

POWER AND *control* 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.

