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Solidarity through dance for survivors of domestic abuse

DURING lockdown, national domestic abuse helpline Refuge has seen a 25% spike in calls for help.

Now, a Northumberland professional dancer, who was previously in an abusive relationship, has launched a project to show courage and solidarity for victims of domestic abuse.

Esther Huss invites domestic abuse survivors to come together in the hope of inspiring victims to seek help and to show that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Using her talent, Esther has set up a dance project and is reaching out to other courageous survivors to make a dance video.

Wanting to showcase the power, dignity and hope of survivors of domestic abuse, Esther has created a short piece of choreography for Project Angry Daughters, which will be performed to Durham-based singer Katie Doherty's song, *Angry Daughters*.

Esther then asks for the domestic abuse survivors to video themselves dancing to her choreography and send their footage back to her, which she will collate and produce a film from.

The issue of domestic abuse is very close to her heart after she left an abusive relationship seven years ago, and Esther hopes her project will make a difference to victims of abuse.

The 37-year-old said: "Hearing about the deeply concerning reality

of domestic abuse numbers soaring, I asked myself what I could do to give hope and encourage people in those situations.

"Though this song was not specifically written about domestic abuse, its sentiment about resilience and inner strength deeply resonated and felt appropriate for this project.

"I thought it gave a powerful message to bring together survivors of domestic abuse, female or male, to dance to this song.

"To showcase their courage, strength and hope, inspiring people currently in abusive relationships to believe in a life free from fear at home and domestic abuse.

"Every person deserves to be deeply treasured by those around them."

Esther, who is originally from Germany, moved to London to study dance when she was 17 years old.

While encouraging people to seek

help, Esther hopes the project will showcase their strength, hope and determination.

She added: "This project is for survivors of domestic abuse, it does not provide one-to-one support for people currently experiencing it.

"It is very important to me that this project focuses on the person as they are now, after having come out of a domestic abuse situation.

"It does not tell their backstory or unpick details of how they managed to get out. It is a showcase of their present self, and I feel this is really crucial.

"Project Angry Daughters is about looking ahead, providing courage and a taste of what one's future self could look like, it's about encouraging vulnerable individuals to feel hope."

■ For more information about the project, visit www.esther-moves.com



► Professional dancer Esther Huss has launched Project Angry Daughters