

Domestic Abuse

Non-fatal Strangulation

Non-fatal strangulation can be used as a form of assault in domestic abuse and a history of strangulation can significantly increase the risk of an eventual fatality. Non-fatal strangulation is often used to instill fear and exert power and control. Victims who experience non-fatal strangulation may believe at the time that they will die as a result. Loss of consciousness, even temporary, can cause brain damage, this includes long-term neurological damage such as memory loss and facial droop. In addition, loss of consciousness can create an increased risk of miscarriage and stroke. Despite the strong link between non-fatal strangulation and domestic homicide, it can be difficult to identify due to a lack of visible injury. Visible marks are not always present but the absence of marks should not undermine an account of non-fatal strangulation.

Also see: Institute for Addressing Strangulation (IFAS). (trix please link to <https://ifas.org.uk/resources/>) for additional resources.

Non-fatal strangulation is a criminal offence. Section 70 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (trix please link to <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/section/70>) amends Part 5 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 (trix please link to <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/part/5/crossheading/strangulation-or-suffocation>) to provide that a person commits the offence of strangulation or suffocation if they intentionally strangle another person or do any other act that affects another person's ability to breathe. Non-consensual or harmful non-fatal strangulation can also arise in a sexual context and is also an offence under the Act.

Further Information (new links)

Non-fatal Strangulation or Non-fatal Suffocation Legal Guidance (CPS) (trix please link to <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/non-fatal-strangulation-or-non-fatal-suffocation>)

Institute for Addressing Strangulation Resources (IFAS) (trix please link to <https://ifas.org.uk/resources/>)

Guidelines for clinical management of non-fatal strangulation in acute and emergency care services (IFAS) (trix please link to <https://ifas.org.uk/guidelines-for-clinical-management-of-non-fatal-strangulation-in-acute-and-emergency-care-services/>)

[Counter allegations | Review of practice guidance - SafeLives](#) Sometimes with domestic abuse there are counter allegations, where both parties allege that the other is abusive.