

Is Your Relationship Based On Power & Control?

The most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them. These are the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem.

However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, makes up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they still instill threat of future violent acts and allow the abuser to take control of the woman's life and circumstances. The power and control diagram (1), is particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer, to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of the other types of abuse. They are not easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.

Tactics used by an abuser

Emotional Abuse

Putting her down, Making her feel bad about herself, Calling her names, Making her think she is crazy, Playing mind games, Humiliating her, Making her feel guilty

Isolation

Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes, Limiting her outside involvement, Using jealousy to justify actions.

Intimidation

Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures, smashing things, destroying her property, Abusing pets. Displaying weapons.

Minimizing, Denying and Blaming

Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously, Saying the abuse didn't happen, Shifting responsibility for the abusive behavior, Saying she caused it.

Male Privilege

Treating her like a servant, Making all the big decisions, Acting like the "master of the castle", Being the one to define men's and women's roles.

Using Children

Making her feel guilty about the children, Using the children to relay messages, Using visitation to harass her, Threatening to take the children away.

Economic Abuse

Preventing her from getting and keeping a job, Making her ask for money, Giving her an allowance, Taking her money, Not letting her know about or have access to family income.

Coercion and Threats

Making and carrying out threats to do something to hurt her, Threatening to leave her to commit suicide, to report her to welfare, Making her drop charges, Making her do illegal things.

(1) See source: <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wheels/>. This page is the text form of the diagram.