



Definition

Strangulation is defined as asphyxia by closure of the blood vessels and/or air passages of the neck as a result of external pressure on the neck. There are three main categories: hanging, ligature strangulation and manual strangulation.

Non-fatal strangulation (NFS) is where the patient has not died.

NFS is not always linked to domestic abuse cases, it can be caused by any person and may not be someone personally connected to the victim.

NHS Guidelines

- These guidelines are new and were only published in Feb 2024.
- The guidance is aimed at clinicians in acute and emergency care services.
- It has been developed to guide the investigation and management, including appropriate imaging requests, of adult and adolescent patients who have experienced non-fatal strangulation within the last 4 weeks, or are presenting beyond 4 weeks but are symptomatic.
- DBTH position: These NHS guidelines have been shared with key Trust departments and further work is in progress, engaging Emergency Department and relevant Clinical Specialities departments to demonstrate how we are assured as a Trust that this national guidance is being followed.



Scan the QR Code to see the NHS Guidelines

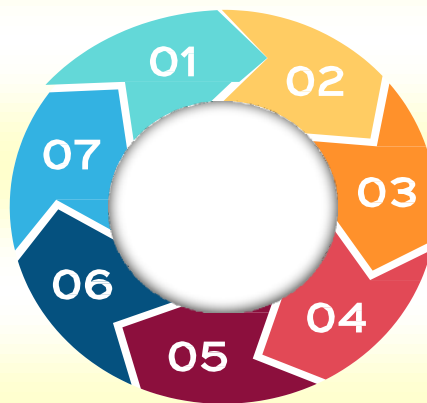
Referrals

If you receive a disclosure of non-fatal strangulation caused by a person 'personally connected' to the patient, then please consult the DBTH DA Reporting Flowchart →



As well as safeguarding referrals for the patient, consider the safety and welfare of any children under 18 years / any unborn who are linked to the patient or perpetrator & refer to Social Care and hospital safeguarding teams.

Safeguarding: 7 Minute Briefing



Signs & Symptoms

Professionals need to be aware that only 50% of people who are strangled will have any visible injury to the neck or head. However, some symptoms may include:

- Redness, finger marks, bruising, swelling or ligature marks to the neck
- Raspy or hoarse voice
- Trouble swallowing
- Petachiae to eyeball and eyelid
- Loss of memory, consciousness or sensation
- Incontinence



Scan to see the full list of signs & symptoms

Statistics

It is estimated that more than 20,000 victims in the UK experience strangulation each year

1 in 11 adult sexual assault victims were strangled during the assault.

25% of domestic homicides reviewed by the DHR process were caused by strangulation.

1 in 4 women accessing community and refuge services reported having experienced strangulation or suffocation.

Children were present in more than a third of non-fatal strangulation offences, according to analysis of a sample of cases by the Crown Prosecution Service

NFS is a HIGH risk factor of domestic abuse

ALL NON-FATAL STRANGULATION CASES MUST BE THIRD PARTY REPORTED TO THE POLICE. IT IS A CRIME!

Strangulation Timeline

