What is Honour Based Abuse?

Honour Based Abuse is a complex issue that can manifest itself in different ways; includes a range of harms and abuses; and can be perpetrated by a range of people.

While there is no statutory definition for Honour Based Abuse, it is defined as

Any incident or pattern of controlling; coercive; manipulative; intimidating; or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse perpetrated by one or more family, extended family, and/or community members and/or current/former intimate partners in response to perceived or alleged transgressions of accepted behaviours. While most often perpetrated against women and girls, anyone can experience honour based abuse regardless of age, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, or gender, including men and boys.

It can encompass but is not limited to:

Psychological, emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual and faith-related, economic, financial, and hate-aggravated abuse; forced marriage; female genital mutilation; abduction; isolation; threats; murder; and other acts of domestic abuse.

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The Concept of Honour

For some communities, the concept of 'honour' is prized above the safety and wellbeing of individuals. To compromise a family's 'honour' is to bring dishonour and shame – which can have severe consequences.

It can lead to the justification of emotional and physical abuse, disownment, and in extreme cases, even murder to preserve family honour and avoid shame.