

# What can I do as an employee, colleague or friend if I suspect domestic violence?

## See!

- Wounds and bruises
- Burns and stab injuries
- Dizziness
- Concentration difficulties
- Sleep and eating disorders
- Evasiveness
- Restlessness and irritability
- Depression
- Behavioral changes
- Frequently makes changes to appointments
- Always/usually accompanied by partner to appointments
- Reactions to being touched
- Refuses to accept help if family must be involved
- Frequent visits to the doctor with unclear symptoms
- Use of drugs

This is an action card for employees of Bjørnafjorden Municipality in connection with the action plan against domestic violence

## Ask!

Try to have a dialogue to acknowledge the violence

### You can start with:

*I am worried.*

### Describe what you see:

- *If seems you are often absent from work.*
  - *You seem exhausted.*
  - *I see bruises on your arm.*

### Continue with:

- *This may not apply to you, but based on my experience, many people who have trouble at home have these kind of symptoms.*
- *What do you think?*
- *How is your situation at home?*

### Advice:

- Avoid using the word 'violence'
- Ask open questions (not leading)
- Listen actively!... say Hmm...tell me more.
- Describe, what did you do? Where were you? How did this make you feel?
- Repeat keywords
- Avoid assessing or judging what happened, like saying Oh, that's horrible!
- Adjust your questions according to age and level of understanding.

## Clarify!

### How does the violence manifest itself?

- Beating, threats and forced sex
- Pulling hair, burning, humiliation or ridicule
- Lack of right to dispose of own money
- Being denied contact with family and friends
- Things the victim holds dear are destroyed
- Mistreatment of pets
- Forced marriage

### How serious is the violence?

- When did it last happen?
- Describe what happened
- Are you afraid that something will happen in the future?
- Is your life and health, or that of your children, in danger?
- Have you been in contact with the police or The Crisis Centre?

### Risk factors

Breakup or divorce, previous violence episodes, access to weapons, unemployment, economic difficulties, illness and addiction can increase the risk of violence and partner killings. The police and the Crisis Centre must be contacted.

- Ask the victim to write down what has happened and is happening, how and when it has happened.
- Inform the victim of violence of what you intend to do with what you now know.

Violence has many faces. Violence can be physical, psychological, economical, sexual and neglect.

## Acute situations

In the event of serious threats or physical injuries following violence and abuse.

- **Call the police** to prevent new acute abuses. Report what you have seen and why you are afraid of new abuses. The victim of violence can report the abuse or the police can issue a public prosecution.
- If you suspect rape, contact The Rape Reception Centre or The Emergency Medical Centre for an investigation and to secure evidence.
- Offer to drive the victim to The Crisis Centre in Bergen, where she/he can be safe. The Crisis Centre has routines for risk assessment and for fetching property.

For more information,  
see:  
«Trygg heile livet: Plan against  
domestic violence»

## Act

### What should you do?

The aim is to motivate the victim of violence to contact the authorities so that the violence stops.

### Anonymous discussions

If you are not sure what to do, you can discuss the matter anonymously with a Crisis Centre or the police. Call and arrange a consultation with professionals at The Crisis Centre.

### Information about the assistance offered to the victim

Help the victim to find information about where to seek help. Contact The Crisis Centre for more information and resources.

### Counseling at The Crisis Centre

Invite the victim to a conversation at The Crisis Centre. The Crisis Centre can help assess safety, whether the matter should be reported to the police, and give advice and guidance on the way forward to stop the violence.

Not everyone needs to live at the shelter. Victims of violence can receive regular counseling sessions during a difficult phase.

Being a professional in the the support system, you can also invite The Crisis Centre to attend a meeting with the victim.

### Duty to Avert:

Everyone has a personal duty to report or otherwise prevent serious crimes.

## Important telephone numbers

- In the event of an emergency to secure evidence, call the police on 112
- Police: 02800
- The Crisis Centre for Bergen and surrounding areas: 55 31 50 50
- The Sexual Assault Reception Centre in Bergen: 55 55 99 50
- Emergency Medical Centre: 116 117
- Competence centre against forced marriage, FGM and negative social control: 47 80 90 50
- The Life Crisis Help at Bergen Medical Emergency Center: 55 56 87 54
- The consultation team against violence and abuse in Bjørnafjorden municipality: 984 99 710
- The Child Welfare Service in Bjørnafjorden municipality: 901 82 850 (weekdays 8.30-15.30) Night time (20-02): 55 36 11 80

See also: [budfir.no/vold](http://budfir.no/vold)

What should I do

## If I suspect violence or sexual abuse against children?

– for those who work with children, are employed in the public sector or are neighbors.

### See!

- Wounds and bruises, specifically if they occur in several places (see pictures in electronic court guide)
- Burns and stab injuries
- Dizziness
- Sleeping and eating disorders
- Stomach pain
- Restlessness and irritability
- Depression
- Acting out or "pleasing" behavior
- Reactions to touch
- Frequent visits to the doctor or hospital (with unspecified symptoms)
- The family objects to access
- Use of drugs

Be attentive to "hidden" messages, for instance if the child writes or draws something, does not want to go home, or changes behavior when the parents pick him/her up.

#### What can you do?

Inform your leader of your suspicion.

Observe, write down what has happened. Note the time and place.

For more information, see "Trygg heile livet: Plan against domestic violence"

### Ask!

**Try to ask what has happened, while also attending to the child.**

**You could start with:**

- I am worried. Describe what you see.
- It seems that you often have stomachache.
- I see you have a bruise on your arm

**Continue with:**

- *This may not apply to you, but I have experienced that sometimes people who are not doing so well at home can have these kind of symptoms.*
- *What do you think?*
- *What is it like to be at home?*

**Advice**

- Ask open questions (not leading) and let the child talk freely
- Use supporting words such as Hmm..., yes, tell me more
- Repeat the child's words (without "parroting")
- Feel free to ask again, say I'm here, stop by if you want to talk to me.
- Arrange another meeting with the child

### Clarify!

A child can talk about events at home suddenly, for example during assembly or a recess. Invite the child to talk:

- When you said that thing earlier today - what did you mean?
- I haven't been there, tell me as best you can.
- Then what happens?
- You have told me about...

Be careful and don't ask in detail. The police or The Child Welfare Service conduct interviews with the child, and wish to be the first to ask the child about the details. Ask open-ended questions and let the child talk freely.

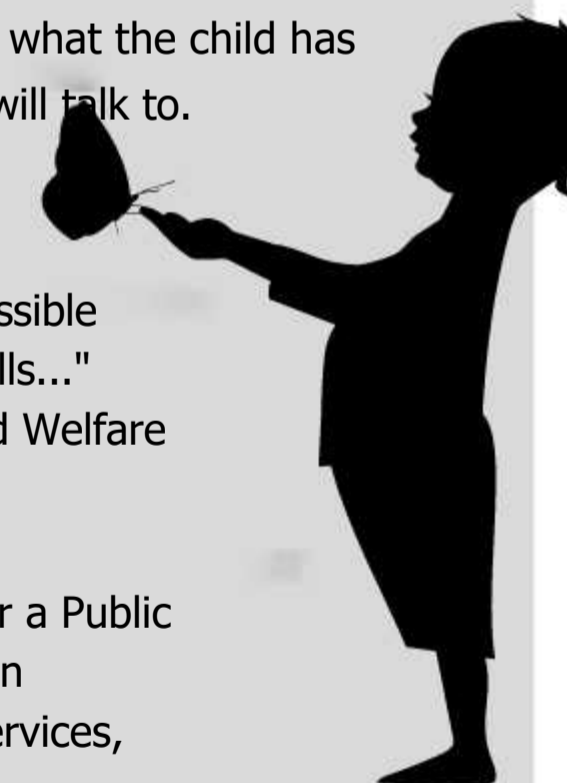
When the child has finished his/her story, confirm what the child has said, and make it clear that what he/she has said is important. Do not promise the child that you will not tell anyone. Explain that you must talk to other adults about what the child has said, but that you will tell the child when you do it and who you will talk to.

**What do you do?**

- Write down what the child has said - as verbatim as possible. Documentation is important, write "mother says...", "child tells..."
- You can discuss the matter anonymously with The Child Welfare Service, a Crisis Centre or the police.
- Feel free to discuss the specific case with your leader or a Public Health Nurse. Together you decide who does what and when (taking emergency measures, notifying The Child Welfare Services, contacting other public services, etc.)

Violence has many faces.

Violence can be physical, psychological, sexual, financial or neglect. Violence and abuse can happen in all families, regardless of social background. Try to look behind the facade.



## Acute

**Duty to Avert:**  
Everyone has a personal duty to report or in other ways prevent serious crimes.

When you have reason to believe that a child will be exposed to violence, you have a duty to avert in the case of:

- physical injuries
- symptoms following psychological violence
- serious threats
- suspicion of sexual abuse
- when the child shows fear of going home
- when the child is collected by intoxicated parents
- suspicion of impending or carried out genital mutilation or forced marriage

The police must be notified immediately. The Child Welfare Service must be notified at the same time.

**NB!** If you suspect violence against children, parents must NOT be contacted. If the child has visible bruises, please take pictures using your own phone. Consider whether the child should see a doctor to secure evidence. Your duty is to notify. The police will investigate and The Child Welfare Service will conduct an interrogation of the child.

Be aware that factors such as breakup or divorce, unemployment, illness, social security and substance abuse in the family may increase the risk of serious violence.

**For more information, see "Trygg heile livet: Plan against domestic violence."**

## Act

### What do you do if you suspect that a child is being abused?

#### Send a report of concern to The Child Welfare Service.

The report must contain: Personal details, cause for concern - what you have seen, heard, observed. State the contact person and what has been done. Send the message in collaboration with your leader. If the leader does not wish to sign, you have an independent responsibility for sending the message with your signature. The Child Welfare Service provides feedback when a report has been received and when the investigation has been completed. As a friend or neighbor, you will only know if the message has been received.

**Remember!** Your duty is to report your concern. The Child Welfare Service investigates the case and decides on further measures.

#### Are you unsure?

Call the Consultation team against violence and abuse or The Child Welfare Service at Bjørnafjorden kommune to discuss the matter anonymously.

#### Tell the child what is happening

Let the child know what happens next with the information he/she has possibly given. Based on the child's age and situation, consider how and when this should happen.

### What if the case is dropped, but the violence continues??

#### New report to The Child Welfare Service

Report the situation again to The Child Welfare Service. They may have received several reports of concern in the meantime.

#### Information about help at home

Give children and parents information about domestic violence and the help available. Send brochures home or hand them out at parents' meetings. The Crisis Centre has brochures and teaching resources.

## Important telephone numbers

- In the event of urgent incidents to secure traces, call the police 112
- Police: 02800
- The Child Welfare Service (daytime): 901 82 850 The Child Welfare Service (night): 55 36 11 80 (open 08-02). Outside of these times, call the police on 02800
- Sexual Assault Help Centre in Bergen (from the age of 15): 55 55 99 50 (24/7)
- Children under the age of 15 who have been sexually abused will receive help via the Children's Clinic at Haukeland University Hospital: 55 97 50 00
- The Crisis Centre for Bergen and the surrounding area: 55 31 50 50



**Duty to Report:**  
You have an independent duty to report to The Child Welfare Service if you suspect violence against children.

**BJØRNA  
FJØRDEN**  
KOMMUNE

