

## Post-separation:

Presenting difficulties

Mother has lost the respect and authority to manage the parenting task.

Child presents behavioural difficulties.

Mother underestimates the impact of the abuse on the child.

Mother and child struggle to acknowledge or talk to each other about the domestic abuse.

Mother and child have poor self-esteem.

Mother-child relationship is damaged.

## Domestic Abuse: Recovering Together (DART) programme

### Inputs

Manualised programme of 10 group sessions for mothers and children aged 7-14 who no longer live with the domestic abuse perpetrator

#### Subjects include:

- Understanding domestic abuse
- Challenging emotions
- Making healthy relationships
- Managing loss and embracing change
- Safety planning

### Change mechanisms

- Improving communication between mother and child
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Breaking down the idea of "family secret"
- Helping mothers and children understand how domestic abuse has impacted their relationship
- Helping mothers and children deal with feelings – anger, guilt, responsibility
- Helping mothers and children in taking responsibility without blaming self
- Improving mothers' confidence in parenting
- Helping mothers and children move forward as a family unit
- Equipping mothers and children with skills to continue to develop positive relationships at home

## Exposure to abuse:

Disrupting the parent-child relationship

Mother, struggling for her own survival in an abusive relationship, is likely to have insufficient resources for parenting.

Child's experience of disrupted parenting causes confusion and anxiety.

Children who see their mother experiencing domestic abuse are also likely to feel unsafe.

## Domestic Abuse: Recovering Together (DART)

### Outcomes

Mother has increased confidence and self-esteem, which leads to safer parenting and greater emotional availability.

Child feels less anxious and is less likely to present difficult behaviour.

Child has improved self-esteem, enabling them to make better friendships.

Mother-child relationship is strengthened.

## Long-term vision:

Breaking the cycle of intergenerational transmission

- Child is less likely to become :
- a domestic abuse perpetrator.
  - a domestic abuse victim.

## Key findings from evaluation

After completing DART...

- Almost two thirds (62%) of mothers with low self-esteem reported substantial improvement.
- 88% of children who found their mothers struggled to show them affection reported substantially improved relationships.
- Over half (51%) of children with high/moderate behavioural and emotional difficulties reported substantially lower levels of need. Mother-child relationship is strengthened.

