



Berkshire Women's Aid

Family Choices

against domestic abuse
bwa



Family Choices

- Psychoeducational content - 25 sessions
- Motivational interviewing/stages of change
- One to one sessions – in person or video
- Integrated survivor support with a dedicated worker – risk assessment, safety, advocacy, emotional support, psychoeducational content
- Group work for survivors
- Support for children and young people
- Multi-agency working/coordinated community response



Eligibility criteria

- Aged 18 and over
- Reading based families
- Must meet the definition of domestic abuse
- The participant must have consented to the referral
- The participant must have demonstrated a desire to participate and the appropriate motivations
- There must be no active police investigations or pending court cases for domestic abuse related offences
- The participant must not pose a high risk of harm to the survivor or children
- The participant must be willing to share details about their current relationship
- The participant must be able to engage with the programme



Deselection criteria

- Regular attendance/appropriate conduct
- Willing to participate/appropriate motivations
- No police investigations
- Further incidents of abuse/increase in risk – including feedback from survivor
- Failure to disclose a new relationship
- Participant welfare



Case study

Tony and Kayleigh are a couple in their 30s who have five children, not all of whom were residing with them at the point they were referred to BWA by Children's Social Care.

Both individuals disclosed support needs around alcohol use and Tony had a history of self-harm. Kayleigh disclosed that she was a survivor of CSA and neglect, working through her experiences, trauma and recovery from alcohol dependency.

There was a history of significant domestic abuse and high level physical assaults. The case had been heard at MARAC on multiple occasions. At the point of referral, both Tony and Kayleigh reported have stopped using alcohol use and that there had been a reduction in physical abuse.



Case study

Tony's engagement was positive from the start. He maintained regular attendance at his appointments and was reflective in his approach, drawing on learning from the Freedom Programme online. During the course of the programme, Tony continued to abstain from alcohol use and secured full time employment.

Kayleigh worked with the BWA Partner Support Worker and undertook work around the stages of change, impacts of alcohol use in cases of domestic abuse, communication, coercive-control and ACEs, as well as risk assessment and safety planning. Kayleigh reported that she was mistrusting of professionals and skeptical of their involvement.



Case study

On completion of the programme, Tony said:

“I feel that I have been educated and that it has changed me as a person in regards to the domestic abuse situation... I think that my partner now feels safer being around me and that I have moved towards the end goal of being non-abusive...It has helped me to learn to communicate more effectively... and [helped me] learn that I need to be a better role model.”



Case study

Kayleigh also reported a positive impact from the programme:

“I feel that the support has helped equip us with a better understanding of our situations and we have both learnt new tools to manage our own emotions and understand ourselves better, therefore we can assess a situation by using communication skills and dealing with it at the time, by not blaming each other, fix it and move on; we are closer than ever now.”

“For my wellbeing it was important for me to learn a different processing of emotions and the Stage of Change showed me how I was managing and have adjusted to break a cycle we both had. [Tony] and I now support and work with each other rather than against each other.”



Case study

“I have been able to reflect with you to gain a better understanding of my own needs therefore realised I was always last and that I need to be first and it’s important to make my needs met, this was really empowering to learn for me.”

“It was a positive experience for me in the end and first dreaded the calls but felt you listened to me; [Tony and I] both had a positive experience.. I had felt comfortable and managed to drop my guard with you and discussed a lot that I had kept hidden.. it made me think and reflect on my life and growing up. I enjoyed the Stage of Change discussion as I did not realise how far I had come; it was empowering and made me realise how important I was.”