

## There is no excuse

There are many myths around domestic violence and abuse including the victim deserves it, drugs and alcohol cause it, it only happens in certain cultures. These are all wrong, the reality is domestic violence and abuse can and does happen to anyone.

While there are a variety of reasons why adult children commit violence against their parents, remember violence is a choice and is the responsibility of the person that uses the violence.

**EVERYBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE  
ALL OF THE TIME**

## Remember -

- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence legislation applies to adult child to parent violence and abuse. It is possible to gain protection using a civil remedy such as a non-molestation order.
- Alcohol and substance abuse do not cause adult child to parent violence, they may increase the severity of the abuse.
- Protecting yourself does not make you a bad parent.

## Where to get help

For support contact the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline.

The Helpline is open to all women and men affected by domestic & sexual violence and abuse.



## In an emergency dial 999

Other support agencies -

**Belfast Health & Social Care Trust - Adult Protection Gateway Team**  
028 9504 1744

**Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid**  
028 9066 6049

**Men's Advisory Project**  
028 9024 1929

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## Adult child to Parent Violence & Abuse



Adult child to parent violence and abuse is a form of domestic violence.

It is when the adult child behaves in an abusive and/or violent manner, leaving the parent feeling frightened, threatened, intimidated and controlled.

## Adult Child to Parent Violence is any act of an adult child over 18 that creates fear in and/or is intended to hurt the parent. It can take many forms and includes:

- **Physical** - hitting, slapping, punching, pushing, breaking things, throwing things...
- **Psychological** - intimidating the parent, playing mind games, causing fear....
- **Verbal** - name calling, put downs, swearing, making threats...
- **Emotional** - making unrealistic demands on the parents, blaming the parents, lying, manipulating the parents, minimising their behaviour, controlling the running of the household...
- **Social** - isolating parents from other family members or friends...
- **Financial** - stealing money or belongings, selling possessions without permission, destroying home or belongings, running up debts the parents must cover, demanding parents buy things...
- **Sexual** - sexual assault and rape, forced to watch pornography...

## How you may be feeling?

- You may be feeling alone - that this doesn't happen to other parents.
- You may be feeling isolated or distanced from other family members and friends.
- You may be feeling that you want the abuse to stop not the relationship with your adult child.
- You may be feeling as a parent you need to protect your child regardless of their age.
- You may be feeling that you deserve the abuse as a punishment for things that may have happened in the past.
- You may be feeling scared to disclose the abuse or that the abuse should be kept a secret.
- You may be feeling that as a parent, you are responsible for the person your adult child has become and therefore the abuse.
- You may be feeling shame and guilt - that you have failed as a parent.

Do not be discouraged by societal expectations ...

You may feel pressure to keep your family together or that by seeking legal protection, you are being a bad parent - this is not true. The violence is not your fault. The abuser is the only one responsible for his/her behaviour. We all deserve the right to feel safe all the time.

## You are not alone

While it has been around for a long time adult child to parent violence is a relatively new term. It is recognised as domestic violence and abuse under the Government's *Stopping Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy*. You may not have heard it talked about or be able to find much information on it. This does not mean that it does not happen or that there is no support for you.

## You are not to blame

Violence and abuse are chosen intentional behaviour and are the responsibility of the abuser only. The abuser may blame you for what's happening, saying their behaviour is a result of how you raised them. You may believe it is your fault. This is not true - people are responsible for their own behaviour and actions.

## Violence is about power and control

Arguing within families is normal and is usually resolved when everyone is equal in the relationship. Violence and abuse is different and is about the abuser having control over the victim, creating an imbalance of power through fear and intimidation.