



change that lasts

the right response to domestic abuse

“
ask
me
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Community responses to domestic abuse: learning and best practice from the Ask Me project

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“Collectively, we talk about domestic abuse. Individually, we don’t.”

“Most community spaces are blocked off to me - he manipulates the people in them so that they disbelieve or judge me... I feel isolated because my abuser controls all community spaces and I have access to none.”

“There is no response from the community - domestic abuse is just not talked about.”

What is Ask Me?

Community members attend a training course where they learn more about domestic abuse, and are equipped with how to:

1 Break the silence

2 Raise awareness

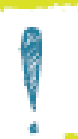
? Answer questions

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Increase understanding



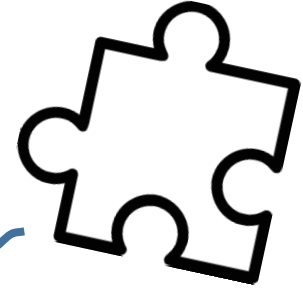
= A community that better understands the barriers faced by survivors



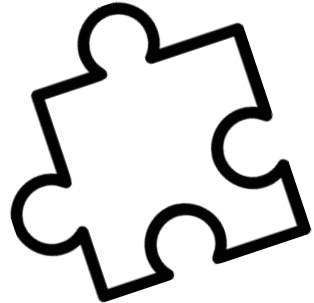
3 Listen and believe, with compassion, without judgement

After the training, community members receive resources to help them raise awareness of domestic abuse within their networks.

March 2019 – March 2020 – 1 year project funded by the Tampon Tax (Cambridge) and Peterborough City Council (Peterborough)



March 2020 – Dec 2021 – Covid. Not funded. Continued supporting existing participants and piloting online version of the training in collaboration with WAFE



Jan 2022 – Jan 2025 – funded by a private charitable trust



What we've learned: does it work?

The project reaches a wide range of community members

“My running group and sports group, which are both full of young women”

“I want to create a support network at the University of Cambridge for students who have experienced violence”

“People within my community particularly immigrants”

We asked: “What kinds of people, groups and/or spaces do you hope to touch after the training?”

“People in my cake classes who are usually women, often they chat about their lives and self esteem”

“I hope to take it to places that'll encourage men, like the gym”

“Members of the public through performance art pieces”

“Anyone coming into the healthcare environment”

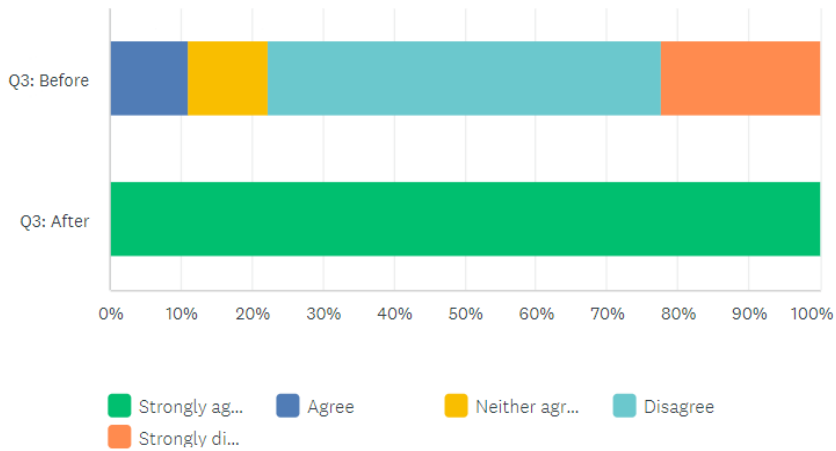
“My friends and family in the Pakistani and Indian community”

“People in my mosque, mum and toddler groups”

It changes people's attitudes towards domestic abuse

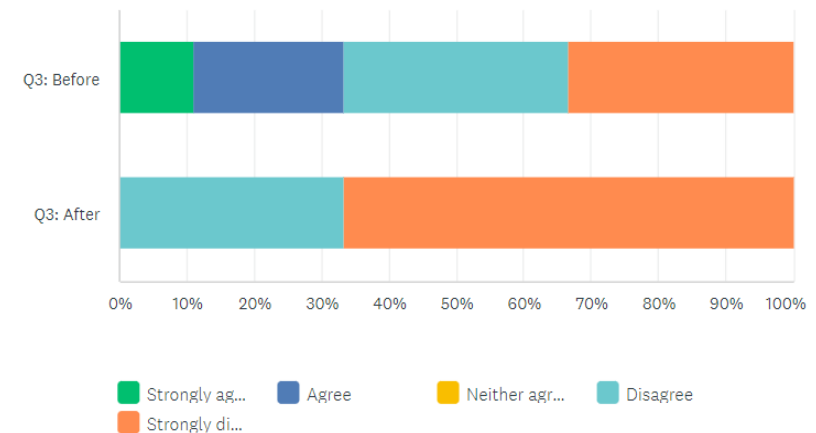
People who are in an abusive relationship are “experts” in their own experiences and know how to keep safe.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



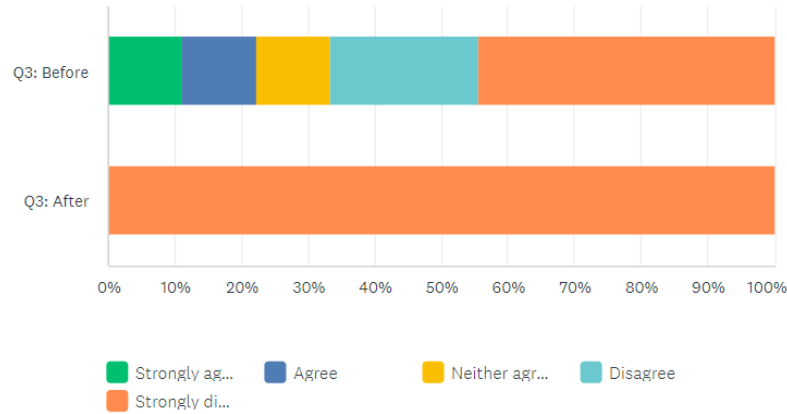
Anger, drugs and drink are largely responsible for abusive behaviour towards partners.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



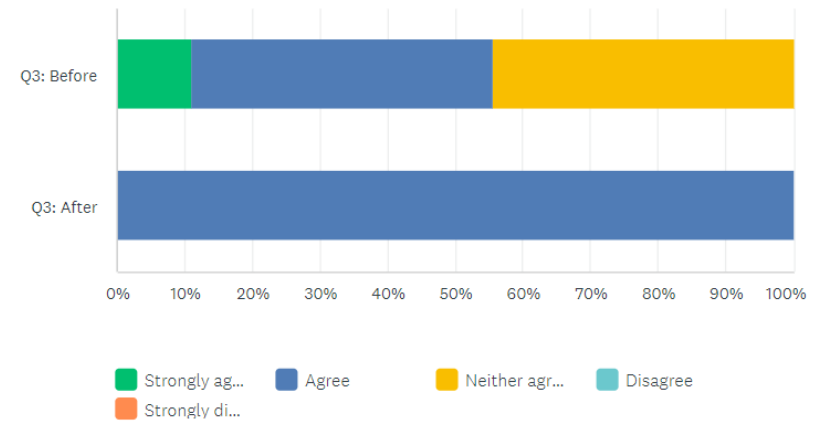
Men form the majority of domestic abuse victims and are largely abused by their female partners/ex-partners.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



I feel confident to start a conversation about domestic abuse with others.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



And people share what they've learned!

"I was having coffee with a friend and her partner was texting her the whole time – and asked her to send a selfie of her and me. He clearly wanted to know exactly where she was and with who. She said he'd put a tracker on her car. I said 'how do you feel about that' and she said 'I don't like it very much.'"

"I've spoken to all sorts of people, and challenged people's perceptions – especially in my church. A perception with some is that abuse can only be physical."

"Having the knowledge from this training is so good...I can open up a conversation. I'm going to give a talk to the school governors, and I've talked with my daughter. I've started to understand 'intersectionality' and how different factors come together. Learning that has really validated some of our experiences."

What do participants think?

What we've learned: best practice for delivery

- Be clear about values and boundaries
- Focus on actions, not personal endorsements via 'roles'
- Stick to the community spirit – not free training for professionals!
- Have mixed training groups
- Make it inclusive on every level
- Judge your resources for ongoing community engagement work
- It works online!

What we've learned: best practice for commissioning

- Have an understanding of asset-based community development approaches
- Consider appropriate evaluation – realist approaches (what works, for whom, under which circumstances) over classic input-outcome frameworks (linear cause and effect)
- It doesn't happen for free
- Be serious about sustainable funding – one year is inadequate
- Think beyond 'number of people trained'

Questions?

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Thank you