

# Lesson 1

What is 'relationship abuse'?



# Learning objectives and outcomes

## Objective

To learn:

- how to identify relationship abuse
- how to access support

## Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- explain what is meant by 'relationship abuse'
- identify the different types of abuse that can affect relationships
- describe ways to get help with relationship abuse

# Starter activity

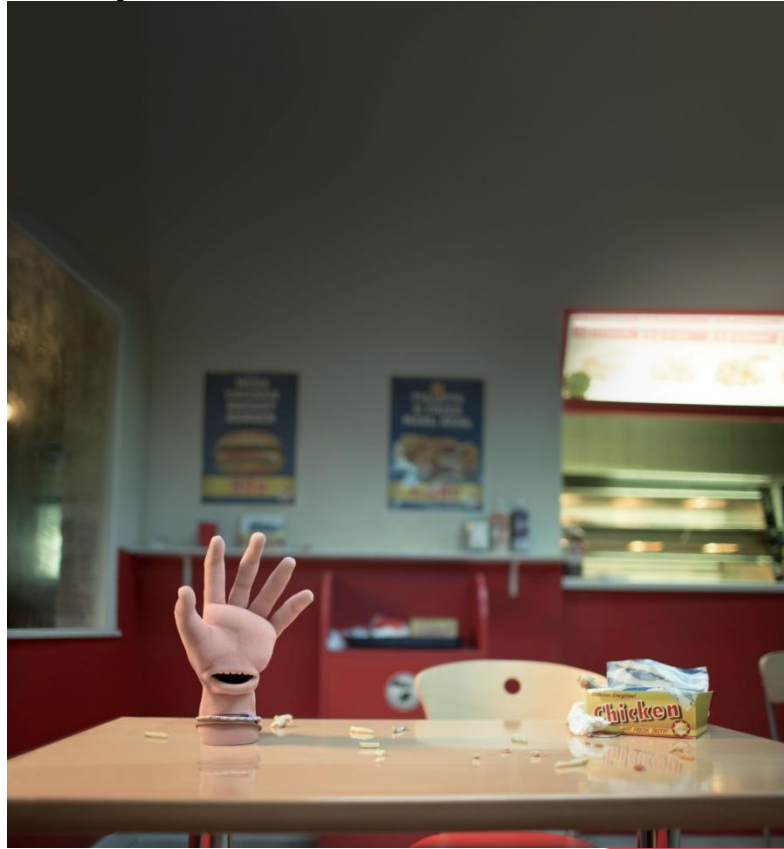
## Brainstorm in pairs/groups:

- the features of a healthy, positive relationship
- the feelings of those in a healthy, positive relationship



# Understanding relationship abuse

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObvC12uJa6A>



# Understanding relationship abuse

## After viewing the film, discuss:

- what are your initial thoughts?
- what do you think about the way the characters (puppets) in the film are behaving?
- what do you think about the behaviours which were mentioned in the film?

## Further discussion of the film:

- What kinds of abusive or disrespectful (unhealthy) behaviours does the film show?
- When two people are attracted to one another, can one of them still be abusive towards the other (or both towards one another)?

# Understanding healthy and unhealthy behaviours

- What is the difference between abusive behaviour versus having a 'normal' healthy argument?
- A 'normal' healthy disagreement can happen between people who feel able to express their views and opinions, but also respect those of others. A healthy disagreement normally involves negotiation, and no one emerges as the 'winner' or the 'loser'.



# Emotional vs. physical abuse

## Where do you stand?

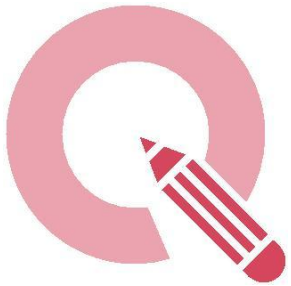
- It isn't really abuse if it's not physical
- It is sometimes justified to hit your partner during an argument
- Physical abuse is more serious than emotional abuse

*Emotional abuse is just as serious as physical abuse, as the impacts can be just as long-lasting*



# Understanding controlling behaviour

1. Discuss the controlling behaviours you saw in the film.
2. In your groups/pairs, write TRUE or FALSE on each statement and discuss as a whole class





# True or false key points I

- Relationship abuse happens when one person hurts or bullies another person with whom they are in a relationship.
- The abuser is always responsible; no one else is to blame.
- Abuse can happen between people of any age, nationality, religion, race or family background
- Abuse can happen between young people in different types of relationships (e.g. boyfriend and girlfriend, parent and child etc.), whether they live together or separately
- Abuse can also happen after a relationship has finished
- People can use physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse to control others

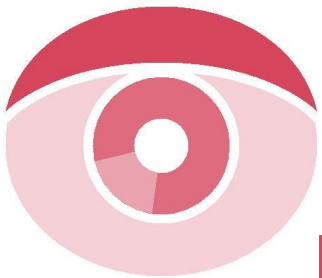
## True or false key points II

- While women are usually the targets of abuse in heterosexual relationships, men can also be targets of abuse, and often find it harder to seek help
- Abuse can happen in same-sex relationships and in relationships involving a trans person, and may in such cases have its own unique characteristics: e.g. threatening to 'out' someone as lesbian, gay, bi or trans; pressuring someone to 'prove' their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Abuse within relationships is often a repeated pattern of behaviour
- Abuse often involves several different types of abusive behaviour, including physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse
- People who use controlling behaviour are more likely to go on to use violence, or are already doing so.

# Warning signs and asking for help

**Write your responses to these questions on the post-its:**

- What are the warning signs that someone might be in an abusive relationship?
- What stops people asking for help?
- Why might a target of abuse find it difficult to leave an abusive partner or take other action to protect themselves? (think about the practical and emotional consequences of leaving or taking action)



# Plenary and reflection on the learning

- Do you feel differently about anything as a result of what you have seen and heard in this session?
- Has anything surprised or shocked you?
- Can you describe what 'abuse' is?
- If someone you knew was experiencing any form of abuse would you know how to get help?
- Do we have a responsibility to help someone who is being abused or is it 'up to them'? What might happen if we do nothing? How might we feel about that?
- How can someone end an abusive relationship? What could happen if they didn't?
- What might stop someone seeking help with an abusive relationship? What might encourage them to seek help?