POWERAND WHEEL

Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the action that allows others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the abuser, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the partner's life and circumstances.

The Power and Control Wheel is a particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which the abuser uses to establish and maintain control over the partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are less easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.

POWER & CONTROL

COERCION & THREATS

Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt the partner. Threatening to leave or commit suicide.

Forcing them to drop charges or do illegal things.

GENDER PRIVILEGE

Treating the partner like a servant. Making all the big decisions. Acting like the "master of the castle." Being the one to define the partner's roles. Making a false allegation.

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Preventing the partner from getting a job, or demanding they work longer hours or get a second job. Making them ask for money or giving them an allowance. Not letting them have access to family income.

USING CHILDREN

Making the partner feel guilty about the children. Criticizing them in front of the children. Telling the children they don't love them. Interfering with visitation. Threatening to take the children away.

INTIMIDATION

Making the partner afraid by using looks, actions, and gestures. Smashing things. Destroying their property. Abusing pets. Displaying weapons.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Putting the partner down.

Making them feel bad about themselves. Name calling.

Making them think they are crazy.

Playing mind games. Humiliating them. Making them feel guilty.

ISOLATION

Controlling what the partner does, who they see and talk to, what they read, and where they go. Limiting outside activities. Using jealousy to justify actions.

MINIMIZING, DENYING, & BLAMING

Making fun of the abuse.
Not taking the partner's
concerns seriously. Saying the
abuse didn't happen. Shifting
responsibility for the abusive
behaviors. Saying the
partner caused it.



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