

Isolation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has been pervasive for domestic abuse victims: for those self-isolating with someone who is harming them, it may seem that there is no way out.

In her recent podcast, entitled *In the Face of Devastation*, Bishop of Gloucester Rachel Treweek (also Anglican Bishop for Women's Prisons) discusses domestic violence with the Nelson Trust*.



The conversation quickly reveals that lockdown has not only resulted in a rise in domestic abuse – but also a notable decline in the accessing of

support services.

In these volatile days, Bishop Rachel conveys this message to her listeners: “If you’ve been ground down, if your self-esteem is so low – because you’ve been told lies about yourself – and you have been seeking love – which actually is not really love” she encourages listeners that, “there is a different way”.

As the Nelson Trust explain the work of Peer Support Groups and Peer Mentors, Bishop Rachel reflects on the power of hearing the experiences of “someone who has lived a story that you can relate to.”

“Change is possible. But you need support” says Bishop Rachel.

Writing in a [previous blog on domestic abuse](#), Melissa Caslake, the Church of England’s National Director of Safeguarding, recommends: “get advice from your Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and of course if you think that someone is in immediate danger, call the police on 999. For victims knowing they not alone, particularly during these restrictions, can be the first step.”

For more advice and information on sources of support and useful guides, please visit [this webpage](#).

**Bishop Rachel Treweek is President of the Nelson Trust. The Nelson Trust supports women and girls with multiple and complex needs and who are either in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the Criminal Justice System in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset. Their services are trauma-informed and gender responsive providing holistic support for women and their families.*

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