CAADA Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) & Quick Start Guidance for Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour'-Based Violence

You may be looking at this checklist because you are working in a professional capacity with a victim of domestic abuse. These notes are to help you understand the significance of the questions on the checklist. Domestic abuse can take many forms but it is usually perpetrated by men towards women in an intimate relationship such as boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife. This checklist can also used for lesbian, gay, bisexual relationships and for situations of 'honour'-based violence or family violence. Domestic abuse can include physical, emotional, mental, sexual or financial abuse as well as stalking and harassment. They might be experiencing one or all types of abuse; each situation is unique. It is the combination of behaviours that can be so intimidating. It can occur both during a relationship or after it has ended.

- ✓ The purpose of the RIC is to give a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a MARAC meeting in order to manage their risk. If you are concerned about risk to a child or children, you should make a referral to ensure that a full assessment of their safety and welfare is made.
- ✓ The RIC should be introduced to the victim within the framework of your agency's:
  - Confidentiality Policy
  - Information Sharing Policy and Protocols
  - MARAC Referral Policies and Protocols
- ✓ Before you begin to ask the questions in the RIC:
  - Establish how much time the victim has to talk to you? Is it safe to talk now? What are safe contact details?
  - Establish the whereabouts of the perpetrator and children;
  - Explain why you are asking these questions and how it relates to the MARAC
- ✓ Whilst you are asking the questions in the RIC:
  - Identify early on who the victim is frightened of – ex-partner/partner/family member
  - Use gender neutral terms such as partner/ex-partner. By creating a safe, accessible environment LGBT victims accessing the service will feel able to disclose both domestic abuse and their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- ✓ Revealing the results of the RIC to the victim: Telling someone that they are at high risk of serious harm or homicide may be frightening and overwhelming for them to hear. It is important that you state what your concerns are by using the answers they gave to you and your professional judgement. It is then important that you follow your area's protocols when referring to MARAC and Children's Services. Equally, identifying that someone is not currently high risk needs to be managed carefully to ensure that the person doesn't feel that their situation is being minimised and that they don't feel embarrassed about asking for help. Explain that these factors are linked to homicide and serious harm and that if s/he experiences any of them in future, that they should get back in touch with your service or with the emergency services on 999 in an immediate crisis.
- ✓ Please pay particular attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a MARAC or in another way.
  The responsibility for identifying your local referral threshold rests with your local MARAC.
- ✓ **Resources:** Be sure that you have an awareness of the safety planning measures you can offer, both within your own agency and other agencies. Be familiar with local and national resources to refer the victim to, including specialist services. The following websites and contact details may useful to you:
  - ✓ National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 2000 247 - For assistance with refuge accommodation and advice
  - ✓ 'Honour' Helpline - 0800 5999247 - For advice on forced marriage and 'honour' based violence
  - ✓ Sexual Assault Referral Centres - http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/sexual-offences/sexual-assault-referral-centres/referral-centre-locations/
  - ✓ Broken Rainbow - 08452 604460 – www.broken-rainbow.org.uk for advice for LGBT victims

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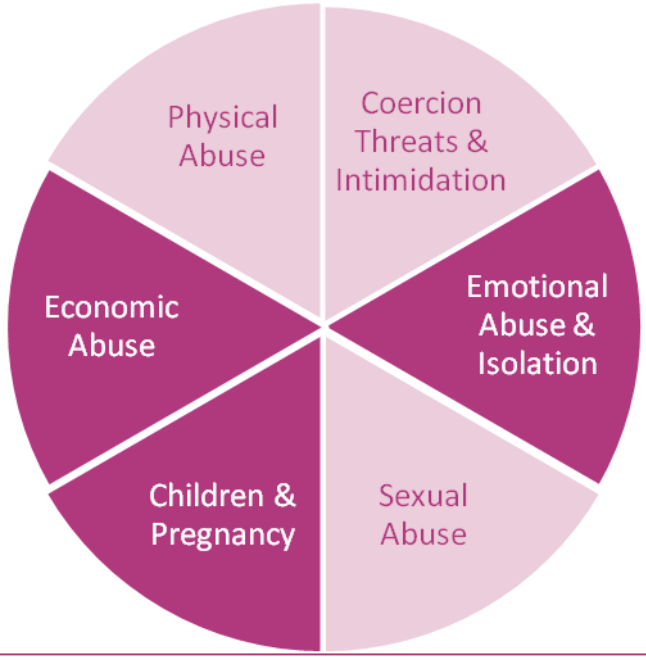
We ask about **PHYSICAL ABUSE** in questions 1, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19 & 23

- ✓ Physical abuse can take many forms from a push or shove to a punch, use of weapons, choking or strangulation.
- ✓ You should try and establish if the abuse is getting worse, or happening more often, or the incidents themselves are more serious. If your client is not sure, ask them to document how many incidents there have been in the last year and what took place. They should also consider keeping a diary marking when physical and other incidents take place.
- ✓ Try and get a picture of the range of physical abuse that has taken place. The incident that is currently being disclosed may not be the worst thing to have happened.
- ✓ The abuse might also be happening to other people in their household, such as their children or siblings or elderly relatives.
- ✓ Sometimes violence will be used against a family pet.
- ✓ If an incident has just occurred the victim should call 999 for assistance from the police. If the victim has injuries they should try and get them seen and documented by a health professional such as GP or A&E Nurse.

We ask about whether the victim is experiencing any form of **SEXUAL ABUSE** in question 16

- ✓ Sexual abuse can include the use of threats, force or intimidation to obtain sex, deliberately inflicting pain during sex, or combining sex and violence and using weapons.
- ✓ If the victim has suffered sexual abuse you should encourage them to get medical attention and to report this to the police. See above for advice on finding a Sexual Assault Referral Centre which can assist with medical and legal investigations.



COERCION, THREATS AND INTIMIDATION is covered in questions 2, 3, 6, 8, 14, 17, 18, 19, 23 & 24.

- ✓ It is important to understand and establish: the fears of the victim/victims in relation to what the perpetrator/s may do; who they are frightened of and who they are frightened for (i.e. children/siblings). Victims usually know the abusers behaviour better than anyone else which is why this question is significant.
- ✓ In cases of 'Honour' Based Violence there may be more than one abuser living in the home or belonging to the wider family and community. This could also include female relatives.
- ✓ Stalking and harassment becomes more significant when the abuser is also making threats to harm themselves, the victim or others. They might use phrases such as "If I can't have you no one else can…"
- ✓ Other examples of behaviour that can indicate future harm include obsessive phone calls, texts or emails, uninvited visits to the victim's home, workplace etc, loitering and destroyed or vandalised property.
- ✓ Advise the victim to keep a diary of these threats, when and where they happen, if anyone else was with them and if the threats made them feel frightened.
- ✓ Separation is a dangerous time: establish if the victim has tried to separate from the abuser or has been threatened about the consequences of leaving. Being pursued after separation can be particularly dangerous.
- ✓ Victims of domestic abuse sometimes tell us that the perpetrators harm pets, damage furniture and this alone makes them frightened without the perpetrator needing to physically hurt them. This kind of intimidation is common and often used as a way to control and frighten.
- ✓ Some perpetrators of domestic abuse do not follow court orders or contact arrangements with children. Previous violations may be associated with an increase in risk of future violence.
- ✓ Some victims feels frightened and intimidated by the criminal history of their partner/ex-partner. It is important to remember that offenders with a history of violence are at increased risk of harming their partner, even if the past violence was not directed towards intimate partners or family members, except for 'honour'-based violence, where the perpetrator(s) will commonly have no other recorded criminal history.

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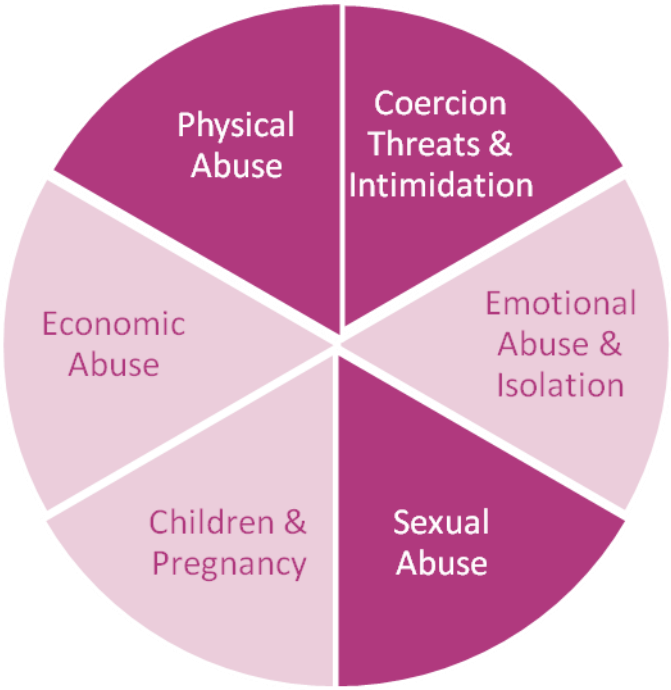
ECONOMIC ABUSE – Question 20

- ✓ Victims of domestic abuse often tell us that they are financially controlled by their partners/ex-partners. Consider how the financial control impacts on the safety options available to them. For example, they may rely on their partner/ex-partner for an income or do not have access to benefits in their own right. The victim might feel like the situation has become worse since their partner/ex-partner lost their job.
- ✓ The Citizens Advice Bureau or the local specialist domestic abuse support service will be able to outline to the victim the options relating to their current financial situation and how they might be able to access funds in their own right.



CHILDREN & PREGNANCY – Questions 7, 9 & 18 refer to being pregnant and children and whether there is conflict over child contact.

- ✓ The presence of children including step children can increase the risk of domestic abuse for the mother. They too can get caught up in the violence and suffer directly.
- ✓ Physical violence can occur for the first time or get worse during pregnancy or for the first few years of the child's life. There are usually lots of professionals involved during this time, such as health visitors or midwives, who need to be aware of the risks to the victim and children, including an unborn child.
- ✓ The perpetrator may use the children to have access to the victim, abusive incidents may occur during child contact visits or there may be a lot of fear and anxiety that the children may be harmed.
- ✓ Please follow your local Child Protection Procedures and Guidelines for identifying and making referrals to Children's Services.

We ask about **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** and **ISOLATION** in questions 4, 5 & 12. This can be experienced at the same time as the other types of abuse. It may be present on its own or it may have started long before any physical violence began. The result of this abuse is that victims can blame themselves and, in order to live with what is happening, minimise and deny how serious it is. As a professional you can assist the victim in beginning to consider the risks the victim and any children may be facing.

- ✓ The victim may be being prevented from seeing family or friends, from creating any support networks or prevented from having access to any money.
- ✓ Victims of 'honour' based violence talk about extreme levels of isolation and being 'policed' in the home. This is a significant indicator of future harm and should be taken seriously .
- ✓ Due to the abuse and isolation being suffered victims feel like they have no choice but to continue living with the abuser and fear what may happen if they try and leave. This can often have an impact on the victim's mental health and they might feel depressed or even suicidal.
- ✓ Equally the risk to the victim is greater if their partner/ex-partner has mental health problems such as depression and if they abuse drugs or alcohol. This can increase the level of isolation as victims can feel like agencies won't understand and will judge them. They may feel frightened that revealing this information will get them and their partner into trouble and, if they have children, they may worry that they will be removed. These risks are addressed in questions 21 & 22.

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If you are a professional working with domestic abuse and would like to know more about the Risk Identification Checklist you can find the following publications on our website:

- ✓ **CAADA-DASH MARAC Risk Identification Checklist (RIC) 2009 for the identification of high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and honour based violence**
  This is the downloadable version of the RIC which has a Severity of Abuse Grid (SAG). The SAG gives practitioners the chance to profile the domestic abuse in more detail and identify significant concerns which may be relevant to include in a safety plan or share at a MARAC.

- ✓ **Practice Guidance for Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) using the CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist 2009**
  This is a full and detailed guide for IDVAs and practitioners using the RIC. It takes you through the process of completing the RIC with your client and provides detail on why and how to ask each question. It also provides supplementary questions to gather additional detail about each risk factor and provides general safety planning advice. This is a helpful guide for IDVAs or practitioners new to the RIC and who want to become more familiar and confident in managing the process.

- ✓ **CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist – without guidance**
  This is a basic version of the RIC to download and use in everyday practice.

- ✓ **CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist – Frequently Asked Questions**
  This addresses a number of practical questions relating to the use of the checklist and the recent changes to the RIC.

For additional information and materials on Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), you can find the following on our website

- ✓ **The new MARAC Guide 2009 – From Principles to Practice**

  This provides detailed guidance on the whole MARAC process and is linked to the 11 Principles which form the basis of the Quality Assurance audit and national standards for MARAC. It is aimed to be used by MARAC steering groups, those MARACs approaching the QA audit and for MARACs who are seeking comprehensive guidance on implementation issues.
- ✓ **MARAC Representatives' Toolkit**
  The representatives' toolkit is designed to be used by MARAC representatives who attend the MARAC meeting itself. It highlights their crucial role in each stage of the process before, during and after the meeting.

- ✓ **Toolkits for specific practitioners attending the MARAC**
  These are aimed at front line practitioners who may encounter a victim of abuse and consider a MARAC referral or who may be asked to undertake research on a MARAC subject or their children. The full range of agencies covered can be viewed on our website this list is being expanded regularly so please keep an eye on this page for updates.

We also have a library of resources and information about your nearest IDVA training course, Continuing Professional Development for IDVAs and how to develop IDVA Services through our Leading Lights programme.

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CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist (RIC)

Aim of the form:

- To help front line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To decide which cases should be referred to MARAC and what other support might be required. A completed form becomes an active record that can be referred to in future for case management.
- To offer a common tool to agencies that are part of the MARAC[1] process and provide a shared understanding of risk in relation to domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To enable agencies to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research of cases, including domestic homicides and 'near misses', which underpins most recognised models of risk assessment.

How to use the form:

Before completing the form for the first time we recommend that you read the full practice guidance and Frequently Asked Questions and Answers[2]. These can be downloaded from www.caada.org.uk/marac.html

Risk is dynamic and can change very quickly. It is good practice to review the checklist after a new incident.

Recommended Referral Criteria to MARAC

1. **Professional judgement:** if a professional has serious concerns about a victim's situation, they should refer the case to MARAC. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. ***This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of 'honour'-based violence.*** This judgement would be based on the professional's experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet criteria 2 and/or 3 below.
2. **'Visible High Risk':** the number of 'ticks' on this checklist. If you have ticked 14 or more 'yes' boxes the case would normally meet the MARAC referral criteria.
3. **Potential Escalation:** the number of police callouts to the victim as a result of domestic violence in the past 12 months. This criterion can be used to identify cases where there is not a positive identification of a majority of the risk factors on the list, but where abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation more fully by sharing information at MARAC. It is common practice to start with 3 or more police callouts in a 12 month period but this will need to be reviewed depending on your local volume and your level of police reporting.

Please pay particular attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a MARAC or in another way.

The responsibility for identifying your local referral threshold rests with your local MARAC.

What this form is not:

This form will provide valuable information about the risks that children are living with but it is not a full risk assessment for children. The presence of children increases the wider risks of domestic violence and step children are particularly at risk. If risk towards children is highlighted you should consider what referral you need to make to obtain a full assessment of the children's situation.

[1] For further information about MARAC please refer to the CAADA MARAC Implementation Guide www.caada.org.uk.

[2] For enquiries about training in the use of the form, please email training@caada.org.uk or call 0117 317 8750.

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CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist for use by IDVAs and other non-police agencies[3] for MARAC case identification when domestic abuse, 'honour'- based violence and/or stalking are disclosed

Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present ☑. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is not the case please indicate in the right hand column	Yes (tick)	No	Don't Know	State source of info if not the victim e.g. police officer
1. Has the current incident resulted in injury? (Please state what and whether this is the first injury.)	☐	☐	☐	
2. Are you very frightened? Comment:	☐	☐	☐	
3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence? (Please give an indication of what you think (name of abuser(s)...) might do and to whom, including children). Comment:	☐	☐	☐	
4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends i.e. does (name of abuser(s) ……..) try to stop you from seeing friends/family/doctor or others? Comment:	☐	☐	☐	
5. Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?	☐	☐	☐	
6. Have you separated or tried to separate from (name of abuser(s)….) within the past year?	☐	☐	☐	
7. Is there conflict over child contact?	☐	☐	☐	
8. Does (……) constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you? (Please expand to identify what and whether you believe that this is done deliberately to intimidate you? Consider the context and behaviour of what is being done.)	☐	☐	☐	
9. Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (within the last 18 months)?	☐	☐	☐	
10. Is the abuse happening more often?	☐	☐	☐	
11. Is the abuse getting worse?	☐	☐	☐	
12. Does (……) try to control everything you do and/or are they excessively jealous? (In terms of relationships, who you see, being 'policed at home', telling you what to wear for example. Consider 'honour'-based violence and specify behaviour.)	☐	☐	☐	
13. Has (……..) ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?	☐	☐	☐	

[3] Note: This checklist is consistent with the ACPO endorsed risk assessment model DASH 2009 for the police service.

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Tick box if factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.	Yes (tick)	No	Don't Know	State source of info if not the victim
14. Has (……..) ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them? (If yes, tick who.) You ☐ Children ☐ Other (please specify) ☐	☐	☐	☐	
15. Has (……) ever attempted to strangle/choke/suffocate/drown you?	☐	☐	☐	
16. Does (……..) do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else? (If someone else, specify who.)	☐	☐	☐	
17. Is there any other person who has threatened you or who you are afraid of? (If yes, please specify whom and why. Consider extended family if HBV.)	☐	☐	☐	
18. Do you know if (……..) has hurt anyone else? (Please specify whom including the children, siblings or elderly relatives. Consider HBV.) Children ☐ Another family member ☐ Someone from a previous relationship ☐ Other (please specify) ☐	☐	☐	☐	
19. Has (…….) ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?	☐	☐	☐	
20. Are there any financial issues? For example, are you dependent on (…..) for money/have they recently lost their job/other financial issues?	☐	☐	☐	
21. Has (……..) had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life? (If yes, please specify which and give relevant details if known.) Drugs ☐ Alcohol ☐ Mental Health ☐	☐	☐	☐	
22. Has (……) ever threatened or attempted suicide?	☐	☐	☐	
23. Has (……) ever broken bail/an injunction and/or formal agreement for when they can see you and/or the children? (You may wish to consider this in relation to an ex-partner of the perpetrator if relevant.) Bail conditions ☐ Non Molestation/Occupation Order ☐ Child Contact arrangements ☐ Forced Marriage Protection Order ☐ Other ☐	☐	☐	☐	
24. Do you know if (……..) has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history? (If yes, please specify.) DV ☐ Sexual violence ☐ Other violence ☐ Other ☐	☐	☐	☐	
Total 'yes' responses				

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For consideration by professional: Is there any other relevant information (from victim or professional) which may increase risk levels? Consider victim's situation in relation to disability, substance misuse, mental health issues, cultural/language barriers, 'honour'- based systems and minimisation. Are they willing to engage with your service? Describe: Consider abuser's occupation/interests - could this give them unique access to weapons? Describe:	
What are the victim's greatest priorities to address their safety?	
Do you believe that there are reasonable grounds for referring this case to MARAC? Yes / No If yes, have you made a referral? Yes/No **Signed:** **Date:**	
Do you believe that there are risks facing the children in the family? Yes / No If yes, please confirm if you have made a referral to safeguard the children: Yes / No Date referral made …….	
Signed: **Name:**	**Date:**

Practitioner's Notes

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