

# Learning from reviews of Serious Cases and Domestic Homicides

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Some reflections on coercive control drawn  
from Domestic Homicide Reviews

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- **Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim**
- **Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour**

**“In one important way, an abusive man works like a magician, distracting your attention so that you won’t notice where the real action is. He draws you into focusing on the turbulent world of his feelings to keep your eyes turned away from the true cause of his abusiveness, which lies in how he *thinks*.”**



**Lundy Bancroft**

**Abuse grows from attitudes and values, NOT feelings**



**The branches are CONTROL**

**The trunk is ENTITLEMENT**

**The roots are OWNERSHIP**

**“Their value system is unhealthy, not their psychology”**



**“You want your partner to be this compass and you want to be North. No matter where the compass goes, or what she’s doing, or what’s on her mind ,you expect her to always be focused on you”**

**Lundy Bancroft**

## **Evan Stark's Three R's**

**“Men who enjoy these habits of mind think they are entitled to continually assess what their partners think and feel, how they behave, and how they use their personal time and resources”**

***RIGHTEOUS*** The coercive controller becomes the arbiter of what constitutes moral behaviour in a wife

***REASONABLE*** Contrasted with 'emotional' responses of women

***RATIONAL*** Contrasted with the 'Hysterical' and 'irrational' responses of women



## **Awareness of age in domestic abuse cases**

- **Victims aged 61+ are much more likely to experience abuse from a current intimate partner than those under 60 (41% against 28%)**
- **They are more likely to be living with the perpetrator after getting support (32% against 9%).)**
- **It seems that victims within this age group *'may feel additional pressures to stay with an abusive partner related to the length of time they have experienced the abuse. For example they may feel increased anxiety about leaving behind a lifetime of contributions to ..homes, assets***

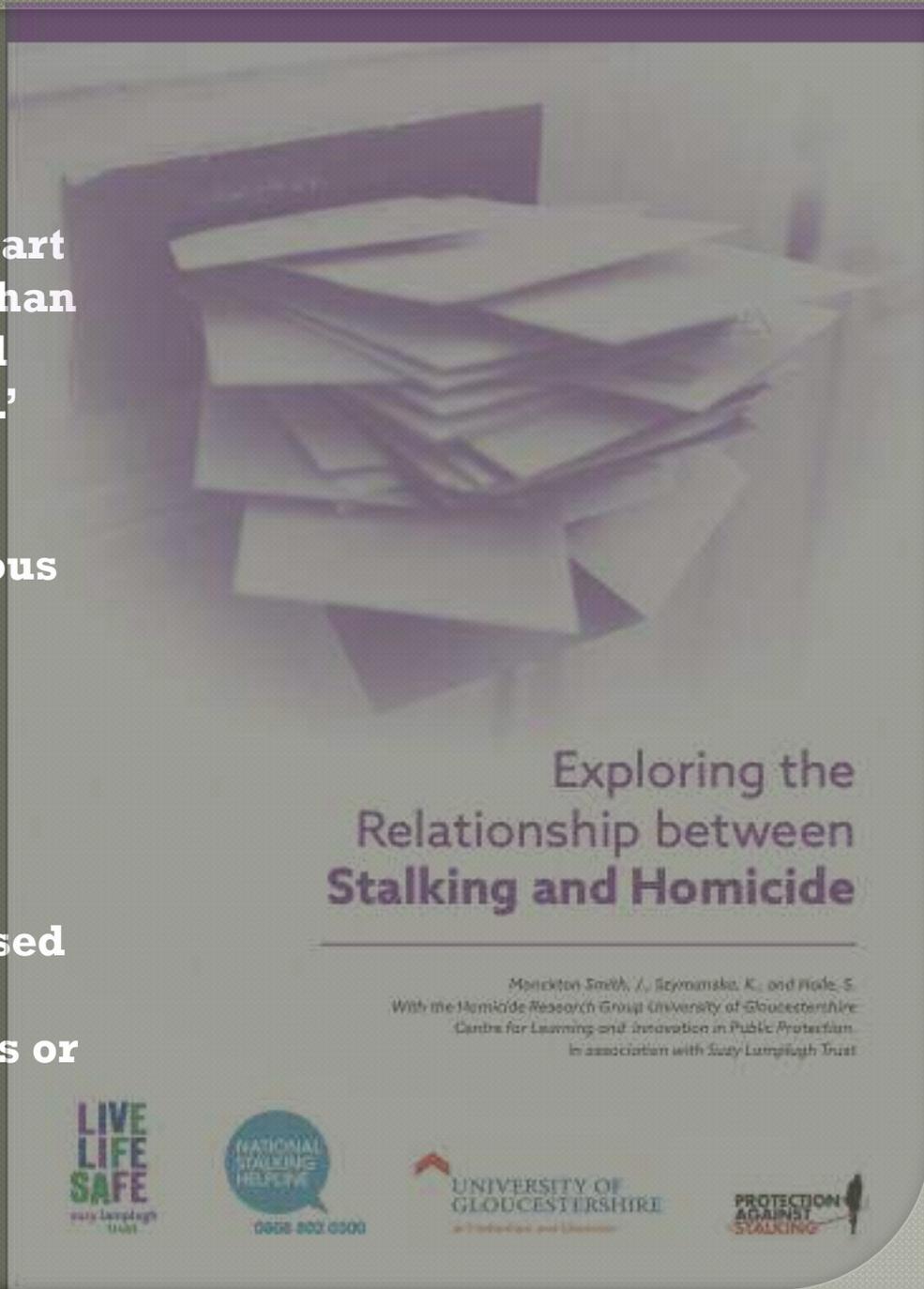
**Safe Later Lives: Older People and Domestic Abuse (October 2016)**

**“Domestic violence and abuse can be compared to a chronic condition where clinicians are supporting the patient and encouraging self management . The difference with patients experiencing domestic violence is that the perpetrator is in the background undoing and sabotaging all the good work being attempted by the clinician and patient.”**

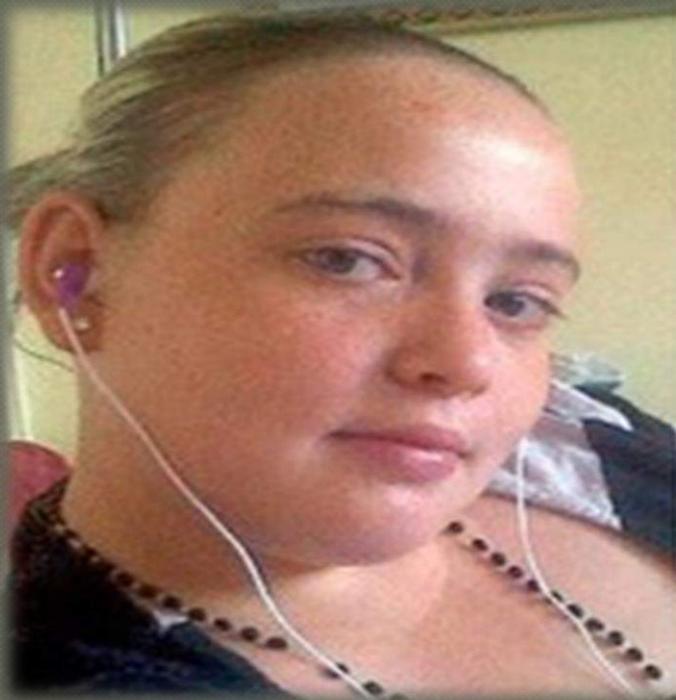
***Royal College of General Practitioners***



- **358 homicides between 2012 and 2014**
- **‘Homicides appear to occur as part of an emotional journey rather than an explosion of spontaneous and immediately provoked violence.’**
- **Escalation in concerning behaviours and ‘trigger for serious harm.’**
- **Stalking in 94% of cases**
- **Control in 92% of cases**
- **More actions should be recognised as stalking behaviour, like vexatious or baseless allegations or court action.**







**Miriam**



**Graham**

## The family Support Worker's view of the family dynamic

**“I went round to see the family one lunchtime. The place was pretty untidy and cold, and the kids were all at home, in pyjamas . Miriam said they were getting over colds, so that's why they weren't in school or nursery.**

**Miriam seemed particularly edgy and argumentative. I asked what they were having for lunch and she said 'don't ask me'**

**Graham was there. He just said to her, “ she's right Miriam, this place does needs tidying up; I'm tired of clearing up your bottles and crap.”**

**Miriam started literally screaming at him, “why don't you do it if your so perfect?- you make me sick.” I thought she was going to hit him . He got up and said, “ look I'll go – I just wanted to help.” Then Miriam started crying and grabbed hold of him saying, “No, no I need you. I can't cope on my own.”**