

The Power & Control Wheel



The Power & Control Wheel Explained:

Physical abuse is one form of domestic or intimate partner violence. It is characterised by the pattern of actions that an individual uses to intentionally control or dominate his intimate partner. That is why the words "power and



control” are in the centre of the wheel. A perpetrator systematically uses threats, intimidation, and coercion to instil fear in his partner. These behaviours are the spokes of the wheel. Physical and sexual violence holds it all together—this violence is the rim of the wheel.

Dominance – Abusive individuals need to feel in charge of the relationship. They will make decisions for you and the family, tell you what to do, and expect you to obey without question. Your abuser may treat you like a servant, child, or even as his possession.

Humiliation – An abuser will do everything he can to make you feel bad about yourself or defective in some way. After all, if you believe you're worthless and that no one else will want you, you're less likely to leave. Insults, name-calling, shaming, and public put-downs are all weapons of abuse designed to erode your self-esteem and make you feel powerless.

Isolation – In order to increase your dependence on him, an abusive partner will cut you off from the outside world. He may keep you from seeing family or friends, or even prevent you from going to work or school. You may have to ask permission to do anything, go anywhere, or see anyone.

Threats – Abusers commonly use threats to keep their partners from leaving or to scare them into dropping charges. Your abuser may threaten to hurt or kill you, your children, other family members, or even pets. He may also threaten to commit suicide, file false charges against you, or report you to child services.

Intimidation – Your abuser may use a variety of intimidation tactics designed to scare you into submission. Such tactics include making threatening looks or gestures, smashing things in front of you, destroying property, hurting your pets, or putting weapons on display. The clear message is that if you don't obey, there will be violent consequences.

Denial and blame – Abusers are very good at making excuses for the inexcusable. They will blame their abusive and violent behaviour on a bad childhood, a bad day, and even on the victims of their abuse. Your abusive partner may minimize the abuse or deny that it occurred. He will commonly shift the responsibility on to you: Somehow, his violent and abusive behaviour is your fault.

