

DHR Bulletin –

Culture & Faith

Focus:

By looking through the recent DHR recommendation, it has been brought to light the importance of understanding culture, religious beliefs and minorities when supporting someone who is experiencing Domestic Abuse.

Key Recommendations regarding the above:

- An extended knowledge of culture/religion of minority communities in Lincolnshire would enhance professional practice.
- An awareness of DA in minority/religious communities would be of benefit

Key Data from Lincolnshire Census 2021

- Lincoln had a larger proportion of residents with different Ethnicities, this was still much lower than England & Wales
- The largest proportion of “White: Other White” Residents lived in Boston (20.53%). There were 8 times more residents of this ethnicity in Boston compared with West Lindsey.
- There were more “Gypsy or Irish Travellers” in West Lindsey (216), and South Holland (168) than other Lincolnshire LAs.
- Boston and South Holland had higher numbers of Romas and South Kesteven and Lincoln, more Irish residents compared to other Lincolnshire LA's.
- Most Lincolnshire residents were either Christian or they did not have a religion.
- Lincoln and Boston had the largest number of residents whose religion was Muslim.

Key Note:

Culture and faith can be seen as an explanation for domestic abuse, however this must be approached with caution. Faith and culture can have both a positive and negative effect on those experiencing domestic abuse.

Key Terms:

‘Sacred Silence’

A spiritual practice recommended in a variety of religious traditions for purposes including facilitation of approaching deity, and achieving elevated states of spiritual purity.

‘Harmonious Home’

A peaceful home, and a concept that indicates that there is love and affection

‘Familism’

The strong identification and attachment of an individual to their nuclear and extended family members

‘Collectivist culture’

Those in which people depend on each other, give priority to common objectives in the group and behavior is conditioned by group norms

Positives

Positives of Faith/religion regarding Domestic Abuse

- Support systems can be a positive influence on people experiencing domestic abuse
- Emotional support can be empowering
- Faith can be seen as having a healing role
- Praying is a positive coping strategy to deal with trauma.

Positives of Culture regarding Domestic Abuse

- Emotional Support from others in similar cultures
- Positive support systems
- Greater understanding of difference cultures

Barriers to engaging with communities

Culture and religion can have a huge influence on people's values and beliefs, how they behave, what they view as acceptable behavior and how they view other people and authorities. All these factors can affect how professionals are able to engage with communities.

Key Examples can include:

- Families being very private; they do not like to share information.
- Communities are reluctant to ask for help
- Negative view of children's services, the assumption that they will take children away, or not understanding their culture.
- Language barriers
- There are certain negative connotations associated with having money troubles or needing support, especially asking for help outside the family or community.

How can we help?

It is vital to be aware of interpreter discomfort when working with people experiencing domestic abuse.



Cultural or Religious Values to be aware of that could be detrimental towards DA

- Stigma attached to divorce
- Males being head of the household
- Elder Females upholding certain traditions
- Stigma around men being victims of Domestic Abuse
- Interpretations of key teachings
- Disloyalty when leaving a relationship
- Arranged marriages can be seen to have more support than marriages based on love.
- 'Behind closed doors'
- Stigma surrounding discrediting culture and families.

Higher level of interpreter discomfort due to stereotypes

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non-disclosure of abuse by victim

- Listen fully and believe the person
- Be aware of cultural differences and values, and how these can affect how the person experiencing DA could interpret these differences.
- Complete an S-DASH/DASH with the person
- Encourage keeping a diary if safe to do so
- Ensure that in reporting to police, you have incident number and future reporting includes that original incident number as well
- If a civil order is breached, encourage reporting this, but also report as stalking pattern
- Call 999 if feeling in immediate danger, If you don't speak or answer questions, press 55 when prompted and your call will be transferred to the police
- National guidance suggests not to block someone who is harassing/stalking you as this could entice them to change their tactics and physically turn up which could put you at more risk.

Specifically, regarding culture, it would be necessary to build up trust with people experiencing domestic abuse and the communities, as this will help enable them to access support. It is vital to reassure that they are in a safe space and address any anxieties they have surrounding services.

Support Services Available:



Developing excellence
in response to FGM

National FGM Centre

www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk



Karma Nirvana

www.karmanirvana.org.uk



Faith Action

www.faithaction.net



Muslim Women's Network

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



Iranian Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)

<https://ikwro.org.uk/>