

To support children and young people:

- Empower the woman to protect herself, and you are enabling her to protect her children
- Be aware of domestic abuse and its effect on children and young people
- Listen to what they have to say - what they want
- Allow them to take things at their own pace, with respect for their feelings
- Challenge in positive ways (e.g. they weren't to blame for dad's behaviour)
- Provide support and services which takes account of children's cultural/ethnic needs. Be aware that their needs are varied and may be affected by factors such as age, race and disability
- Assess the child/young person's immediate safety needs
- Develop a personal safety plan with the child, which reflects their age and understanding
- Provide services to help them and their mothers live in a safe environment away from the abuse
- Provide resources to minimise disruption in their lives
- Provide services to help them recover from the experience of abuse e.g. confidential services where they can talk about their experiences and discuss possible courses of action, advocacy services, support groups, play work. Evidence suggests that children's recovery and well-being can be aided by greater openness about their experiences. (Harris, Hendriks, Black and Kaplan 1993, in *Making an Impact*)
- Involve children/young people in shaping and supporting services
- Staff in agencies such as social work and housing as well as legal services should be aware of legislation related to domestic abuse, e.g. about the power of the courts and transferring a tenancy to the non-abusing parent
- Agencies should develop appropriate policies to ensure their practice does not undermine women's strategies to protect themselves and their children

From: Scottish Women's Aid *Reaching Out: Women's Aid in a Rural Area*, East Fife Women's Aid
Domestic Abuse Good Practice Guidelines by Fife Council Social Work Services
'It hurts me too' by Alex Saunders *Making an Impact - children and domestic violence. A Reader* by Marion Hester, Chris Pearson and Nicola Harwin