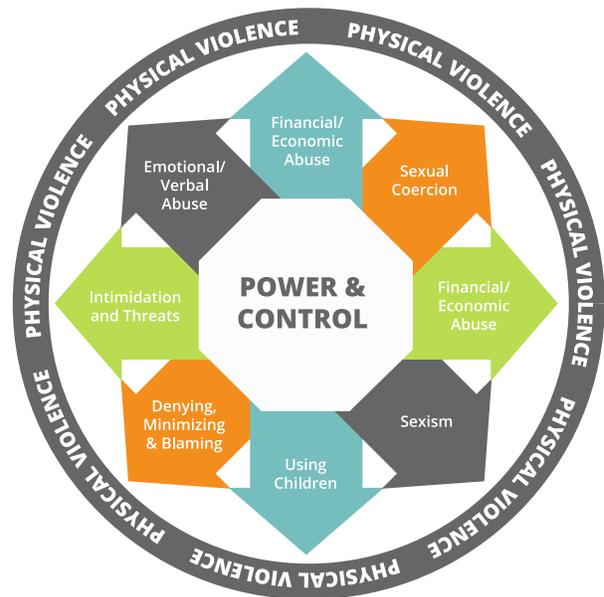


# Unhealthy Relationships

---

Consider the following definition of abuse: "Abuse is an attempt to gain power or control over another person using physical, emotional, sexual, or financial tactics."

The "Wheel" you see shows that Power and Control are at the center of an abusive relationship. In other words, abuse is when there is a pattern of one person trying to gain power and control over the other. One of the most obvious or blatant ways to control another person is by using violence -- such as hitting a person, holding someone down, or sexually assaulting someone. However, there are other ways of controlling a person that do not include physical violence and are not so easy to spot. Instead of using physical or sexual violence, many abusers may use verbal, emotional, psychological or financial tactics to control the other person. Some examples of these forms of abuse are shown in between the "spokes" of the wheel. They are more subtle, often people do not recognize them as abuse. But they are abuse, and they often lead to physical violence.



## Intimidation and Threats

- Using looks/actions/gestures/voice to scare partner
- Throwing/smashing things, showing weapons, destroying property, punching walls or other objects
- "Play fighting" that is meant to show strength and power over partner
- Threatening to hurt partner or someone s/he cares about
- Threatening to commit suicide

## Emotional/Verbal Abuse

- Constant criticism, name -calling, put -downs
- Playing mind games
- Embarrassing or humiliating partner
- Guilt -trips
- The "silent treatment"
- Spreading rumors or telling secrets
- Insulting partner's race or heritage
- Damaging partner's personal property

### Sexual Coercion

- Manipulating partner into sex, including using guilt trips or threats
- Unwanted touching
- Pressuring partner for sex
- "Playful" use of force during sex
- Treating partner like a sex object
- Sexual harassment
- Drugging someone/having sex while they are too drunk or high to make a clear decision about whether they want to have sex

### Financial/Economic Abuse

- Preventing partner from getting/keeping a job
- Keeping partner on an allowance
- Making partner give you his/her money
- Using someone for their money
- Expecting sexual acts in return for spending money are partner

### Sexism

- Discrimination based on gender
- Using the belief that males are superior to females or that males have certain privileges that females should not have, to justify controlling partner
- Being the one to define male/female roles
- Expecting the male to make all the big decisions

- "Rules" for the relationship that are not the same for both partners

### Using Children

- Pressuring partner to get pregnant
- Using children as a way of creating dependency
- Threatening to take away children or not allow contact with children
- Hurting or threatening to hurt the children
- Telling or threatening to tell the children negative things about partner
- Threatening to report partner to child welfare

### Denying, Minimizing and Blaming

- Denying the abuse or acting like it is not that serious
- Not taking the partner's concerns about the abuse seriously
- Saying the partner "brought on" the abuse by something s/he did or didn't do or saying s/he deserves the abuse
- Not taking responsibility for one's own behavior

### Isolation & Extreme Jealousy

- Controlling who partner is friends with, where s/he goes, what s/he does
- Separating partner from family
- Not letting partner work or be involved in his/her own activities
- Keeping constant tabs on partner, including through pager or cell phone
- Accusing partner of cheating as a way of manipulating him/her
- Using jealousy to justify controlling behavior