

Sample Helpline Call 2

Call from a survivor experiencing psychological and emotional abuse

The helpline worker responded to a voicemail message left by a woman asking for a call back. The woman had two young children and described being in a controlling and psychologically abusive relationship with the father of her children. She lived with, but was not married to, the perpetrator and wanted to end the relationship but was unsure of how to go about doing so.

The woman had not spoken to anyone before about what was happening and was upset talking about it for the first time. She had been unable to discuss it with her friends or family for fear of judgement and them not believing her, as she had been told repeatedly by the perpetrator that she was the abusive one and everything was her fault.

She had been reluctant to call the helpline as she was unsure that it was abuse she was experiencing, as there was no physical abuse, however, she went on to describe ongoing control and psychological abuse. The helpline worker was able to validate her experiences and concerns by letting her know that she was experiencing domestic abuse.

The woman went on to describe further abuse. The woman was very limited in where she could go; she could only leave the property with her partner's permission.

He had isolated her from friends and family as they had moved away due to his work. The perpetrator told the woman on a daily basis that she was ugly, not good enough and a bad mother.

On one occasion he had pinned her against the wall and shouted in her face. The next day he had been apologetic, told her that he loved her and promised to get help, for which he never did.

The perpetrator would monitor the woman's calls, had put a tracker on her phone and had her passwords to her email and Facebook account.

He threatened that if she was ever to leave he would call social services and tell them that she was an incompetent mother due to her suffering from depression.

The woman had previously approached the council for help but had not had the children with her. As a result, the council said she was not a priority; that they could put her on the waiting list but it could take up to two years for a property to become available for a single woman. She explained that she didn't have the children with her due to the perpetrator not letting them go, but the council still would not help.

women's aid

until women & children are safe

The helpline worker discussed the option of refuge accommodation. The woman didn't want to move as she had a full time job which she didn't want to leave, and she didn't want to disrupt the children by moving them to a different school. The woman ideally wanted to remain in the property. She did, however, understand the importance of her safety and her children's well-being, and if she had to leave then she would. She had previously asked the perpetrator to leave and he had refused.

The helpline worker discussed Non Molestation orders and Occupation Orders, and suggested this may be an option to remove the perpetrator from the property. The helpline worker gave the woman a contact number to obtain some legal advice and practicalities around this.

The helpline worker did a search for the woman's local domestic abuse service and suggested she contact them for support in taking out an injunction or any other practical or emotional support her and her children may require. The helpline worker encouraged the woman to consider contacting other professionals such as the police, her GP and social services in order to access more support in her situation and to document the abuse. The woman did not want to contact social services at this stage, but agreed that contacting her GP and the police would be a positive step to access more support.

The helpline worker gave the woman a Caller ID. She was reminded that she could contact the helpline at any time should she require any further information. The helpline worker reassured the woman that she had done the right thing in reaching out for help and reminded her that there was always the option of refuge if needed.

The woman seemed more confident at this point that was she was describing was abuse and seemed more determined to end the relationship.

Call duration: 19 minutes