



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

Women's Aid Case Studies Domestic Violence and Covid-19

Sharon

42-year-old Sharon* is mum to 12-year-old Sam and 6-year-old Ava. She is continuing to work from home during the Covid-19 pandemic but is finding the situation increasingly more difficult and desperate as she is locked into the house with her abusive husband all day and night and has been unable to hide or escape, even for short amounts of time. Prior to the lockdown, her husband was aggressive and controlling but since the lockdown, he has become more volatile.

She says:

"I feel like I'm being monitored by my husband 24/7. He takes every opportunity he can to undermine and control me. He constantly intrudes on my work calls and conversations and I feel like I've no choice but to put up with his unacceptable behaviour all day, every day because I'm literally locked inside the house with him. It's unbearable and I constantly feel frightened and vulnerable. One evening, I was preparing dinner, cooking the children's favourite meal, when he suddenly attacked me and started to choke me. I was so afraid; I didn't know what to do. I was too scared to ring the Guards because I didn't want the children to get upset and I was worried about what my husband might do when released by the Guards. But, I decided to ring the Women's Aid National Freephone Helpline for support and they helped me in securing emergency refuge for both myself and the children. I'm so thankful for their support."

Agnes

Agnes is 78 and has sadly suffered emotional, physical and financial abuse throughout her entire married life. Though her husband is now 80, she continues to endure his abuse and remains terrified of him. To make matters worse, her 58-year-old son recently returned to the family home and he has become increasingly more abusive in his behaviour towards her too.

Agnes told us:

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, D02 RR27

Tel: 01-6788858

Email: info@womensaid.ie

24hr National Freephone

Helpline **1800 341 900**

womensaid.ie

Directors of Women's Aid: Bethany Lynch (British), Maura McLaughlin, Rachel Mullen, Ursula Regan (Chair), Ailbhe Smyth, and Nusha Yonkova.

Women's Aid is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a registered office at 5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2, D02 RR27. Women's Aid is also a charity (Charity Reg No. 20012045), our Companies Registration Office number is 58035 and our CHY number is 6491.



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“He refuses to contribute financially and demands that I wait on him hand and foot. Whenever I’ve asked him to help, he has got angry and aggressive with me, shouting things like “you owe me, you old bitch” and “you’ve never done anything for me, so why should I do anything for you?”

With the Covid-19 lockdown, the situation has become even more unbearable as I feel completely trapped, suffocated and I’m frightened of telling anyone in case matters escalate and the situation gets even worse. My two other children both live abroad and I don’t want to worry or upset them so I don’t tell them any of what is going on. But, having not seen my friends in weeks, I’m feeling very alone and isolated. My son is at home all the time now and there is literally nowhere to escape from the abuse of both my husband and my son. I feel like the only way out is to die.

The stress and intensity of the situation is making me feel hopeless and desperate. I’ve started having flashbacks of some of the worst attacks from my husband and it is giving me panic attacks. I’ve thought about ending my own life just to escape the situation.”

Desperate for emotional support, she rang the Women’s Aid National Freephone Helpline and is grateful to know that there is someone on the line who listens and understands. She is too afraid to seek a safety order against her husband or her son. But she is worried about what all this added stress and abuse is doing to her mental health so she might talk to her GP and will stay in contact with Women’s Aid for continue support and reassurance.

Elke

Elke* has been in an abusive relationship since marrying her husband four years ago. Since the Covid-19 imposed lockdown, she has been minding their one-year-old daughter and working full-time from home, which has begun to take its toll on her mental health. She is finding being confined to the house with her husband all day a living nightmare. She told us: “He makes me feel like a servant, demanding I cook, clean, and have sex with him when and as he pleases. I’ve tried refusing, but he doesn’t listen and threatens to beat me so badly that no one would recognise me. He’s twice my size and I know the damage his fists have caused me in the past, so I feel like I’ve no other choice but to do whatever he asks. I’m terrified of him but I don’t know what to do or where to turn. None of my friends or family live in Ireland so I feel completely alone and isolated.”

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“I’m desperate to leave the relationship with my daughter but I’m scared of what my husband might do to us. I’d like to secure a safety or barring order against him but I’m scared I won’t be believed without solid proof.”

Elke is continuing to seek support from the Women’s Aid National Freephone Helpline, who are supporting her and helping her to apply for a safety order against her husband.

**All names changed and details amended to protect identities and privacy.*

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