



Operation Encompass: working to break the cycle of Domestic Abuse

EDUCATING TODAY • EMPOWERING FOR TOMORROW • BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Relationships (and Sex) Education and Health Education Curriculum

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the other Operation Encompass Handbooks:



Background

Domestic Abuse is a 'cruel and complex crime'¹ which affects millions of people in our society every year and cuts across all strata of society, across all ages, types of relationship, cultures and races. It is damaging to individuals and to communities, it weakens a country's economy, reduces productivity and attendance in the workplace, is a public health issue and bleeds into every part of our society. Domestic Abuse diminishes both the perpetrator and the victims. We must all work to achieve the cessation of Domestic Abuse.

Domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police.

- *'Children exposed to domestic abuse are victims of child abuse.'*²
- Living with domestic abuse is a children's rights issue.³

Operation Encompass ensures that all domestic abuse incidents with children related to either adult will be shared with the child's school prior to the start of the next school day. From the inception of Operation Encompass one focus has been our aspiration to end Domestic Abuse.

1 Foreword to Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 by Home Secretary and Justice Secretary

2 Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 Page 16

3 UNCRC



Context

'Domestic abuse is complex. It can go unidentified by agencies, families and friends, and even victims themselves. In order to transform the response to domestic abuse, it is important that it is first properly recognised and understood.'⁴

Definition of Domestic Abuse⁵

The behaviour of a person ('A') towards another person ('B') is "domestic abuse" if—

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse (see subsection (4))
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

'Economic abuse' means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to:

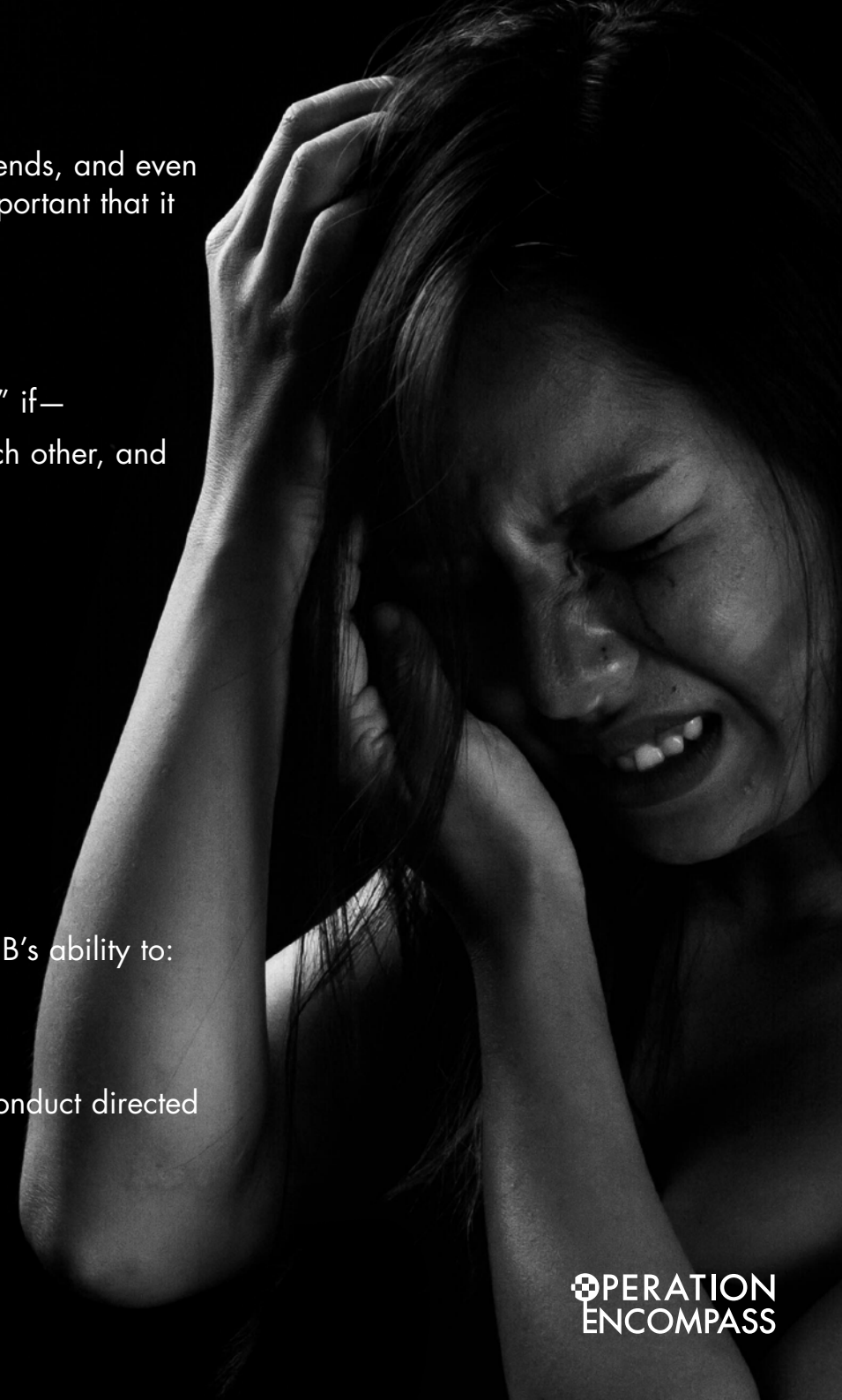
- acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- obtain goods or services

A's behaviour may be behaviour 'towards' B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).

[Read the full definition and Act here »](#)

⁴ Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019

⁵ Domestic Abuse Act 2021



Prevalence of Domestic Abuse

A Domestic Abuse call is made to the police in England and Wales every 30 seconds.⁶

For the 12-month period to year ending March 2020:

Estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year (1.6 million women and 757,000 men).⁹

Estimated 8.8 million adults aged 16 to 74 years had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years.¹⁰

At least two women a week and 30 men a year are murdered.¹¹

It is estimated that between $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of children have experienced domestic abuse.¹²

In just one year domestic abuse is estimated to have cost over £66 billion in England and Wales.¹³

It is estimated that 2.7 million children (aged 0-15) live with an adult who has experienced Domestic Abuse.¹⁴



6 HMIC 2014

7 Crime Survey for England and Wales ending March 2020

8 Crime Survey for England and Wales ending March 2020

9 ONS (2014)

10 Home Office 2019

11 Home Office : The economic and social costs of domestic abuse Jan 2019

12 Office of the Children's Commissioner

Impact upon children

Now that the Domestic Abuse Act has gained Royal Assent and has become law, **children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right.**¹³ This must herald a step change not only in how children are supported but also in terms of the expectations from all professionals who come into contact with these children¹⁴.

There is a wide range of research which clearly demonstrates the damage done to children, throughout their life span, when they experience Domestic Abuse in their life.^{15 16}

This damage can be caused at each and every stage of their lives, from conception onwards and, whilst the impact may change, develop and vary dependent upon the individual, the age of the child, and the nature and duration of the domestic abuse, the damage is very real.

Experiencing domestic abuse is recognised as an Adverse Childhood Experience¹⁷ (ACE) and as such, helping children to heal from this trauma is a crucial aspect of the role of all schools.¹⁸

'These children have complex needs, and in school they do far worse than their peers.'¹⁹

These issues have been recognised by the Government in the Consultation Response and Draft Bill document and Foreword.

'We will recognise the devastating impact that Domestic Abuse can have on children who are exposed to it.'²⁰

'No child should ever experience the trauma caused by domestic abuse.'²¹

'No one should have to suffer the pain of this abhorrent crime, particularly at the hands of those closest to them. Children should not have to witness violence and abuse in their own homes.'²²

We recognise that for many children school is a place of safety, continuity and security and that some children achieve well academically.

13 Domestic Abuse Act 2021

14 A response to Children being recognised as Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse

15 John-Devaney-Research-Review-The-Impact-of-Domestic-Violence-on-Children

16 Royal College of Psychiatrists Domestic Abuse and Violence: The impact on children and adolescents

17 Felitti and Anda

18 KCSIE 2020 Page 11

19 Home Office Draft Domestic Abuse Bill Consultation Response

20 Home Office Draft Domestic Abuse Bill Consultation Response

21 Home Office Draft Domestic Abuse Bill Consultation Response

22 Home Office Draft Domestic Abuse Bill Consultation Response

Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Abuse

This schema is a visual representation of the implications and impact that Operation Encompass has had towards ending Domestic Abuse and the work that we have been undertaking thus far:

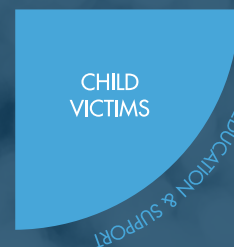


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Through Operation Encompass we have enabled more parents to understand that they are victims of Domestic Abuse and how this abuse is damaging to their children, thus developing the understanding that children are victims in their own right. We have also ensured that schools have the skills to offer support to these parents and understand the complexity and nuances of Domestic Abuse through free face to face briefings or by undertaking the online Key Adult training which can be accessed by all school staff, including Governors. Key Adults²³ now have the knowledge of how and where to signpost victims and access external support. Schools have become a safe place for adult victims to disclose Domestic Abuse (we know that for many, reporting to staff in school is more likely than them reporting to the police) in the knowledge that they and their family will be supported unjudgementally and by staff who have a level of understanding about the issues they may be facing.

23 Terminology of Key Adult used to avoid confusion as the role of safeguarding lead in schools (Level 3 trained) has different titles dependent upon location (Designated Safeguarding Lead / Officer. To receive Operation Encompass notifications the teacher must be the safeguarding lead or their deputy



The core purpose of Operation Encompass is to enable support to be given to the child victims of Domestic Abuse. Key Adults (Designated Safeguarding Leads or their deputies) in all schools involved in Operation Encompass have knowledge of Domestic Abuse and its impact upon children.²⁴ In turn it is expected that these Key Adults ensure that this knowledge has been disseminated to all staff in their respective schools.²⁵ Through Operation Encompass, schools are able to help children understand what is happening at home and how to best protect themselves both physically and emotionally and what support and protection they are entitled to from adults²⁶. We have also achieved our aim to have children recognised as victims of Domestic Abuse in their own right²⁷, with their numbers being counted so that the magnitude of the issue can be known and support provided.

24 Free face to face briefings led by OE or online Key Adult Training www.operationencompass.org

25 Either through training in school or by ensuring all staff, including safeguarding Governor, undertake free Operation Encompass online training www.operationencompass.org

26 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and UNCRC

27 Domestic Abuse Act 2021



Operation Encompass has enabled some adults who commit Domestic Abuse to understand that this behaviour is not acceptable in their home, in their community or in our society. Perpetrators have also been able to understand the harm that they are causing to both their partner, their children and extended family members. For some, the recognition of damage done to their children has been a revelation and the catalyst to change their behaviour. The recognition of children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right should strengthen this understanding. There is a greater understanding of the impact that Adverse Childhood Experiences that some perpetrators may have encountered in their past and, whilst we can never condone the behaviours of perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, working with them is crucial.



The nationwide knowledge of and support for Operation Encompass has encouraged international discussion and societal awareness about the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact that this has upon any children within the household. Media interest has assisted with this growing recognition and education about Domestic Abuse. Community awareness within the locality of each school involved in Operation Encompass is raised as schools publicise this aspect of their safeguarding role. Involvement in Operation Encompass transmits a very strong message that Domestic Abuse is not acceptable. As ALL police attended incidents of Domestic Abuse are reported to schools we have also enabled a greater awareness of the range and complexity of behaviours which constitute Domestic Abuse.

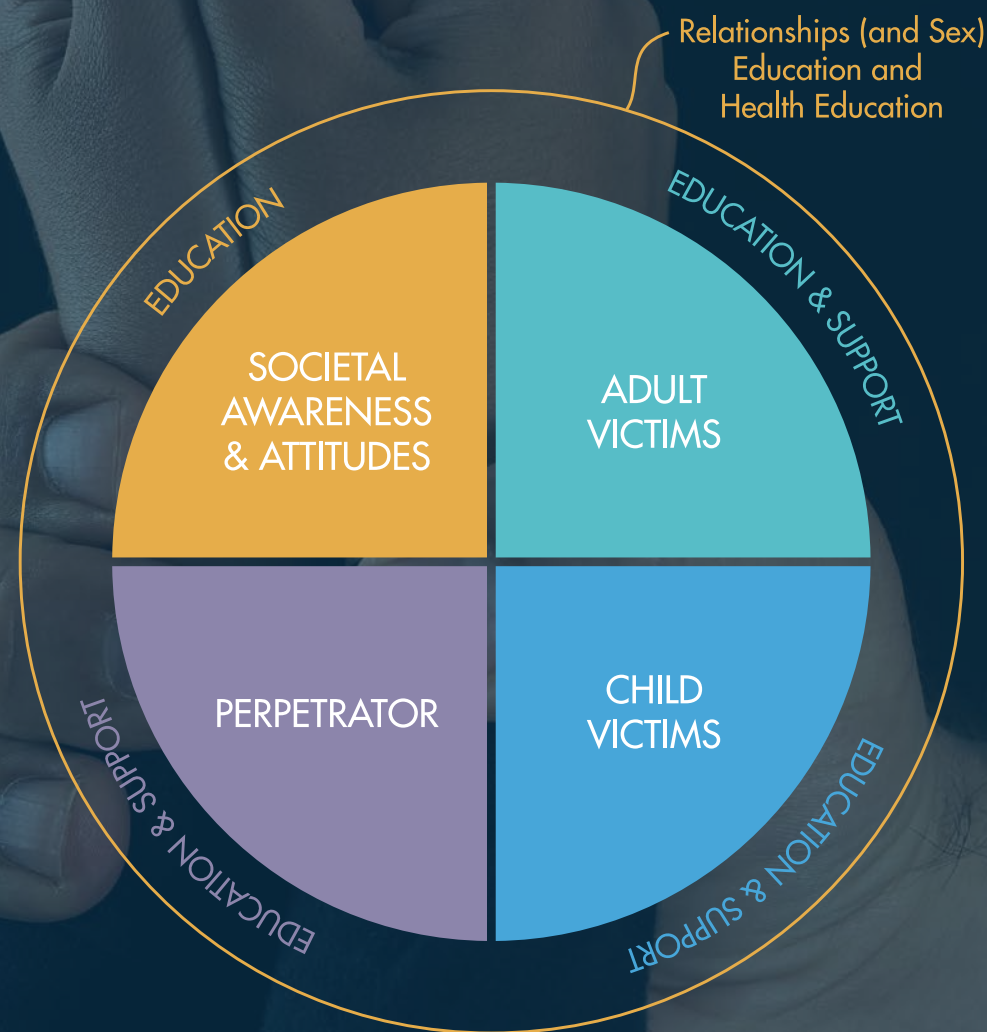
A Domestic Abuse Curriculum

Supporting all of this work is the prevention and awareness work that schools undertake through their PSHE/Relationships/Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum. There has always been the opportunity for schools to teach about Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass has encouraged schools to do this and indeed many schools have done so. Whilst there has long been a professional awareness of the role schools can play in breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse, a Joint Targeted Area Inspection in 2017 revealed that 'it is often not part of the curriculum that is prioritised by schools.'²⁸

'We recognise that if we want to change attitudes we need to engage with children at the earliest possible opportunity. We know that experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, lasting impact on children, with negative effects on their future behaviour and relationships. All children should be supported to understand that abuse is never acceptable'²⁹

There is now an imperative for schools to teach this overtly through the Relationships (and Sex) Education Relationships and Health Education programme heralded by the Home Office in the draft Domestic Abuse Bill and then fully articulated by the DfE in their Statutory Guidance document.³⁰

This enables schools to support each of the elements identified by Operation Encompass as key to breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse and as described in the enhanced schema to the right:



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28 JTAI. The multi-agency response to children living with domestic abuse 2017

29 Home Office Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019

30 DfE, Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers. June 2019.

Operation Encompass aims to support schools to clearly identify those aspects of Relationships (and Sex) Education and Health Education which encourage teaching about Domestic Abuse.

This is Operation Encompass the Next Steps (OEtNS);



This work is encapsulated by the phrases:

Educating today • Empowering for tomorrow • Breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse

Together these are the essence of our focus and clearly articulate and capture what we are trying to achieve through both Operation Encompass and Operation Encompass the Next Steps (OEtNS).

Together Operation Encompass and Operation Encompass the Next Steps also support the approach of prevention and crucial early intervention, supporting each aspect of the protect, prevent and repair national agenda.

Educating today:

It is imperative that children and young people are given the opportunity to understand the complexity, prevalence and range of Domestic Abuse so they can identify it in all its forms.

This education should start from the very youngest of our children and then build, through a spiral curriculum, towards our older children. This means creating a developmentally appropriate curriculum which ensures that what is taught is appropriate to the age of the child and which allows children to revisit, refine and embed; to build and deepen knowledge; to rehearse previously learnt skills and to develop supportive attitudes and attributes.

This means educating about healthy, respectful relationships alongside the development of an understanding of Domestic Abuse.

Empowering for tomorrow:

We must equip our young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to prevent themselves becoming either victims or becoming perpetrators. They should understand their rights in terms of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and know how and where they can access support.


They should feel empowered to access support, to safely remove themselves from such relationships, understanding the cycle of abuse and recognising that abuse in any relationship is never acceptable. They should also be able to spot the signs of abuse in other people's relationships and know how best to support them and to access support from other agencies.

Government, schools and support agencies must also recognise the need for them to ensure that they understand their role in supporting all who are victims of domestic abuse, no matter what their age or the composition of their relationship. This also entails ensuring that the right support systems are in place.

Breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse:

The conventional understanding is that 'breaking the cycle of abuse' refers to an individual's relationship. When part of Operation Encompass and OEtNS we also use this to mean working towards a cessation of Domestic Abuse in our society. It is clear that month after month, year after year, additional individuals become victims and perpetrators of Domestic Abuse - this cycle has to stop and schools can play a significant part in this work.





*'Educating young people is the only true, long-term solution to gender-based violence.'*³¹

*'We want to help schools deliver high-quality relationships education that covers domestic abuse.'*³²

OEiNS in no way wishes to replace good practice that is already in place in schools and we know that schools will embed the teaching about domestic abuse into their existing curriculum.

Schools should also acknowledge that their teaching about domestic abuse must be undertaken in a sensitive manner: there will be children who are living with domestic abuse and they must not be made to feel ashamed or guilty; there will be members of the school staff who will be victims of domestic abuse and there may be staff members who are perpetrators of domestic abuse.³³

31 UNESCO, UNFPA, and UN Women

32 Home Office Consultation Response and Draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019

33 We recommend that all schools have a Domestic Abuse Policy

Creating a safe environment for these discussions is crucial, children must feel comfortable, safe and secure when taking part in this work.

We have signposted schools to resources which support the development of the exploration of Domestic Abuse from EYFS through to KS5.³⁴ Operation Encompass is not endorsing these materials but offer them as a starting point for a school to consider.

We have built upon the already successful collaborative working across agencies created by Operation Encompass through:

- Promoting awareness of and education about Domestic Abuse in schools but also across the wider community
- Working to mitigate the risk of children growing up to become either victims or perpetrators of Domestic Abuse
- Empowering children and young people, creating a culture where children and young people along with school staff, feel confident to talk about domestic abuse
- Building resilience in the whole school and wider community
- Further enhancing the support offered to adult and child victims of Domestic Abuse

Throughout the work of Operation Encompass and Operation Encompass the Next Steps (OEtNS) the voice of the child is of paramount importance and our teaching about Relationship (and Sex) Education and Health Education should be child led. It is important to enable all children to participate and to be supported through this curriculum.

Using the mandatory Relationships (and Sex) Education and Health Education curriculum, OEtNS has identified three key areas for exploration which should assist schools to develop those aspects which will enable children (EYFS-KS5) to participate in a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

EMOTIONS

Development of emotional literacy, our personal understanding of our emotions and empathy towards others.



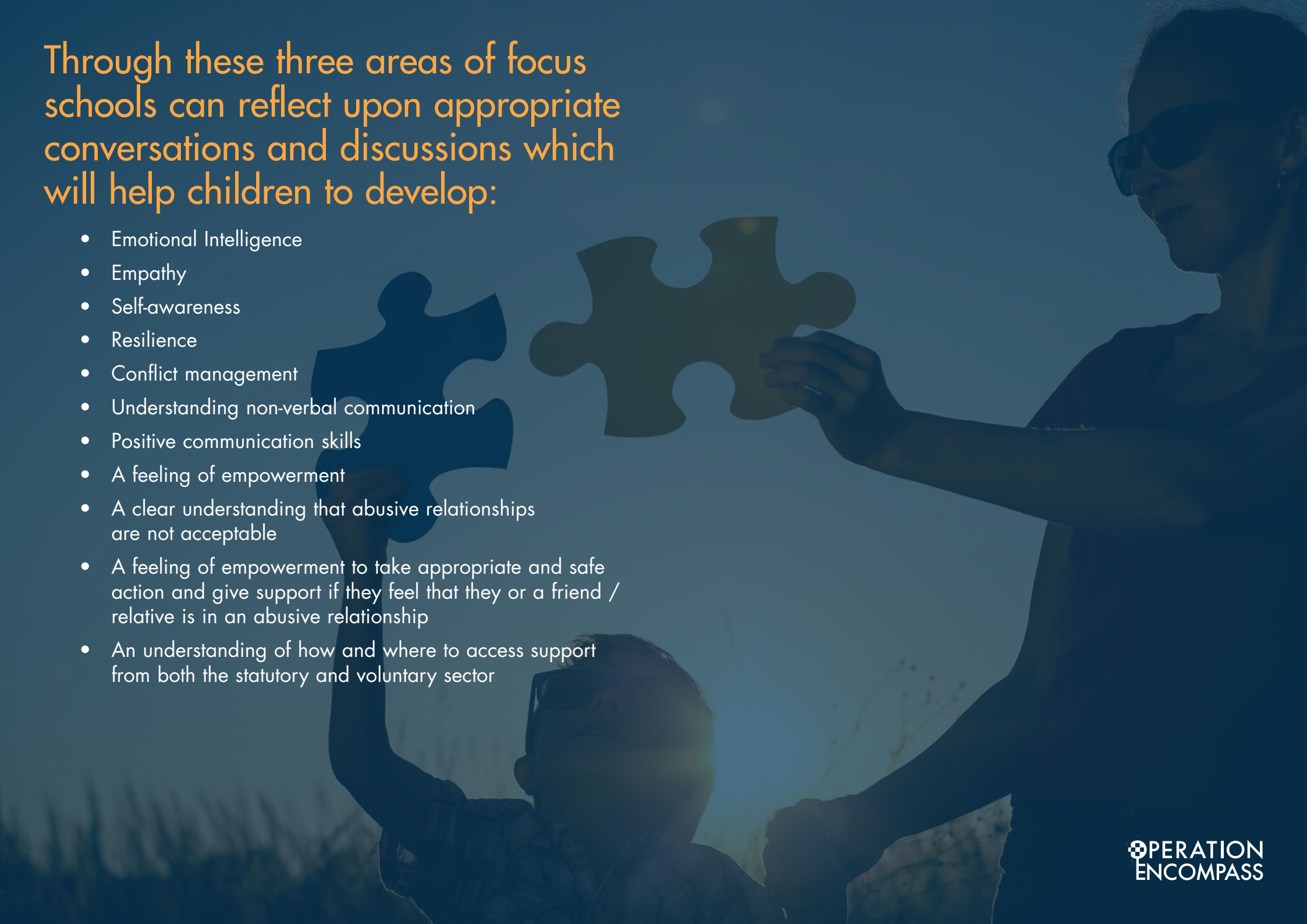
RELATIONSHIPS & FRIENDSHIPS

Understanding range of relationships ,what a positive, healthy, respectful relationship looks like thus gaining the understanding and awareness of when a relationship is abusive, disrespectful or unhealthy.

RULES & BOUNDARIES

Children need to understand their rights as enshrined in the UNCRC. Living peacefully in a civil society requires rules. Need to understand rules, expectations and boundaries of relationships to be a responsible member of society.

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A woman wearing sunglasses and a child are shown from the chest up, holding large puzzle pieces against a sunset background. The woman is on the right, holding a puzzle piece with her right hand. The child is on the left, holding a puzzle piece with their right hand. The puzzle pieces are dark and have a glowing outline. The background is a warm, orange and yellow sunset sky with silhouettes of trees and a fence in the foreground.

Through these three areas of focus schools can reflect upon appropriate conversations and discussions which will help children to develop:

- Emotional Intelligence
- Empathy
- Self-awareness
- Resilience
- Conflict management
- Understanding non-verbal communication
- Positive communication skills
- A feeling of empowerment
- A clear understanding that abusive relationships are not acceptable
- A feeling of empowerment to take appropriate and safe action and give support if they feel that they or a friend / relative is in an abusive relationship
- An understanding of how and where to access support from both the statutory and voluntary sector



The Themes

As we explore each theme it is important to note that these are only suggestions of what might form part of a school's curriculum and are not meant to be exhaustive, schools will develop their own appropriate areas of study which will link into and further support their current work, their children's needs and the community they serve. It is important that this teaching is not a 'bolt-on' set of lessons that stand in isolation.

Exploring Relationships/Friendships

- Understand the range of relationships/friendships at school/home/community that a child experiences
- Exploring what friendship is and what makes a good friend
- How someone behaves towards a friend, and how friends treat each other
- Explore caring and respectful relationships and friendships, awareness of and respect for different types of relationships
- Equality of individuals within relationships
- Relationships built upon respect, trust and communication
- Exploring relationships which occur online and in the virtual world, and those which exist across both
- Explore love and who the people are that a child loves. Consider how romantic love might be different /the same as love in a friendship. Explore how we demonstrate that we love someone
- Negotiation in relationships
- Understanding that relationships/friendships are not always exclusive and how this might appear
- Consider the influence of peers in contrast to family influence. This can be appropriate as peer relationships may be more positive than family relationships
- Exploring the effect that social influences (or for younger children, influence from our peers, family, media and society) can have on ourselves/our values/our expectations of relationships etc
- Explore the signs of disrespectful, unhealthy or abusive relationships
- Explore stalking, harassment, obsessive, controlling and coercive signs of abuse



Exploring Emotions³⁵

- Be able to talk about our emotions
- Consider how we construct our own emotions³⁶
- be able to describe our perceptions of the emotions of others
- Understand emotional concepts such as jealousy, envy, anger, loneliness
- Understanding that people experience emotions in diverse ways in relation to different experiences and situations
- Understanding that emotions are natural and part of everyday life
- Assessing whether feelings are proportionate to a situation
- Exploring dealing with the emotions related to challenging relationships
- Exploring dealing with the emotions related to change (e.g., break-up of relationship/argument)
- Explore how to act when feeling disrespected
- Explore self-awareness: the impact a person and their emotions have on others



³⁵ Links to mental wellbeing in DfE, Relationship Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers. June 2019.

³⁶ See the work of Lisa Feldman Barrett.

Exploring Rules & Expectations

- Children must be taught about the rights that they have as enshrined in the UNCRC
- Rules give us guidance to keep people safe, to keep others safe and to help individuals live together with others
- Understanding the need for rules and the reasons behind them
- Explore rules at home/school/in the community
- Explore the concept of fairness
- Discuss consequences that might apply if people do not adhere to rules
- Explore the awareness and understanding of rules preparing children to play active part in society, understanding how laws are made and upheld
- Examine the definition of Domestic Abuse and what this might look like in different situations
- Consider how to recognise the characteristics of an abusive relationship and where the law impacts upon relationships including:
 - relationships
 - VAWG
 - consent
 - sexual consent
 - abuse
 - coercion and control
 - harassment
 - gaslighting
 - domestic abuse

Resources to support this work:

Operation Encompass Free Helpline, confidential advice directly from an Educational/Clinical Psychologist

www.operationencompass.org

"At last there is someone I can talk to" Are children experiencing domestic abuse a vulnerable group? A Handbook for Schools: Operation Encompass

www.operationencompass.org

Operation Encompass Free Key Adult Training, can be accessed by all school staff and governors

www.operationencompass.org

Government website Disrespect Nobody

<https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/>

PSHE Association website has a range of ideas across all age groups <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk>

Alice Ruggles Trust Relationship Safety Resource. Advice and resources about stalking including coercion and control <https://www.alicerugglestrust.org>

UNESCO, UNFPA, and UN Women UN Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education at 'Education for a Healthy Future' <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ITGSE.pdf>

For information about domestic abuse support services in your area download the free Bright Sky app. This is a good resource to have on a school mobile, it is frequently updated and also includes toolkits to identify if someone is experiencing domestic abuse.

<https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

Living with domestic violence and abuse is a children's rights issue as enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and should be recognised by us all as such. The most relevant Articles to DVA are:

Article 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 3 (best interests of the child)

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 15 (freedom of association)

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this

Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life

Article 42 (knowledge of rights)

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.



A person is seen from behind, standing in a field with their arms raised high in the air. The background is a soft, hazy sunset or sunrise sky with warm colors. The person is wearing a light-colored t-shirt.

OPERATION ENCOMPASS

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