestic abuse, so we encourage you to read and discuss this with your friends and family.

Misunderstanding of what domestic abuse is, who it happens to and how the Jewish community is affected, prevents us from making the change we need to reduce and even eliminate violence against women and girls. It allows abusive behaviour to persist and creates barriers for those affected to come forward for support. To help break this cycle, the Jewish Women's Aid team has collated these key myths surrounding domestic abuse, along with explanations, with more information available at jwa.org.uk/shabbat.

In this way we can all be part of creating a safer community in which abuse is not tolerated.

Sam Clifford,
Chief Executive Jewish Women's Aid

Our support services

HELPLINE

0808 801 0500

A free phone line

Monday - Thursday 9.30am-9.30pm

WEB CHAT

www.jwa.org.uk/webchat

Monday & Wednesday: 3pm-5pm

Tuesday & Thursday: 10am-12pm

EMAIL

You can send an email to advice@jwa.org.uk. Your message will go straight to someone in our specialist support team.

OTHER SERVICES

0808 2000 247

24 hours National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 500 2222

Rape Crisis Helpline

Our education & training

Gain knowledge and tools to promote a healthy culture in your Jewish organisation or setting.

We offer educational sessions and training for professionals across our community, covering healthy relationships and consent, and domestic abuse. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact outreach@jwa.org.uk.

01

I would know if a good friend was experiencing abuse.

Myth or reality?

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02

Children are not affected by abuse that is directed towards their mother.

Myth or reality?

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03

If the abuse was that bad she would leave.

Myth or reality?

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04

Domestic abuse only happens to certain kinds of people.

Myth or reality?

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01

Myth

Abuse is often hidden, and signs can be subtle, like mood changes, withdrawal, or anxiety. Abusers may isolate, manipulate, or threaten victims to stay silent.

If you suspect abuse, listen, support, and encourage your friend to seek help.

02

Myth

Children witnessing abuse are deeply affected, often experiencing anxiety, depression, and PTSD. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims if they witness abuse. They may feel unsafe and sometimes blame themselves. Therapy and support can help them heal and recover.

03

Myth

There are complex reasons why a woman may stay, including fear of the unknown, financial dependence, guilt, stigma, and concerns about separation from her children. Many know that leaving doesn't guarantee the abuse will stop.

04

Myth

Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of background. However, it disproportionately impacts women—1 in 4 will experience it—and Jewish women are not exempt. Abuse exists across all communities, and women seeking help come from diverse religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

05

Domestic abuse
in the Jewish
community is the
same as in the
wider community.

Myth or reality?

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06

If it's not physical
- it's not domestic
abuse.

Myth or reality?

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07

If a couple
separates,
domestic abuse
ends.

Myth or reality?

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08

Abuse is less
common among
young people.

Myth or reality?

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05

Myth

Jewish women may face unique challenges, including faith-based abuse and community pressures. Abusers might use religious texts to manipulate, deny women access to rabbinical advice, or refuse a Get (religious divorce). Women may also be afraid of being disbelieved and judged by their community.

06

Myth

Domestic abuse includes coercive control, a pattern of psychological, emotional, financial, or other abuse, which may not be physical. This form of abuse manipulates, isolates, and controls the victim, creating a power imbalance and causing long-term harm, even without physical violence.

07

Myth

Abuse can continue after separation. Abusers may use family courts or financial abuse to continue control. Post-separation abuse can persist for years, causing emotional and psychological distress. JWA offers support through legal processes, practical support, and therapy to help women cope.

08

Myth

Young people (16-24 years old) are at the highest risk of experiencing relationship abuse (March 2022, ONS). They often experience coercive control, isolation from her family and friends, stalking via GPS and love-bombing.