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# Love Without Chains

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A Guide to support services and information relating to  
Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Harassment



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## Introduction

Relationships can be many things: a safe place, exciting, intellectually stimulating, providing companionship, a challenge, something to be worked for. A loving relationship can be immensely rewarding and a fulfilling experience with another person.

On the other hand, abusive relationships can be incredibly damaging: physically, emotionally, psychologically. Experiencing abuse be it in the form of domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, stalking or harassment often has severely traumatic repercussions for the survivor.

Whether the abuse occurred recently or long into the past there are sources of support in Oxford; people to talk to, people to help, people who understand. You don't have to suffer in silence.

The purpose of this guide is to make people aware of what 'abuse' is, how to recognise the signs and common reactions and feelings people who have experienced it often have. It also gives advice on how best to support survivors, where survivors can seek extra help and support and provides a list of contacts that may be useful in a range of different circumstances.

Information for how perpetrators can seek help and advice to overcome their abusive behaviour is also included.

The Oxford University Student Union VP (Women) in partnership with Oxford City Council have written this guide and if you have any questions or want further information please contact [women@ousu.org](mailto:women@ousu.org).

## Domestic Abuse. What is it?

The Government defines domestic violence as "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."

1 in 4 women will experience it in their lifetime, and 1 in 6 men. Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling behaviours and can happen to anyone.

Are you in an abusive relationship?

Questions to help you discover if you are experiencing domestic abuse:

1. Are you afraid of your partner?
2. Do you feel isolated, bullied or belittled?
3. Does your partner cut you off from friends or family?
  
4. Does your partner verbally abuse you?
5. Does your partner physically hurt you?
6. Do you feel as if you are walking on eggshells?
  
7. Do you change your behaviour to avoid triggering an incident?
8. Does your partner threaten you or your children?
9. Does your partner control the money?
  
10. Does your partner force you to have sex or make unreasonable demands?
11. Does your partner accuse you of being unfaithful?
12. Does your partner say you are useless and couldn't cope without them?
  
13. Does your partner have sudden changes of mood which dominate the house?
14. Is your partner charming one minute and abusive the next?
15. Are you afraid of making your own decisions?

If you have answered yes to one or more of these questions you may be experiencing Domestic Abuse.

## Common Reactions and Feelings

- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Depression
- Increase in drinking or smoking
- Self-harm
- Loss of appetite or over eating
- Over dependence on the other person
- Embarrassment or shame
- Fear
- Isolated

## Staying

You may have decided to stay in the relationship for any number of reasons. You should take time to consider how you can best keep yourself and any children as safe as possible.

### **Remember they will not change**

1. Keep ensuring any injuries you may have are recorded with someone you can trust such as a GP or a close friend.
2. Ensure you have photos of injuries if possible. These may prove useful in the future if things persist.
3. Join a Freedom Programme Support Group. They will empower you
4. Find someone you can speak to because you may be so affected by the abuse that you cannot make an informed decision as to what you can do.
5. Remember you are not responsible for what someone else does, even if they insist that you are.

## Going

You may have spent time researching your options and have prepared to leave.

1. You should ensure you have gone through the safety plan and taken as much as you need.
2. The most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when a person is leaving or has just left. It is important that you get advice about leaving safely
3. Ensure somebody knows you are leaving and are safe and well.
4. If you haven't already contact a helpline about finding a refuge. They can advise you on what to do next and help keep you safe.

## How to Support A Friend or Family Member

If you suspect or know that a family member, friend or colleague is experiencing domestic abuse then the information below will help you to be supportive. It is important to bear in mind that domestic violence is a crime and unacceptable. The victim is not to blame and has the right to live without fear of abuse.

### Support

- **Be understanding.** Help them to open up and talk, but at their pace. It is important that you believe what they tell you.
- **Be supportive.** Do not judge them but reassure them that it is not their fault and that no one deserves to be treated badly. It may be that they do not recognise that they are in an abusive relationship; therefore it is important to be patient and assure them that you will be there for them.
- **Help to build their self-esteem.** Do not criticise them for staying in the relationship or tell them what to do. Point out their strengths and remind them of how well they are coping. Often abused people feel very isolated; make sure you help them to keep in contact with others.
- **Help them to work out a safety plan.** It is important that the victim decides what is safe and what is not
- **Do not tell them to leave or judge them if they want to stay.** The most dangerous period is when someone is about to or has left an abusive partner. It is important that the victim makes his or her own decision about whether or not to leave. It takes a lot of courage. If they do wish to, then encourage them to contact a local domestic violence agency for support and information.
- **Look after yourself.** Do not offer to speak to the abuser or put yourself in a dangerous position. Seek advice from domestic violence agencies.

### Safety Plan

It is important that the victim of abuse and any children are kept safe. Below is a list of ways to help them achieve this.

- Encourage the victim to develop his or her own safety plan.
- Offer to keep a set of spare keys, an overnight bag and a set of clothing for the victim and any children in case they need to leave their home quickly
- Offer to keep important documents such as passports, birth certificates, driving license and bank details. If they cannot leave you the originals then copies would do.
- Agree a code word that only the two of you know, that would signal an emergency situation in case the victim cannot get help themselves.
- It is not the children's responsibility to protect their parent. If there is a violent incident the children should dial 999 or call an agreed person.
- Find out information and contact details of support agencies in your area. A list of support services can be found at the end of the pamphlet

## Are Concerned About Your Behaviour Towards Your Partner?

The following is a brief summary of information that can be found on the Respect website, [www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

You do not have to beat your partner to be abusive. Abuse is about power and control. Controlling your partner.

Do any of the following statements seem familiar?

“S/he knows how to wind me up”

“ S/he nags me”

“ S/he knows what I am like”

“If only s/he would do/not do something, I wouldn't be abusive”

If they do then it is up to you to take responsibility for your actions. You choose to be abusive and once you accept that then you can make the right changes.

Your behaviour will be having a bad effect on your partner and on your children. It is up to you to address this and stop emotionally/physically hurting them.

If you recognise yourself as an abuser then there is support out there. Find out more by going onto [www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)

## Sexual Abuse: What is it?

Sexual violence includes a range of different behaviours, many of which - such as sexual assault or rape - are crimes.

According to the British Crime Survey, serious sexual assault is most likely to be committed by someone known to the victim (89 per cent of female and 83 per cent of male victims).

Just over half (54%) of female victims reported that a partner or ex-partner had been the offender. (British Crime Survey 2005/06)

## Sexual Violence Myths

**Myth:** Most rapes are committed by strangers

**Reality:** Only 11% of rapes are committed by strangers. 51% are by a partner or ex-partner, and 38% are committed by an acquaintance.

**Myth:** Rape is about sexual gratification

**Reality:** Rape and sexual assault have nothing to do with sexual gratification. The motivating factor for an offender is to control and have power over their victim. Sex is the weapon.

**Myth:** Men cannot control their sexual urges

**Reality:** It is very patronising to men to say that they cannot control themselves. Most men would never sexually violate another person. Sexual violence is a choice made freely by the perpetrator. He can choose at any point to stop. If four burly Police Officers suddenly appeared, as the man was about to rape, he would be able to control his sexual urge then.

**Myth:** Only women can be raped

**Reality:** Men and women can be raped just as perpetrators can be male or female. Any person whatever their age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, economic or marital status can be raped. You are more at risk between the ages of 16 and 24. Of the 14,449 reported rapes in 2004-05 92% of the victims were female and 8% male.

**Myth:** If the victim didn't fight or try to run away, or there was no weapon or injuries sustained, rape did not occur.

**Reality:** Threats of violence are a weapon, and a woman/man may not resist vigorously for fear of injury or death. Some people freeze in these situations, others fight back. Until you are faced with it you do not know how you will react. How people react depends on who the attacker is. Sexual violence is not defined by the physical injuries sustained and it is the psychological injuries that endure the longest. Rape is a non-consensual act of sexual penetration.

**Myth:** Women often falsely accuse men of sexual assault or rape (for example, to get back at them, or because they regret or feel guilty about having sex).

**Reality:** Less than 5% of allegations of rape are false. It is a vastly underreported crime, less than 20% of women will report and even fewer men. Only 6% of reported rapes result in a conviction. That is because there are rarely any independent witnesses to this crime, and is often one person's word against another.

**Myth:** Women who wear provocative clothing are asking for it

**Reality:** Women have the right to dress in anyway they feel comfortable. Her body always belongs to her and no one has any right to touch her without consent.

**Myth:** Male rape only occurs in same sex relationships

**Reality:** Heterosexual and homosexual men can and are sexually assaulted. Men, whatever their sexual orientation, are not brought up to anticipate the possibility of sexual violence the same way women are. This prevalent myth also acts to stop heterosexual men from reporting, as they fear their sexuality may be questioned.

**Myth:** If a woman is raped or sexually assaulted after drinking then she must take part of the responsibility.

**Reality:** The responsibility of a sexual attack lies completely with the attacker, not the victim, irrespective of how much alcohol is consumed. Alcohol is not the cause of sexual assaults, but it does increase the risk of being sexually assaulted, as the victim may be incapable of giving consent or defending himself or herself.

**Myth:** If a male victim ejaculates then he is obviously enjoying it and therefore it is not sexual assault/rape

**Reality:** Penile erections and ejaculation are involuntary physical responses. A rapist will often ensure that the male victim ejaculates as it confuses them. Men equate ejaculation with sexual pleasure. Studies show that men in moments of extreme anxiety do maintain an erection and spontaneously ejaculate.

# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CONSENT

(Koestner & Sokolow)

## Effective Consent is:

- Informed;
  - Freely and actively given;
  - Mutually understandable words or actions;
  - Indicating an agreement to engage in mutually agreed upon (sexual) activity.
- 
- At the heart of the idea of consent is the idea that every person, man or woman, has a right to personal sovereignty, not to be acted upon by someone else in a sexual manner unless he or she gives clear permission to do so.
  - Consent to one form of sexual activity never can imply consent to other forms of sexual activity.
  - Consent requires that the person initiating the sexual activity get permission to do so, and that permission does not exist in the absence of resistance.
  - Passively allowing someone to touch you in a sexual manner is not consent.
  - There is no duty for an alleged victim to fight off or act in any way to stop a sexual aggressor.
  - There are circumstances, as well, where even when consent is given, it is not valid. Consent would be invalid when forced, threatened, intimidated, coerced, when given by a mentally or physically incapacitated person, or when given by a minor.
  - No means no, but nothing also means no. Silence and passivity do not equal permission.
  - Pushing ahead after someone says or indicates "no" crosses the line.
  - Just because someone kisses you doesn't mean it's automatically going any farther.
  - Making someone touch you is as bad as touching someone else, where no consent is given.

## Was it my fault?

Making choices is a constant process, what to have for breakfast, deciding to drive at the speed limit. Some are easier to make than others. Most choices we make do not result in a negative experience. Having a drink and enjoying a sociable evening with friends is pleasant when the evening ends safely tucked up in your own bed. It becomes a terrible

experience if you are raped at the end of it. The fact you chose to have a drink is not a bad choice, we all have the right to drink, and being raped was not your choice. The rapist made a choice about whether or not to force you to engage in a sexual act against your will. The responsibility is solely that of the rapists.

It is important that you change your mind set

'I should not have smiled at him/her'

'Why did I agree to having that drink?'

'I should have fought back'

'Why did I trust them?'

'I should not have taken the short cut through the alley'

'I should not have worn that outfit'

You have every right to drink, to wear what you want, to smile at whom you want to, walk where you want. They are your choices to make. These are everyday choices we make over and over again with very little negative consequences. Some behaviour may make you more vulnerable, like drinking too much, or walking alone at night through alleyways, but still that does not give anyone the right to sexually assault you. The person who sexually assaults makes a clear choice to do it therefore the fault lies totally with them.

Was it your fault? **No.**

## Common Reactions to Sexual Assault

Whether you are a woman or a man there are common reactions to being sexually assaulted. Below are a number of normal reactions that you may experience. However everyone is an individual and no two people will react completely the same.

- **Emotional Shock:** I don't feel anything. I have not cried once since the assault.
- **Disbelief and/or Denial:** Did it really happen? Why me? Maybe I just imagined it. It wasn't really rape.
- **Embarrassment:** What will people think? I can't tell my family or friends. I hope know one finds out about this.
- **Shame:** I have always seen myself as a strong person. I feel as though my skin is crawling. People will think I am promiscuous.
- **Guilt:** It is my fault. I should have fought back. If only I had...
- **Depression:** I do not want to get out of bed. I don't want to talk to anyone. I want to be on my own. I would be better off dead.
- **Powerlessness:** I am unable to make any decisions. I have no control over what happens to me. No one can help me.
- **Disorientation:** I cannot concentrate on anything. I have become very forgetful. Nothing seems right anymore.
- **Flashbacks:** Everywhere I go I see that face. I cannot stop re-living the assault.
- **Fear:** I am scared that they will come back and get me. I do not like being on my own. What if I have a STD or AIDS? I keep having terrible nightmares.
- **Anxiety:** I am keep crying. The slightest thing makes me jumpy. I feel trapped.

- **Anger:** I want to really hurt the person who did this to me. I should not have...
- **Physical Stress:** I am putting on/losing weight. I have constant headaches. I have no interest in sex at all. I am smoking/drinking too much

It is important for you to know that your reactions are **normal and temporary reactions** to an abnormal event. You may experience any or all of the reactions. Although it may be hard to do, talking about the assault will help. In fact, it's common to want to avoid conversations and situations that may remind you of the assault. You may have a sense of wanting to "get on with life" and "let the past be the past." This is a normal part of the recovery process and may last for weeks or months.

Eventually you will need to deal with your feelings in order to heal and regain a sense of control over your life. Talking with someone who can listen and understand whether it's a friend, family member, support organisation or a counsellor is part of this process. It may take some time so do not expect too much from yourself.

## Ways To Take Care of Yourself

- **Get support** from friends and family. Try to identify people you trust to validate your feelings. Spend time with people who care about you and make you feel good about yourself. Try not to isolate yourself.
- **Talk** about the assault and **express** feelings, you can choose when, where, and with whom. You can also decide how much or how little to talk about.
- **Use stress reduction techniques.** Exercise like walking, running, biking, swimming; relaxation techniques like yoga, massage, music, and/or meditation.
- **Maintain a balanced diet and sleep cycle** and **avoid overusing** caffeine, sugar, nicotine, alcohol or other drugs.
- **Take some time to indulge yourself.** Treat yourself to something, for example a new outfit, a day out, a new CD.
- **Try reading.** Reading can be a relaxing, healing activity. Try to find short periods of uninterrupted leisure reading time.
- **Consider writing a diary/journal** as a way of expressing thoughts and feelings.
- **Release** some of the hurt and anger in a healthy way: **Write a letter** about how you feel about what happened to you. Be as specific as you can. You also can **draw pictures** about the anger or hurt you feel as a way of releasing the emotional pain.
- **Remember you are safe**, even if you don't feel it. **The assault is over.** It may take longer than you'd like, but **you will feel better.**
- **Contact a support service.** Support services are confidential; they will listen without judgement and help you to move on.

## How Friends & Family Can Help

After a sexual assault, the victim needs to:

- Get medical attention.
- Feel safe.
- Be believed.
- Know it was not their fault.
- Take control of their life.

Things you can do to help:

- **Listen and don't judge.** Try to simply understand their feelings. Do not ask them why they accepted a drink, why they did not get away. 'Why' questions tend to put the onus of responsibility onto the victim, when it is the perpetrator who is totally responsible.
- **Offer them a safe place.** If possible, stay with them at their place or let them stay at yours.
- **Be there and give comfort.** They may need to talk a lot or at odd hours at the beginning. Be there as much as you can and encourage them to talk to others.
- **Encourage them to seek professional help.** There are support agencies, see the list below.
- **Be patient.** The healing process may take a long time so do not rush it. There will be good and bad days, but talking and being supportive will help.
- **Accept their choice of what to do about the sexual assault.** Ask them what they need, help them list their options, then encourage them to make their own decisions. Even if you disagree. It is very important that they make their own decisions and have them respected.
- **Reporting to the Police.** It is their decision as to whether or not they want to report to the Police. However the Police will be very sensitive and take the allegations seriously. Offer to go with them for support.
- **Put aside your feelings and get support for yourself.** If you feel anger towards the perpetrator or in some way blame the victim or feel overwhelmed by the support you are giving, then find someone else to talk to, a family member, friend or support agency.

## What happens if you go to the Police

### What is a Specially Trained Officer (STO)?

A specially trained officer is a non-uniform wearing police officer. They undergo specialist training to deal with the victims of serious sexual offences.

These serious sexual offences include;

#### **Rape**

- *It is an offence for any male to penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of a female or male without their consent.*

#### **Sexual Assault by Penetration**

- *It is an offence for any male or female to penetrate the vagina or anus of another person without their consent. The offence is committed where the penetration is by a part of the body or anything else.*

#### **Causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent**

- *It is an offence to cause or encourage another person to engage in sexual activity without their consent.*

**Any other sexual offence deemed especially serious by the investigating officer** – such as a sequence of offences in a specific area.

STO's deal with male and female victims aged 18 and over. There are 14 male and female STO's across the force.

There is always a STO available and they work within a rotational shift pattern.

When a report of serious sexual assault is made to the Police a STO becomes involved at the earliest opportunity. They work closely with forensically trained doctors and organise forensic medical examinations of the victim.

STO's are trained in taking detailed statements. These are normally taken after a medical examination. Statements are usually taken in a video or DVD format for this type of offence.

If a person is sexually assaulted there is a narrow time frame to obtain forensics. It is therefore important that the forensic examination takes place ASAP. The max time limit is 7-10 days but this depreciates with washing and wiping. A preferable time limit is within a few hours. A medical examination is similar to a smear test.

We also use an Early Evidence Kit to obtain forensics as early as possible

The examinations take place at a specific 'examination suite.' This is of a very similar set up to an everyday house and is not part of the police station. From the outside the suites look like normal houses. We will always aim to take the victim to their nearest suite.

After the initial investigation a STO will act as a point of contact for that person. We facilitate pre-court visits and act as a means of communication between the victim and CID. Victims can also call us if they have any concerns or issues regarding their investigation. We will also provide details of local counselling and support groups such as rape crisis and victim support.

If you do come into contact with a person who has been sexually assaulted and **considering calling the police**; we would ask you to inform them of the following.

- 1) Ask them to call the police ASAP on 999 if an emergency or on the non-emergency number 08458505505
- 2) Retain all clothing worn at the time of the offence
- 3) Tell them not to wash or wipe any areas touched by the suspect
- 4) If oral penetration has occurred, brushing of teeth, drinking and smoking can lessen the chances of obtaining forensics
- 5) Make sure they are in a safe place
- 6) Tell them not to drink any or further alcohol
- 7) Seek medical help if needed
- 8) The victim will need to be prepared to undertake a forensic medical examination and provide a statement if they consent to do this

## Safety Tips

### Out partying

- Getting drunk or taking drugs can dull your senses, which can be extremely dangerous to your personal safety.
- Make sure you plan in advance how you are going to get home. The ideal plan is to book your taxi in advance or, if you have the number of a licensed cab company with you, call from the party before leaving the venue. Alternatively ask your host or staff at the club or bar to recommend one.
- Beware of spiked drinks.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.

### Taxis

- Do not hail a minicab from the street or accept a lift from a minicab touting for trade: the driver could be anyone. Book a cab over the phone and when the cab arrives ask the driver his name and company. Ask what name he is expecting to collect.

- Always try to share a cab with a friend.
- If necessary walk to the nearest minicab office, keeping to well-lit streets and walking against the traffic and in sight of other people whenever possible.
- Always sit in the back of a cab and if you get chatting to the driver do not give away personal details. If you feel uneasy with the driver, ask him to stop at a busy familiar place and get out.

## Public transport

- If using public transport, have your ticket, pass or change ready in your hand so that your wallet is out of sight.
- Always wait for the bus or train in a well-lit place near other people if possible and try to arrange for someone to meet you at the bus stop or station.
- If a bus is empty or it is after dark, stay on the lower deck as near as possible to the driver.
- If you feel threatened make as much noise as possible to attract the attention of the driver or guard.

## On foot

- Avoid danger spots like quiet or badly lit alleyways, subways or isolated car parks. Walk down the middle of the pavement if the street is deserted.
- Whenever possible, walk with a friend or stay near a group of people.
- Avoid passing stationary cars with their engines running and people sitting in them.
- Always take the route you know best and stick to well lit, busy streets.
- Look confident. Bullies tend to choose victims who look like an easy target.
- Keep your mind on your surroundings: when wearing a walkman you will not hear trouble approaching.
- Be careful when using a cashpoint machine. Do not count your money in the middle of the street.
- If you think you are being followed, trust your instincts and take action. As confidently as you can, cross the road turning as you do to see who is behind you. If you are still being followed, cross again. Keep moving. Make for a busy area and report to anyone who may be able to help you.
- If a vehicle pulls up suddenly alongside you, turn and walk in the other direction: you can turn much faster than a car.
- Never accept a lift with a stranger or someone you don't know very well even if you are wet, tired or very late.
- Place valuables such as wallets in an inside pocket or use a body belt. If you are carrying things, use a small bag slung across your body under a jacket or coat. Ensure it sits close to your body.

- Avoid confrontation. Do not meet aggression with aggression, as this is likely to escalate the situation. Talk your way out of problems, stay calm, speak gently, slowly and clearly. Breathe out slowly to help you relax.
- If you are trapped or in danger, yell or scream. Your voice is your best defence. Shout, 'Phone the police' or other specific instructions which people can understand easily.

### **Always carry in your pocket**

- A mobile, a phonecard or some spare change to make a phone call.
- A couple of numbers for reputable cab firms in your area/ area you go out.
- Money, keys and travel cards.
- If possible carry a personal alarm and know how to use it to shock and disorientate an assailant so that you can get away.

## Stalking and Harassment

Definitions:

### Harassment

Harassment includes conduct directed at, or towards, an individual by another that causes a victim to fear violence may be used against them or another person, or causes the victim to feel afraid, alarmed or distressed. (ACPO 2008)

### Stalking

Stalking is not a legal term used in the context of the criminal justice system. It is a colloquial term used to describe a particular kind of harassment. It is normally used to describe a long-term pattern of persistent and repeated following of, communication with or other intrusions on the privacy of a victim. In many cases the conduct might appear innocent if taken in isolation, but when it is linked, as a course of conduct may be sufficient to cause alarm, harassment or distress to the victim and amount to harassment. The term stalking is often used in the media to describe cases where the suspect is a stranger or an acquaintance of the victim or has had only a brief intimate relationship with the victim. (ACPO 2008)

## The Protection of Harassment Act (1997)

The Act introduced two new criminal offences –

Section 2 summary offence: conduct that amounts to harassment of another. This is punishable by up to 6 months in prison or a maximum fine of £5,000, or both  
Section 4 either-way offence: where the victim fears that violence will be used. This is punishable by up to 5 years in prison or an unlimited fine, or both

For both offences there must be a 'course' of conduct, which is defined as 'conduct on at least two occasions'. The court has the power to make a restraining order against those convicted in order to prevent a repetition of the harassment.

### **Behaviour by the suspect can include:**

- Following someone about
- Making phone calls
- Unwanted contact through social networking sites
- Hanging about outside their home
- Sending (unwanted) letters or cards
- Hanging about outside their place of work or study
- Persistent staring or looking
- Making silent phone calls
- Making obscene phone calls

- Physical intimidation, such as threats of violence
- Sending text messages or emails
- Threatening friends or family
- Sending (unwanted) items, such as gifts
- Stealing things from the person
- Approaching friends or family
- Actual physical force or violence
- Forcing them into sexual acts
- Damaging property
- Intercepting their mail

### **What to do if you are being harassed:**

- Talk to someone and get support. Harassment can also be called psychological grievous bodily harm
- Keep a record of everything, times, dates, details of what has happened and any witnesses to the harassment. Do it as soon as possible after an incident whilst it is fresh in your mind
- Keep any evidence, for example emails, letters as they may be useful later
- If possible do not engage with the person harassing you
- Rely on your own instincts, if it does not feel right then it probably is not
- Contact the Police, it is a criminal offence
- Remember it is not your fault

### **How to support someone who is being harassed**

- Listen to them and do not judge
- Encourage them to get professional help
- Do not minimise what is happening
- Encourage them to keep a diary of everything
- Take the harassment/stalking seriously
- Find out as much information as you can on what it is

## Keeping safe on the Internet

- Never reveal your personal home address or contact details on the Internet.
- Password protect all of your personal accounts including mobile, emails, Internet accounts. Change the password regularly and do not use anything that can easily be answered by another person
- Conduct an Internet search using your name to make sure that there is nothing out there that you are not aware of. A internet stalker may have set up blogs or accounts using your name
- Be suspicious of any incoming emails, telephone calls or texts that ask you for your identification information
- Never give out your national insurance number unless you are absolutely sure of who is asking and why.
- If you are leaving or have recently split up with a partner, especially if they were abusive, then change all of your passwords to something they cannot guess. Even if you think your ex-partner is 'okay' it is good practice for moving forward
- If you think you have a stalker act quickly, do not respond to them and follow the above advice.

## Support

Police (non-emergency) 0845 8 505 505  
In an emergency dial 999

### Domestic Abuse

Oxfordshire Helpline (Women & Men) 0800 731 0055

National 24hr Helpline 0800 2000 247

Victim Support Oxfordshire (Women & Men) 0845 450 3883

Broken Rainbow (LGBT) 0845 260 4460

Respect (perpetrators only) 0845 122 8609

### Sexual Violence

Oxford Rape Crisis (Women only) 01865 726295

AMSOSA (Men only) 0845 430 9371

Victim Support Oxfordshire (Women & Men) 0845 450 3883

### Harassment & Stalking

Suzy Lamplugh Trust 020 7091 0014

Network for Surviving Stalking [www.nss.org.uk](http://www.nss.org.uk)