

## **Getting on Better e-learning Module 2: Recognising domestic abuse**

### **Cultural awareness**

When working with parental relationships, it is useful to be aware of the parent's cultural background and any religious beliefs which might affect the relationship dynamics. This can make a difference in the parent's characteristics, history, values, and beliefs. The way they behave in their relationship may differ from those in other ethnic or cultural groups.

Being sensitive around this is fundamental to creating a healthy working relationship with the parents. They need to feel comfortable discussing their relationship with you, as well as any other issues that come up.

Being culturally sensitive does not mean accepting abusive behaviours within relationships where abuse might be normalised – it means understanding differences and being respectful of them. Continue to report and carry out procedures and protocols of any abuse detected.

### **Cultural barriers**

#### **'Honour'-based abuse**

This is abuse which takes place in communities or families whose beliefs and values normalise the abuse the victim is experiencing because of history, religion, or honour. The victim is often abused by the whole family, not just their partner, risking isolation from the family if they seek help.

#### **Family structures**

In some families there is a gendered hierarchical status. The victim is conditioned by their partner and family to believe that the abuse they are experiencing is acceptable and normalised.

#### **Immigration status**

Perpetrators manipulate the victim with their immigration status, use it to prevent them from seeking support or refuge. The perpetrator may threaten that the victim will lose their children, and that they will be deported or evicted if they seek help.

#### **Language barriers**

When a victim is unable to speak English, or if English is a foreign language, they may become dependent on their perpetrator to translate for them.

#### **Cultural insensitivities and institutional racism**

UK evidence suggests that direct and indirect experiences of institutional racism and cultural insensitivity within the police and other organisations can lead to a lack of trust in public services and a reluctance to report or disclose abuse.

Some evidence (mostly from research conducted in England) suggests that minoritised ethnic women who have reported domestic abuse to the police have sometimes been met with unresponsive, unsympathetic, culturally-insensitive, or racist responses.

Police and other services can sometimes overlook domestic abuse due to 'race anxiety' – a fear of being seen to be culturally insensitive or racist – or a misunderstanding of gender-based violence in minoritised ethnic communities as a predominantly cultural or private issue.

### **Specialist 'by and for' services**

When dealing with domestic abuse, victims from ethnic and minority backgrounds have found that support and services do not seem available for their needs.

This evidence was gathered from *Minoritised Ethnic Women's Experiences of Domestic Abuse and Barriers to Help-Seeking: A Summary of the Evidence*, published 7 August 2024.

## **Useful links**

[Refuge – culturally adapted services](#)

Culturally adapted services for black and minoritised women.

[Rise](#)

Support and links for black and minoritised communities.