

Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) is defined as physical, sexual, psychological, or financial abuse and/or violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and that forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. Available statistics show that in Europe women are much more likely than men to be victims of DVA and experience multiple incidents. An EU-wide survey' by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), reported that 14% of women in Ireland have experienced physical violence by a partner since age 15; 6% of Irish women have experienced sexual violence by a current or former partner; 31% of women have experienced psychological violence by a partner.

DVA can have long and short-term emotional, cognitive, and behavioural consequences for women (Hester et al., 2007; Holt et al., 2008). Available evidence indicates that, for women, DVA is the most likely cause of depression, anxiety and panic attacks, anorexia and other eating disorders, hyper-vigilance, sexual dysfunction, complex post-traumatic stress disorder, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicide (Humphreys & Thiara, 2002; Hester et al., 2007). Given the high incidence of domestic violence and its particular emotional and psychological impacts the likelihood of domestic violence presenting in the therapy room is very high.

Bohne, et al (2016) found that the effectiveness of counselling is dependent upon a positive therapeutic alliance built on mutual trust and respect and, crucially, an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and abuse. The key ingredient of therapeutic success was found to be that counselling when complemented with specialist training in the dynamics of DVA achieved better outcomes for survivors.

Evaluation of Training

This training was formally evaluated by Dr Leonor Rodriguez, (Post-doctoral researcher at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway) in February 2020.

She found that participants knowledge of DVA and coercive control increased and remained over time. After completing the training, participants felt their confidence increased, their skills and capacity to respond had improved and they considered the consistent support from the facilitators as an asset of this training.

After the training participants wanted to work more in this field. Trainers were described as experts in the field of DVA, knowledgeable, relatable and approachable.

Participant Feedback

“Most relevant training I have done. Very informative and improved my skills in dealing with the issues that can arise.”

‘Excellent Course. Very challenging because of the subject matter but felt very supported’.

...the training was excellent. It was a heavy topic delivered with a good mix of theory, participation, discussion which helped me stay connected with it...

‘This was an excellent training which has helped me work more effectively with my clients experiencing DVA and Coercive control’.

‘The facilitators brought a difficult issue to the fore with great empathy and directness’.

‘Had I not done the course I would not have the confidence or belief to do the work of this nature’.

‘Found this workshop excellent and really glad I did it. Very interesting and most of all very relevant to my work as a counsellor / therapist.’

Introduction to Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) & Coercive Control

2 Day Training for Counsellors



IACP Approved
12 Points

DAY ONE

Introduction to Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) and Coercive Control

Aims & Objectives

- To equip counsellors to identify DVA and Coercive Control when it presents in the therapy room.
- To enable counsellors to work competently with the issue and/or be able to make appropriate and timely referral.
- To work confidently with the issue of DVA using specific interventions, relevant information and skills.
- To help prevent secondary victimisation from occurring in counselling of clients experiencing DVA.

Components of Training

- Understanding DVA and Coercive Control within a social/political context.
- Core principles in working with clients with domestic violence with reference to current research.
- Recognition of perpetrator type and tactics in client presentation.
- Exploring the presentation of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal and financial abuse in a therapeutic setting.
- Assessment of safety needs of client
- Overview of options including legal options, specialist support agencies and other relevant referrals.



Training Session Facilitators:

Elizabeth Power, RPN, RNMH, BA Social & Economics Studies (Women's Studies), Masters in Writing, Certificate in Gestalt Therapy. She is Coordinator of Domestic Violence Response. She has worked as Group Facilitator and Support Worker in the area of domestic violence and abuse since 1993. She has worked as a researcher (Towards a Community Response to Domestic Violence, 1998) and Editor (Life's Real Fairy tales, 2006).

Evelyn Glynn, BA Holistic Counselling & Psychotherapy, MA Community Development, MFA, Diploma in Jungian Psychology & Art Therapy and Foundations in Process Orientated Psychology and Gestalt Therapy. She has worked in the area of domestic violence for 20 years both with Women's Aid as a development worker and latterly in Domestic Violence Response as Coordinator, Facilitator and Support Worker.

Essential components of training include formal presentations, experiential learning, practical group exercises, presentation of handouts, exploration of client narrative and group discussion

DAY TWO

Interventions for Empowerment of DVA Survivors in Therapeutic Settings

Aims & Objectives

- To explore key components of empowerment relevant to working with DVA Survivors.
- To enable the counsellor to work with a client who experiences DVA and Coercive Control in the longer term.
- To facilitate an understanding of the different stages in working with women including post separation abuse.
- To equip the counsellor with specific strategies which assist a client in coming to terms with domestic violence and abuse..

Components of training

- Key steps for clients in dealing with DVA: In the relationship / Leaving the Relationship / Post Separation.
- Coming to Consciousness / Empowerment / Disengagement exercises in a therapeutic setting. This include techniques devised in our work with clients over many years to teach aspects of DVA and coercive control and its impact.
- Understanding Healthy Relationships, Rights / Needs / Choices.

Price List

Two-day training: €250

Early Bird Rate; €220 for bookings secured three weeks in advance.

- A deposit of €90 is required to secure place. Enquires to dvatireland@gmail.com