

Safeguarding Text Message around Domestic Abuse

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As you are no doubt aware, this period of heightened emotional and financial stress, along with restrictions on leaving the house is thought to be greatly increasing the risk of Domestic Abuse but although there has been a rise in the incidence of domestic homicide this is not matched by the expected rise in presentations to support services. ([The Staying Safe service in Calderdale](#) currently report the usual number of presentations but with greater complexity and risk).

We are looking for ways to reach out to those who may be in need of support but struggling to access it and this week the LMC approved the idea of GPs sending a universal text to all patients - we would be grateful if you would consider participating in this initiative.

The body of the text is below, we realise you may want to put an introduction to explain where it comes from and/or that it is being sent to all patients, but urge that you keep this as short as possible so the patients don't miss the important part lower down. (eg "greetings from xx practice to all our patients")

Also you will note there is a suggestion at the end that the patient could ring the practice if they are not sure what to do - this is also so that a victim who is being controlled/watched can make an apparently 'innocent' phone call without arousing suspicion. We are attaching the IRIS guide for practices with advice for staff on speaking to DA victims safely.

Body of text below:

We want you to know that we're still here to look after you whenever you need us and we'd be happy to consult with you by phone or video and not just for coronavirus-related queries. Please use our usual phone number if you need our help.

Lockdown will be a difficult time for many people but YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE IN YOUR HOME. If someone is making you feel unsafe or seems to be controlling aspects of your life in any way, physical, psychological, financial or sexual, please check <http://calderdalestayingssafe.org.uk/> or call 01422 323339 9-5 (Mon-Fri) or the national helpline at 0808 2000 247 outside those hours for help and support.

It can be hard for people in lockdown to stay in control of emotions but if you feel your behaviour might risk hurting the ones you love, check <https://respectphonenumber.org.uk/> or call Freephone 0808 8024040 9-5 (Mon-Fri) for help and support.

Don't forget you can call us at the surgery if you're not sure what to do and always call 999 in an emergency (and then press 55 if you can't speak).

Please do contact us with any questions, suggestions or feedback regarding this, we hope this may be the first of several such texts for patients to help keep them safe in these difficult times.

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