**Domestic Abuse – Offering Support**

When you are supporting someone who is experiencing domestic abuse, remember

* the Home-Start approach of

a listening ear

non-judgmental support to look at the options

building up confidence to make choices

 are the most valuable things you can offer

* let her know that

you believe what she is saying

you are concerned about her and the children – they have a right to be safe

she is not on her own in facing this – help is available

she is not to blame

she need not feel ashamed

* don’t criticise her partner – she may feel you are criticising her for choosing him and staying with him
* don’t advise her how to avoid provoking him – that sounds like saying it’s her fault that she is abused
* encourage her to seek confidential, practical advice from helplines
* be patient, it may take her some time to get to the point of seeking outside help
* realise how complicated it is for a women to leave her home and don’t blame her for not leaving
* domestic abuse isn’t a private matter, it is against the law – women have a right to be safe in their own home and to able to keep their children safe
* It is unlikely to stop of its own accord or because the perpetrator suddenly reforms – if it is unchallenged and unchecked, it will get more frequent and more severe
* Domestic abuse has long lasting negative effects not only on women but also on children
* If you witness abuse, never intervene physically – you can contact the police and they will investigate