**Domestic Abuse**

**Case Studies**

**Scenario A - Stephanie’s account:**

*This is a true account of a female survivor of Domestic Abuse*

I met K when I was 30, he was unlike any man I’d met before – he was charming, made me laugh, and was very attentive. He told his mother that I was ‘beautiful and clever’.

One or two aspects of his behaviour, early on in our relationship, should have set the alarm bells ringing in my head, but they didn’t. He’d get angry at the slightest thing, for instance, but would soon apologise and make some excuse – he was tired, or he’d been under stress at work. I found out that he had also overspent on his credit card, but he said that he was paying it off little by little. I believed everything he told me.

A year or so after we married, K persuaded me to move – hadn’t we outgrown my small house? We bought a new home together and spent years transforming it. Not once did it occur to me that I’d gone from 100 per cent ownership of my home to 50 per cent ownership and that K had gone from 0 per cent ownership to 50 per cent.

Fifteen years into our marriage I began to notice significant changes in K’s behaviour. He became secretive, going behind my back and then becoming angry when I found out and challenged him about his behaviour – which usually involved other women. He would pick arguments with strangers in the street and he managed to alienate most of our neighbors. Throughout all this, I continued to support him. The vows I had made when I married him weren’t meant to be broken; I was a loyal, faithful wife who accepted my lot in life. Some people had happy marriages, some not so happy.

When I told him I was leaving him, K became very emotional. He said he couldn’t live without me and he threatened to commit suicide if I left. I know now that this is typical of emotional abuse, but at the time I was afraid he’d go through with it and that I’d have his death on my conscience for the rest of my life.

Things became so bad between us that I took time off work and went to stay with my sister. While I was with her, K pestered me nonstop, again threatening to kill himself if I didn’t return. I was emotionally drained, and returned to a supposedly repentant K. I told him that I saw only a few options, one of which was divorce. He said he didn’t want a divorce and that if I’d take early retirement we could move away and have a fresh start. I agreed.

All I can say, with hindsight, is that he was good at putting on an act. Whenever I became angry, he’d accuse me of backing him into a corner and would grab hold of the kitchen surface, saying it made him feel safe, or he’d take hold of a knife and make as if to hand it to me, inviting me to tell his doctor that he was ‘mental’.

**Notes;**

**Scenario 1 (Part 1) – Jamie**

A youth worker is mentoring a young person at church; Jamie aged 15. Jamie has shared that his dad can be quite unpredictable and short-tempered. Jamie said that the other day, on their way home from church, his dad made the whole family get out of the car and left them to make their own way home. Jamie says he never knows what mood his dad will be in and he sometimes feels so scared and unsure what to do.

**What are the key issues and concerns ?**

**What advice would you give or what would you do ?**

**Scenario 2 (Part 1) – Kelly and Charlie**

Kelly and Charlie have been dating for over a year, both were married previously, and they have teenaged children. They recently announced their engagement and shared that they would be getting married quite quickly, in just 8 weeks. Kelly shares with a close friend that Charlie has been talking about money a lot (the lack of it), saying they don’t need to have a big ceremony and should have a very small and intimate ceremony. In fact, it appears that Charlie has become increasingly angry about what Kelly is spending their money on. Kelly shares further that Charlie has suggested that they should move to a new house in a new city soon after they get married saying it would be good to get a fresh start, but this would mean uprooting the children from their schools.

**What are the key issues and concerns ?**

**What advice would you give or what would you do ?**

**Scenario 1 (Part 2) - Jamie**

It’s early morning and Jamie calls you unexpectedly. He sounds quite distressed and tells you that he doesn’t know what to do. He shares that his mum and dad have had an argument; they were shouting and screaming at each other and he heard things being smashed. He thinks his dad has hit his mum and she has now locked herself in the bathroom. His dad has left the house and said he’ll be back tonight after work. Jamie says that he is scared and worried about how his dad will be when he returns home. The conversation is cut short and Jamie says he’s got to go because he can hear his mum coming down the stairs.

**What are the key issues and concerns ?**

**What advice would you give or what would you do ?**

**Scenario 2 (Part 2) – Kelly and Charlie**

It’s one week before the wedding and Kelly has shared with you thoughts about calling the whole wedding off. Kelly has talked about feeling so guilty for attending the church home group and for going out with friends as Charlie always makes such a big deal of it. Furthermore, Charlie is highly critical of Kelly’s children and insists that there is absolute peace around the dining table for every meal going as far as to say that Kelly has not brought them up with good table manners and respect and they could do with being whipped into shape.

Kelly shared that she has spoken to their Pastor who was very unsympathetic, suggesting prayer would be the best course of action and that it will all be fine once they are married.

**What are the key issues and concerns ?**

**What advice would you give or what would you do ?**

**Exploring Theology**

**Exercise 1 - The safest place of all**

**Taking Eden as the safest place for men and women, what would be some of the characteristics of such a place and the relationships within?**

**Part A - Genesis 1:26-31 (NIV)**

26Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’

27So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them

28God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’

29Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

30And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

**Part B - Genesis 2:7-8, 18, 20-25 (NIV)**

**7**Then the Lord God **formed a manfrom the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being**. **8**Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed…

**18**The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”…

**20**So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

**21**So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. **22**Then the Lord**God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man,** and he brought her to the man.**23**The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones
    and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
    for she was taken out of man.”

**24**That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. **25**Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

**Exercise 2 – Consequences of The Fall**

**Read the section of scripture allocated to your group:**

**What are some of the characteristics of the relationships after the fall?**

**Genesis 3:7-24 (NIVUK)**

**Part A**

**7**Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

**8**Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9**But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

**10**He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

**11**And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

**Part B**

**12**The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

**13**Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

**14**So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock  and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. **15**And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+3&version=NIV)] your head, and you will strike his heel.”

**Part C**

16To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;    with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” 17To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

**Part D**

**20**Adamnamed his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.**21**The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. **22**And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” **23**So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. **24**After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

**How can the Church be part of the solution?**

How can your church or churches you are connected to be part of the solution?

Plot out some next steps either individual or in your small groups.

Look at the Restored Church pack page 37 - 39 for guidance i.e. The domestic abuse charter and self-assessment form.

**My Action Plan:**

**What do I need to do?**

**Who needs to be involved?**

**What is the timescale?**

**How will I know it’s been achieved?**

**If there’s one thing I’ve learnt......**

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**Write your own notes here:**