

# Domestic Violence and Coercive Control in Relationships



# Course Description

- ▶ Abusers use a variety of Coercive Control Tactics in their relationships to keep their spouses/partners constantly on guard.
  - ▶ Learn to identify various types of coercive control tactics abusers use, how those coercive control tactics impact their spouses/partners, their children, and the view outsiders have of their relationships.
  - ▶ Learn how cognitive distortions manifest in the various coercive control tactics.
  - ▶ Learn how to challenge cognitive distortions or avoid being manipulated by them.
  - ▶ Be able to identify various coercive control tactics survivors present in church interventions, criminal and civil courts.

# Course Agenda

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What is coercive control?

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What are the types of coercive control tactics abusers use in relationships?

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How do abusers use coercive control tactics?

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Impacts of coercive control tactics on spouses/partners

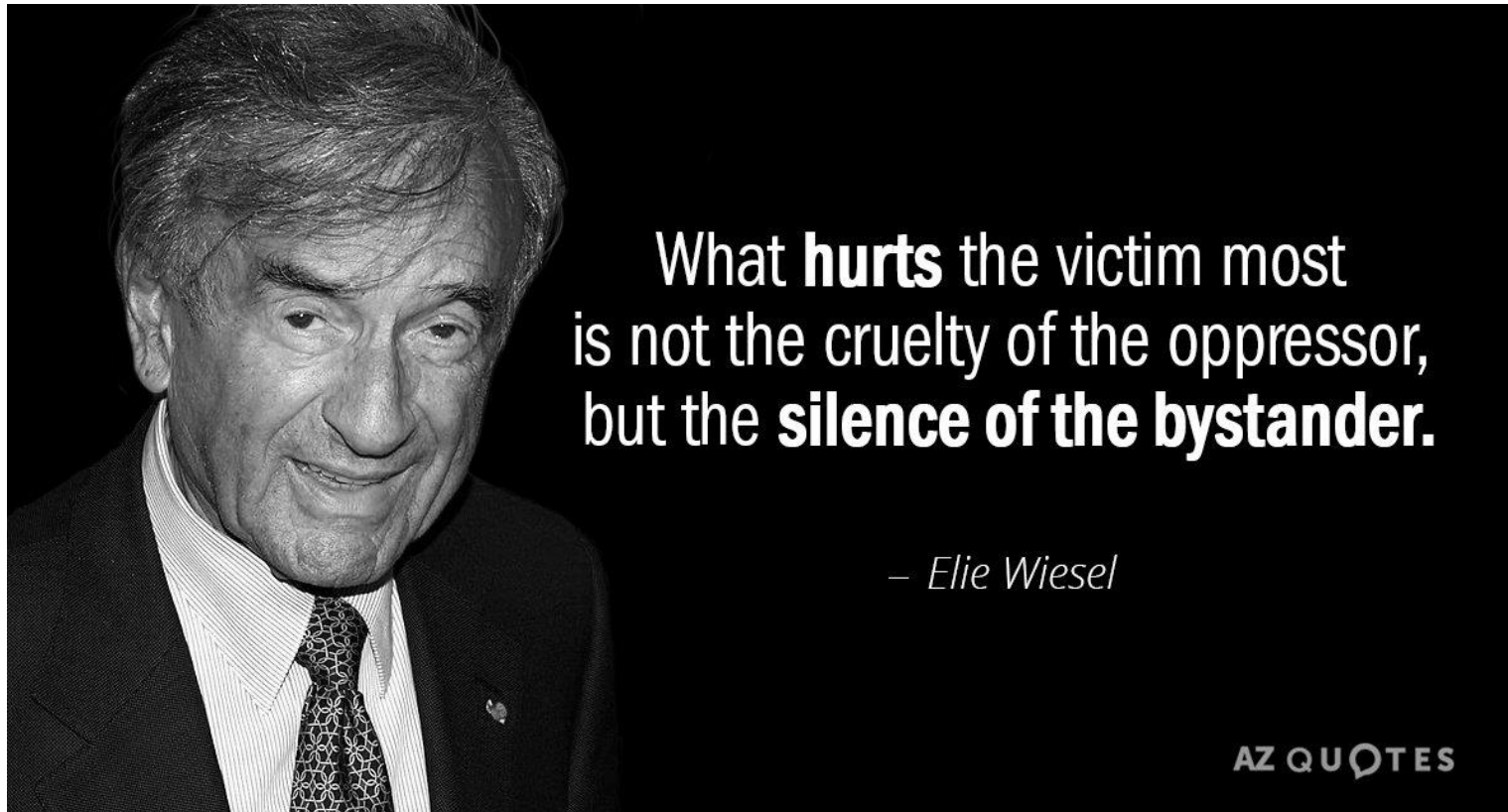
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Impacts of coercive control tactics on children

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Outsiders view of relationships where coercive control tactics used

# Stand Up-Speak Out for the Oppressed Advocacy Personified

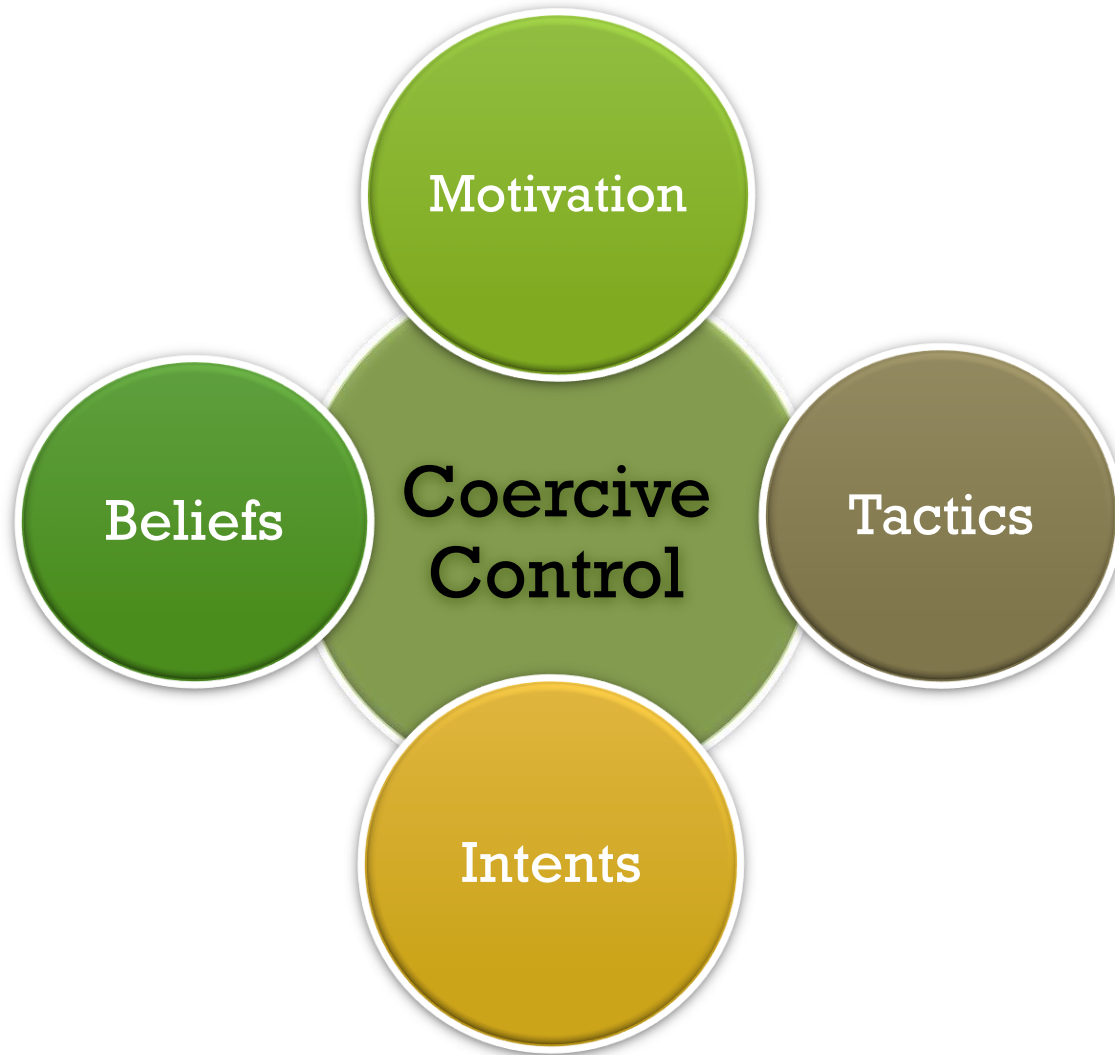


What **hurts** the victim most  
is not the cruelty of the oppressor,  
but the **silence of the bystander.**

– *Elie Wiesel*

AZ QUOTES

# Multi-faceted Nature of Coercive Control





**From “Domestic Violence”**

**The Landscape is changing**



**to “Coercive Control”**

# Origins of Coercive Control: Evan Stark's Work

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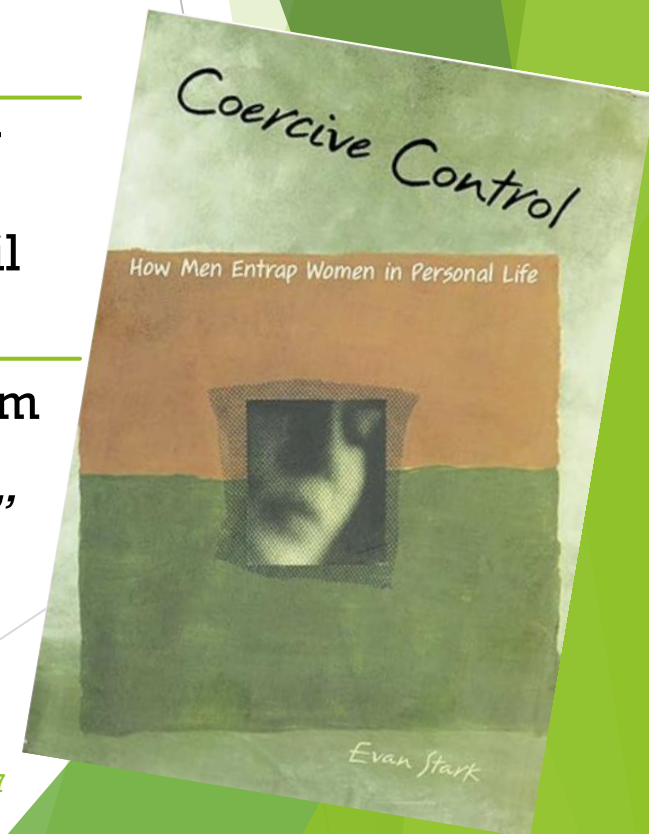
## Stark re-framed “Battering” to “Coercive Control”

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“Shifts the emphasis to the abuser’s **patterned behavior**, accounts for ‘**entrapment**’ without relying on either a victimization or pathology model and broadens the claims of battered women for justice and civil liberty.” (Stark, 1995, pg. 3)

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“Pattern of oppression...an offense to liberty that prevents women from freely developing their personhood, utilizing their capacities, or practicing citizenship, consequences they experience as entrapment.” (Stark, 2007, pg. 4)



# What is Coercive Control-based Domestic Abuse?

## Two types of Domestic Abuse:

### Situational Couple Violence (SCV) and Coercive Controlling Violence (CCV)

- **SCV**- “results from arguments or situations that escalate to physical acts but is not part of a larger motive to control one’s partner.” (Hardesty, et. al., 2015)
- **CCV (or intimate partner terrorism)**- “is violence that occurs in the context of coercive control, with the use of both violent and nonviolent tactics aimed at maintaining dominance over one’s partner.” (Johnson, 2008)
  - Caused by one partner striving to **control and subordinate** the other (Stark, 2007)
  - **Domination, restriction of human rights, removal of freedom and liberty**



# Coercive Control

- ❖ **Coercive control** in intimate partner violence (IPV) is described as a dynamic process linking a demand with a credible threatened negative consequence for noncompliance. (Dutton, Goodman, & Schmidt, 2006)



- ❖ **Intimate terrorism (IT)** with and without physical violence
- ❖ Psychological maltreatment
- ❖ “Abusive pattern remains largely outside the scope of evaluation and decision-making in family court.” (Stark, 2010, pg. 11-11)

# Coercive Control: Multiple Study Findings

**Coercive control** is an abusive dynamic that incorporates **intimidation, microregulation, restricting a partner's autonomy, humiliation, and manipulation to ultimately exert control over an intimate partner.** (Kaplenko, Loveland, & Raghavan, 2018)

**“Coercion encompassed psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.”**

**Controlling behavior** was defined as **“making a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday lives.”** (Stark, E., & Hester, M., 2019)

**“All of characteristic effects of battering may be produced even when no violence has occurred or when violence has not occurred for some time.”** (Stark, 2010, pg. 11-11)

# Generality of Coercive Control

## Core of coercive control theory- surveillance & microregulation

- Analogous to other capture crimes, like hostage-taking, kidnapping, or prisoners of war (Stark, 2007, pg. 203)
- Biderman's Chart of Coercion (Biderman, 1957)
- Betrayal Trauma is one result (Freyd, 2020)

## Development and Validation of a Coercive Control Measure for Intimate Partner Violence

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/214438.pdf> (Dutton, Goodman, & Schmidt, 2006)

## **Aim of coercive control:**

- To usurp and master a partner's subjectivity
- Individualized and personal dimensions
- Focus on imposing sex stereotypes in everyday life

## **Result:**

- a condition of **unfreedom**
- experienced as **entrapment**
- gendered in its construction, delivery, and consequences (Stark, 2007, pg. 205)

# **Particularity of Coercive Control**

# Purpose of Coercive Control Tactics

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Intimidate

---

Humiliate

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Exploit

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Isolate

---

Control partner

---

Gain power over partner

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Dominate

---

Manipulate

# Grounding Break



# Coercive Control is Counterintuitive

If you love your partner, how would you treat them?

If you enjoy the most intimate relationship with the person you are partnered with, how would you treat them?

If you commit to a monogamous relationship, how do you maintain that trust?

If a child's bedtime is 8 p.m. while residing with both parents, what would you expect the parents to do post-separation?

If children are provided healthy meals and snacks prior to separation, what would you expect both parents to do post-separation?

# Coercive Controllers Use of Four C's





# Cunning

“Abusers lull *[her]* into a sense of security and safety. They do this by letting *[her]* know they will protect *[her]* and make sure *[she is]* safe from any outside harm. What they do not tell *[her]* is that *they* will be the source of harm to *[her]* in the future. They are just waiting for *[her]* to tell them how much *[she]* love[s] them and only want to be with them for the rest of *[their lives]*.”

Excerpt from Eyes Wide Open: Help! with Control Freak Co-parents (© 2014, Wingfield)



[Amazon book link: https://a.co/d/iypGKdZ](https://a.co/d/iypGKdZ)

# Conning

“Abusers show *[her]* how wonderful they are and that *[she is]* now forever in debt to them for rescuing *[her]* from *[her]* previous “awful” situation. Abusers con *[her]* into believing that they really love *[her]* and that *[she is]* the only one for them.”

Excerpt from *Eyes Wide Open: Help! with Control Freak Co-parents* (©2014, Wingfield)



# Convincing

“Abusers reinforce what they have conned *[her]* into believing about them. They will lie and exaggerate to “make *[her]* feel” that *[she]* “want[s] to take care of them” because they have been hurt or abused themselves. They appeal to the “rescuer” in *[her]* and say they understand what *[she]* *[has]* experienced in prior abusive relationships or with *[her]* parents because the same thing happened to them.”

Excerpt from *Eyes Wide Open: Help! with Control Freak Co-parents* (© 2014, Wingfield)

# Charming

“Abusers know how to say and do “all the right things” to feed into *[her]* fantasies of being cared for, loved, and, nurtured. He buys just the right presents, brings flowers at just the right time, and woos *[her]* until *[she convinces [herself]* he will always treat *[her]* as special. He counts on *[her]* falling under the spell of romance as described in all the books, songs, and movies that end with the couple “living happily ever after.”

Excerpt from Eyes Wide Open: Help! with Control Freak Co-parents (© 2014, Wingfield)

# Power over, never “between” partners

## WHY WAS THE BANK ROBBED?

- What did the bank do wrong?
- How did it fail?
- Is this bank prone to robberies?
- Does it have a history of being robbed?
- Why didn't the bank see it coming?
- Didn't it notice the red flags?
- What was the bank wearing?
- Had it advertised about having money?
- The bank was robbed because the robber made a **choice**. **Stop blaming the bank for the robbery. The robbery was a premeditated, carefully calculated crime.**

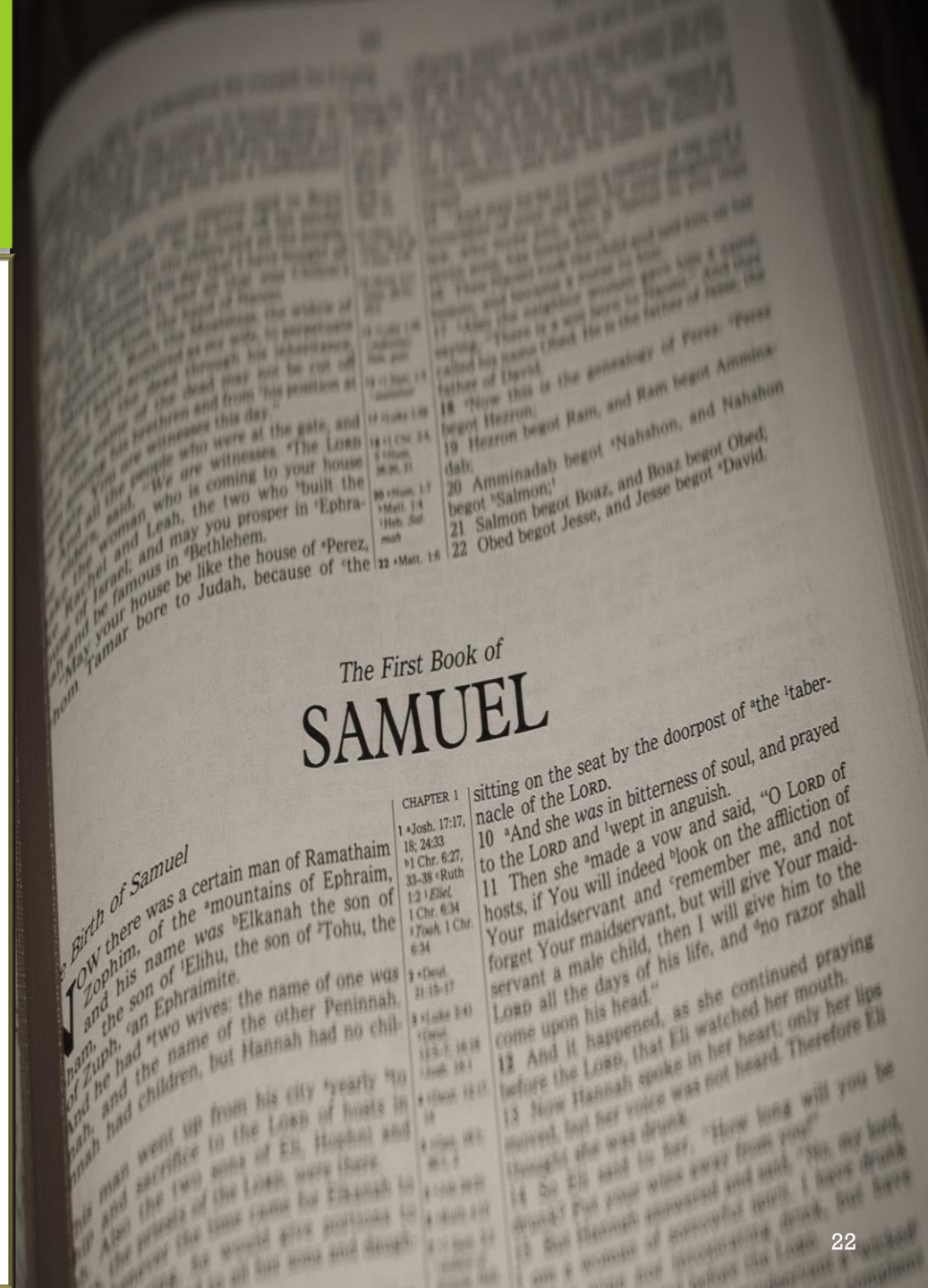
~Missy Burns



# Dynamics of Coercive Control/ Abuse in Scripture

- ▶ Story of Amnon & Tamar (2 Samuel 13)- account of assault and abuse
- ▶ “Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel; and the man was very rich, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And it came about while he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the man’s name was Nabal, and his wife’s name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but **the man was harsh and evil in his dealings...**” (1 Samuel 25:2-3, full story 2-35)

▶ Story of Saul & David (1 Samuel 18-31)-  
<https://joyforrest.wordpress.com/2015/10/20/a-biblical-account-of-the-abusive-personality/>



# Dynamics of Coercive Control/ Abuse in Scripture

2 Timothy 3:1-5 "But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be **lovers of self**, lovers of money, **proud, arrogant, abusive**, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, **unappeasable**, slanderous, without self-control, **brutal, not loving good, treacherous**, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. **Avoid such people.**" (ESV, emphasis added)



# Coercive Control Statutes

**Domestic violence** comprises a range of behaviors beyond physical and emotional abuse. Abusers often use violence, intimidation, degradation and isolation to deprive victims of their rights to physical security, dignity and respect.

Evan Stark has been encouraging the use of “**coercive control**” to describe a **course of oppressive behavior grounded in gender-based privilege**.

**Note:** few elements of coercive control are currently considered criminal, or are only crimes when committed against strangers, which further complicates this issue within the context of domestic violence.



# Moving toward Criminalization of Coercive Control

- ▶ 2011 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (also known as **CoE Istanbul Convention**)
  - ▶ Highlights gender-based violence committed against women
  - ▶ Serves as the blueprint for *defining* various forms of violence against women (VAW)
  - ▶ Creates a legal framework to protect women against all forms of violence
  - ▶ Does not specifically use the term "coercive control," but rather **psychological violence-** provides *criminalization* of many forms of VAW, including psychological violence
  - ▶ For more information, visit:  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/630297/EP\\_RS\\_ATA\(2018\)630297\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/630297/EP_RS_ATA(2018)630297_EN.pdf)



ACTION AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence



PREVENTION

PROTECTION

PROSECUTION

CO-ORDINATED POLICIES

# Criminalizing Coercive Control

UK Statute 2015: The **Serious Crime Act** closed a gap in the law by creating a new offence of **controlling or coercive behaviour** in intimate or familial relationships (section 76). The offence carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

Constituted by behaviour on the part of the perpetrator which takes place "repeatedly or continuously"

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Victim and alleged perpetrator must be "personally connected" at the time the behaviour takes place.

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Must have had a "serious effect" on the victim (caused the victim to fear violence will be used against them on "at least two occasions", or it has had a "substantial adverse effect on the victims' day to day activities")

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Alleged perpetrator must have known that behaviour would have a serious effect on the victim (or such that he or she "ought to have known")

# UK Statute: First to Define Coercive Control in Criminal Law

The **Domestic Abuse Act (2021)**, update to Serious Crime Act) is the only UK legislation with a specific statutory sentencing aggravation to reflect the **harm that can be caused to children** growing up in an environment where domestic abuse takes place.

How to emulate the UK Statute:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/28/domestic-violence-law-coercive-control-abuse-partners-courts>

# Other Country's Statutes

- ▶ **Australia, New South Wales- Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act** HB2425 was introduced in 2020, passed in 2022, and makes coercive control in current and former intimate partner relationships a criminal offence. The offence has not commenced yet and will likely commence in July 2024.
- ▶ **Canada- Bill 207, Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act** received royal assent in 2020, definition of “family violence” includes “any conduct by a family member towards another family member that constitutes a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.”
- ▶ **France-** adopted **Law 2010-769** in 2010, a ban against “psychological violence within marriage,” becoming the first country to officially criminalize psychological abuse. France has also enacted protections for victims along with high penalties, including fines and imprisonment. In July 2020, improvements were made to protect victims and children.
- ▶ **Ireland-** Coercive control is provided for in section 39 of the **Domestic Violence Act 2018**. After January 1, 2019, coercive control is a criminal offence.
- ▶ **Scotland-** The **Domestic Abuse Act 2018**, which came into force April 1, 2019, created a specific offense of domestic abuse that covers not only physical abuse, but other forms of psychological harm and coercive and controlling behavior. Scotland has the most extensive laws on coercive control.
- ▶ **Wales-** in the **Serious Crimes Act of 2015**, the Government in Wales criminalized coercive control along with the UK.

# Advocates for Change in Statutes

- ▶ <http://endcoercivecontrol.org/>
- ▶ <https://www.nationalsafeparents.org>
- ▶ Safe Child Act (federal level, US)-  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-concurrent-resolution/72#:~:text=H.-,Con>

Coercive Control Bill Tracker:

<https://www.theacecc.com/billtracker>



# U.S. State Statutes

- ▶ Arkansas- § 9-15-219 (2021)- includes adding “Course of control” language
- ▶ California
  - ▶ **SB 1141** (2020)- amends CA family law code to include coercive control
  - ▶ **Piqui’s Law SB331** (2023)- prohibits courts from ordering children into unregulated services known as reunification camps and ensures training is developed and established for judicial officers involved in domestic violence and child custody matters
- ▶ Connecticut- **Jennifer’s law SB1091** (2021) includes a working definition of coercive control into law to protect partners and children
- ▶ Colorado
  - ▶ **Julie’s Law** (2021)- requires domestic violence training for family court professionals and requires the courts to make children’s safety a top priority in domestic violence-related divorce cases
  - ▶ **Ty’s Law** (2021)- applied similar requirements to the child welfare system

# U.S. State Statutes

- ▶ Colorado (cont.)
  - ▶ **HB23-1108** (2023)- creates a task force to make recommendations for judicial training to improve outcomes in alleged domestic violence cases
  - ▶ **HB23-1178** (2023)- makes court comply with federal “Keeping Children Safe from Family Violence Act,” including clarifying the role of experts in domestic violence cases, and how past incidents of abuse can be considered; prevents the Colorado courts from removing children from a protective parent to whom the children are bonded or ordering reunification therapy with an accused abuser
- ▶ Florida- **Greyson’s Law HB781/SB1106** (2021) adds a definition of coercive control to into the state law to add further protections to children
- ▶ Hawaii- **HB2425** (2020) signed an extensive criminal coercive control bill into law
- ▶ Maryland- **HB1352** (2020) expands the state definition of abuse and adds coercive control as a reason to petition for a peace or protective order

# U.S. State Statutes

- ▶ New York- **Assembly Bill A2375C** (2021) requires that court ordered forensic evaluations involving child custody and visitation be a licensed psychologist, social worker or psychiatrist who has completed a training program developed by the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- ▶ Pennsylvania- **Kayden's law/Senate Bill 55** (2023)- includes requiring training for court professionals and supervised visitation at a minimum when there is a potential risk to the child's safety
- ▶ South Carolina- **HB5271** (2020) introduced to amend the Domestic Violence Bill, adding section 16-25-130 which creates the offense of Coercive Control.
- ▶ Washington State- **House Bill 1901** (2022) amends Washington state's protection order system to include coercive control to legislation that was thoroughly reformed last year with the passage of HB1320



# Violence Against Women Act

- ▶ **The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) creates and supports comprehensive, cost-effective responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.**
- ▶ Since its enactment in 1994, VAWA programs, administered by the U.S. Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Health and Human Services (HHS), have dramatically improved federal, tribal, state, and local responses to these crimes.
- ▶ <https://nnedv.org/content/violence-against-women-act/>

## What is the Violence Against Women Act?

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) creates and supports comprehensive, cost-effective responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. Up for renewal every five years, each VAWA reauthorization builds on existing protections and programs to better meet survivors' needs.



# VAWA Reauthorization 2022, Title XV

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE



See the course webpage for full VAWA reauthorization information or visit

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3623/text>

# VAWA SEC. 1503: PURPOSES

To prioritize child safety in private custody proceedings in State court

To strengthen the ability of courts to recognize and adjudicate domestic violence and child abuse

To ensure that court personnel are appropriately trained in the dynamics, signs, and impact of domestic violence, using a trauma-informed approach



# Grounding Break



# Captivity Crime Defined

(proposed by D. Wingfield)

- Coercive control is a **captivity crime** that involves:
  - (a) mental control of the captive,
  - (b) threats of negative consequences,
  - (c) patterns of control that entrap the captive in the relationship,
  - (d) the captive makes more than one unsuccessful attempt to escape,
  - (e) the captive may only escape after
    - (i) major escalation of coercive control, (ii) significant injury requiring medical intervention, (iii) significant law enforcement intervention, (iv) threats of significant harm or significant harm to children, (v) harm to children that involves child protective services and intervention from same.



# Captivity Crime

## (proposed by D. Wingfield)

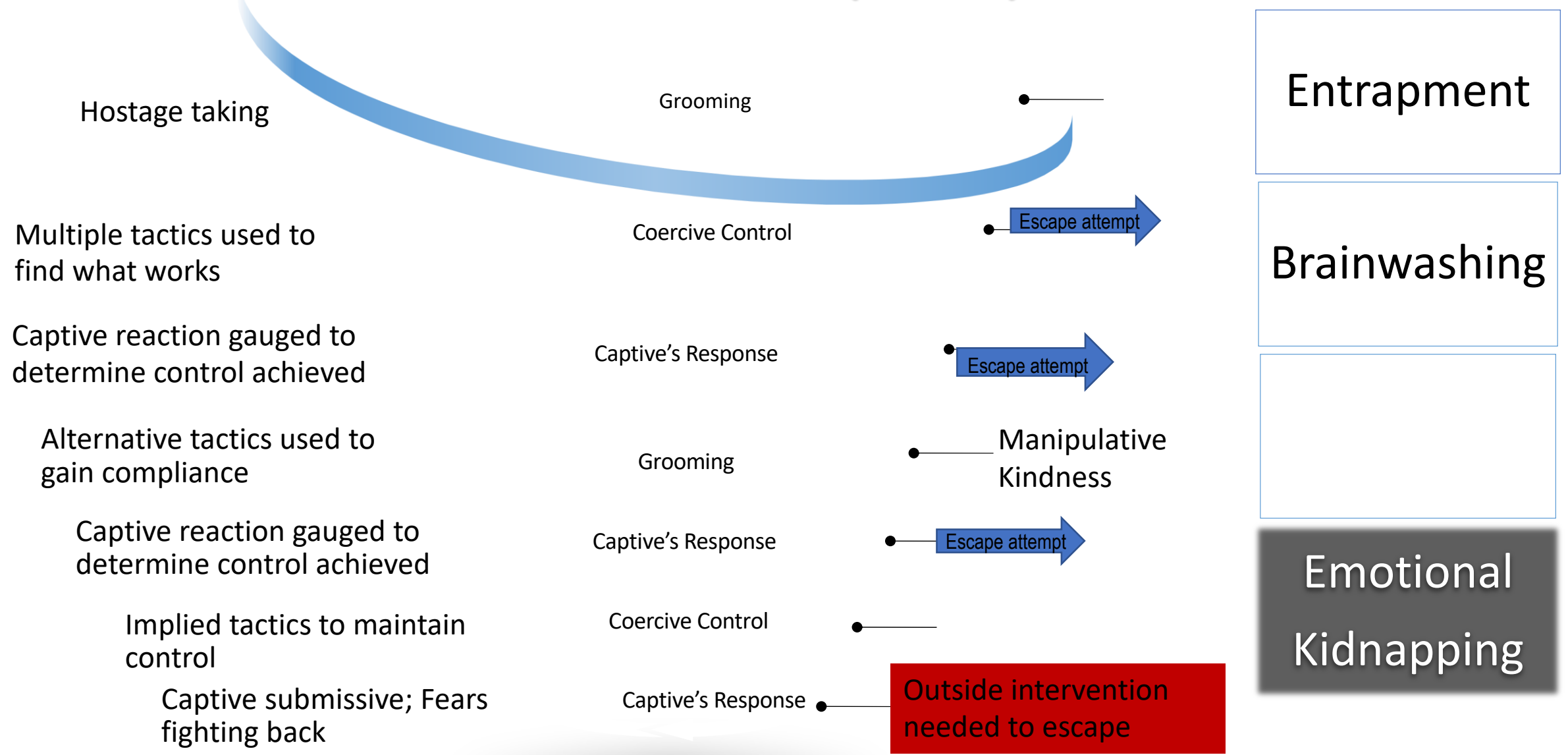
### *What is mental kidnapping?*

- While there are situations of physical confinement by abusers of their abused partner, coercive control without physical violence is very commonly reported by survivors. To understand how this works, I equate it to “Psychological kidnapping” as defined by the American Psychological Association- depriving a person of the free functioning of his or her personality. The term is sometimes used to describe the psychological mind control attributed to cults. See also [brainwashing](#).

### *What is emotional blackmail?*

- Emotional blackmail is part of captivity crimes used to maintain coercive control over the abused partner even when the abuser is not present. Emotional blackmail entails similar tactics to brainwashing. The American Psychological Association defines “brainwashing” as a broad class of intense and often coercive tactics intended to produce profound changes in attitudes, beliefs, and emotions. Targets of such tactics have typically been prisoners of war and members of religious cults.

# Coercive Control=Captivity Crime



# Coercive Control Course of Conduct

## Violating

Violating physical integrity

- Physical/sexual assault

## Denying

Denying respect and autonomy

- Intimidation
- Threats
- Emotional attacks
- Using children
- Male privilege
- Minimization
- Blame-shifting

## Depriving

Depriving social connectedness

- Isolation
  - Deprivation of resources
  - Imprisonment
- Depriving of respect and lowest level of human kindness

## Appropriating or denying

Appropriating or denying access to resources required for personhood and citizenship

- Control of time and movement



# Typical Case Of Coercive Control

Frequency

Severity

Even routine

Minor assaults

Often  
accompanied  
by coerced sex

(Stark, pg. 11-11)



# Six Elements of Coercive Control in Intimate Relationships



1) Agent's communication of demand, request, or expectation;



2) Agent's communication of the threat of a meaningful negative consequence;



3) Agent's surveillance of the target's response;



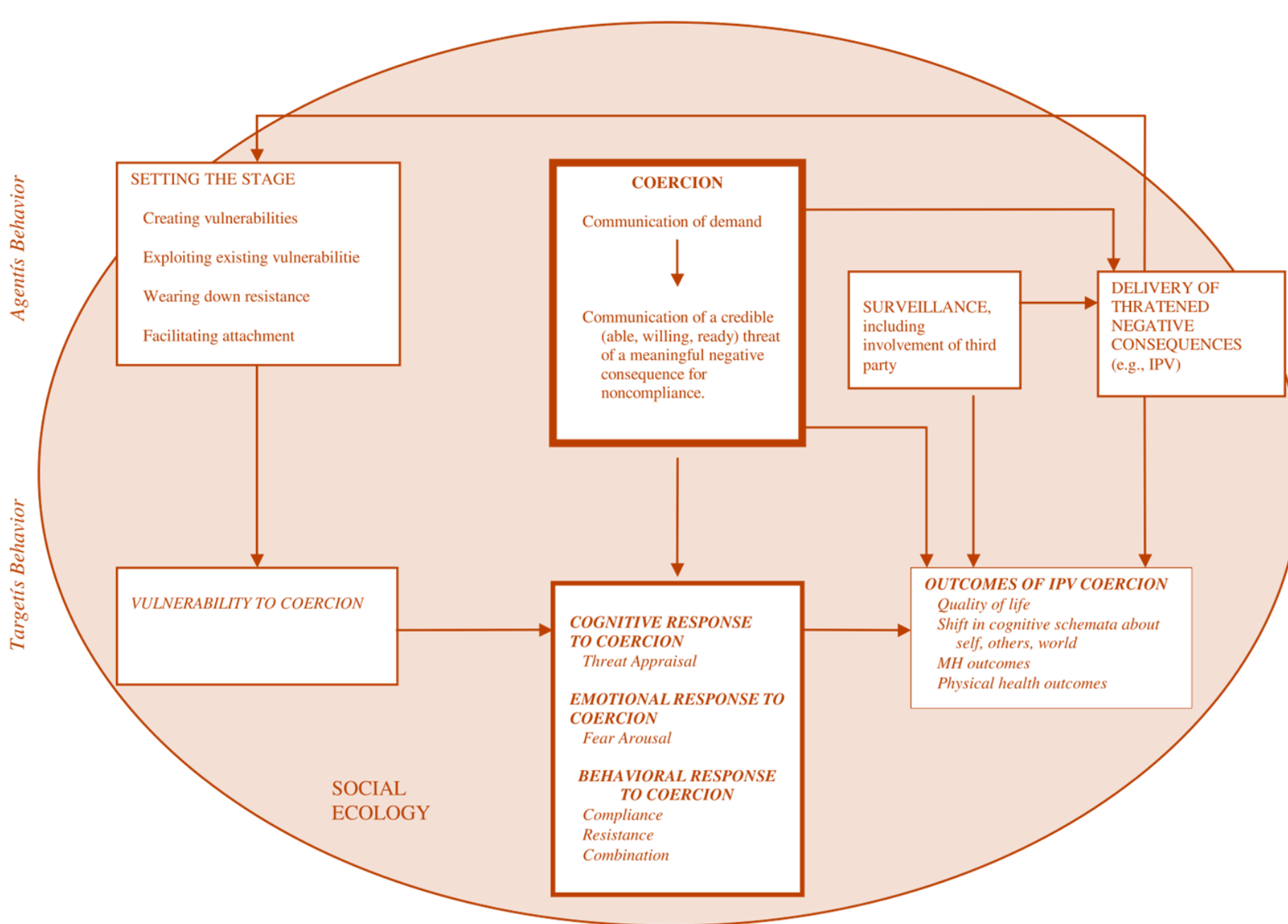
4) Agent's setting the stage for social influence;



5) Target's response to the demand, request, or expectation;

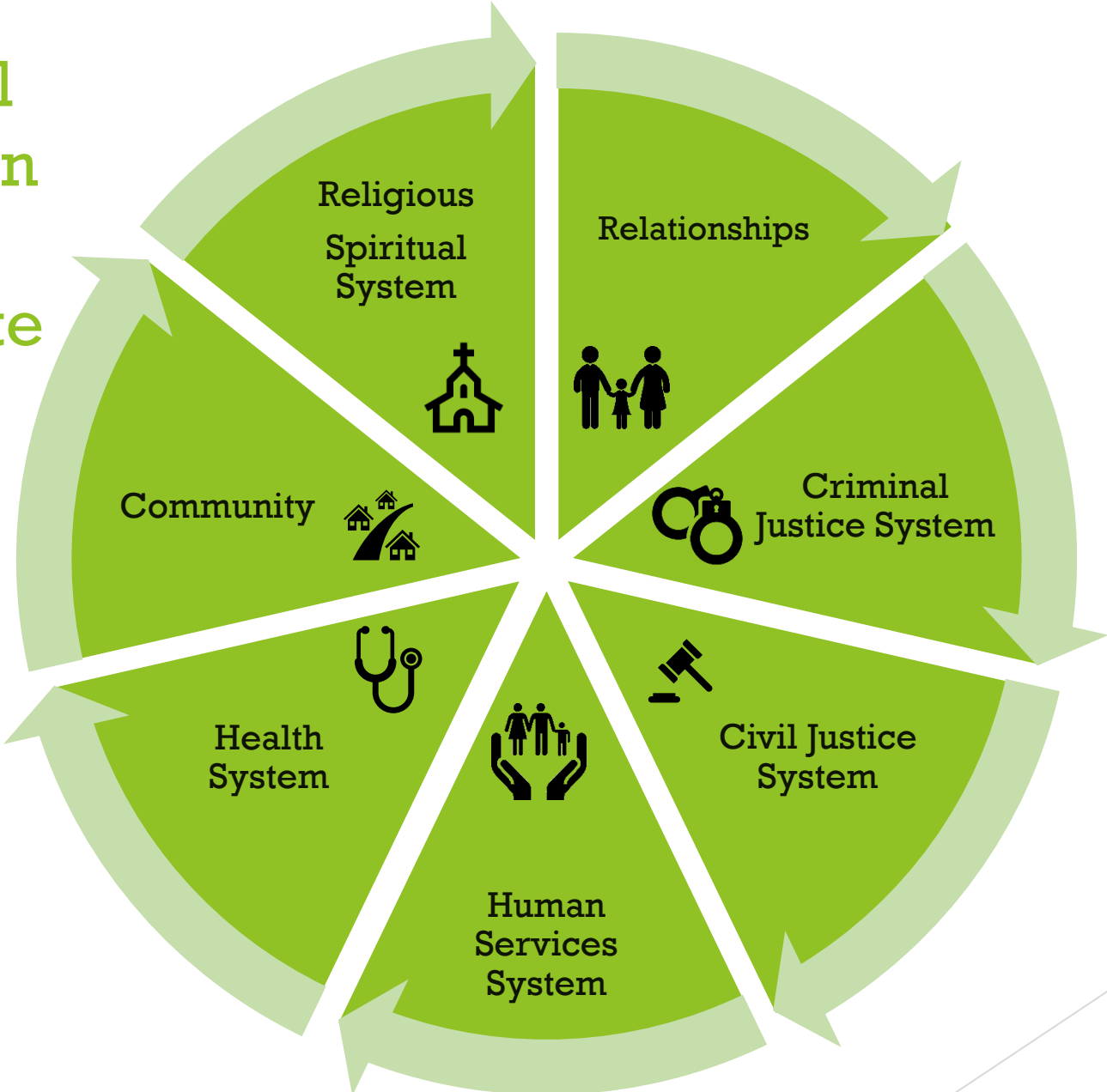


6) Relational context surrounding the coercion? (Dutton & Goodman, 2005)



**Fig. 1.** Model of coercion in intimate partner violence.

Coercive Control tactics are used in multiple settings to control intimate partners.



When you finally escape the hold your abuser has on your mind you get a whole new outlook on life. There's an overwhelming sense of **FREEDOM** you get while finding yourself once again. You'll want to do things you haven't been able to do for a while. Its like being set free from prison. And sometimes being alone never felt so good!



# God Hates Abuse (Oppression) & His Heart is for the Oppressed

“The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.”

Psalm 103:6

“The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked,  
*And the one who loves violence His soul hates.*” Psalm 11:5

“For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help,  
The afflicted also, and him who has no helper.  
He will have compassion on the poor and needy,  
And the lives of the needy he will save.  
*He will rescue their life from oppression and violence,  
And their blood will be precious in his sight..*” Psalm 72:12-14

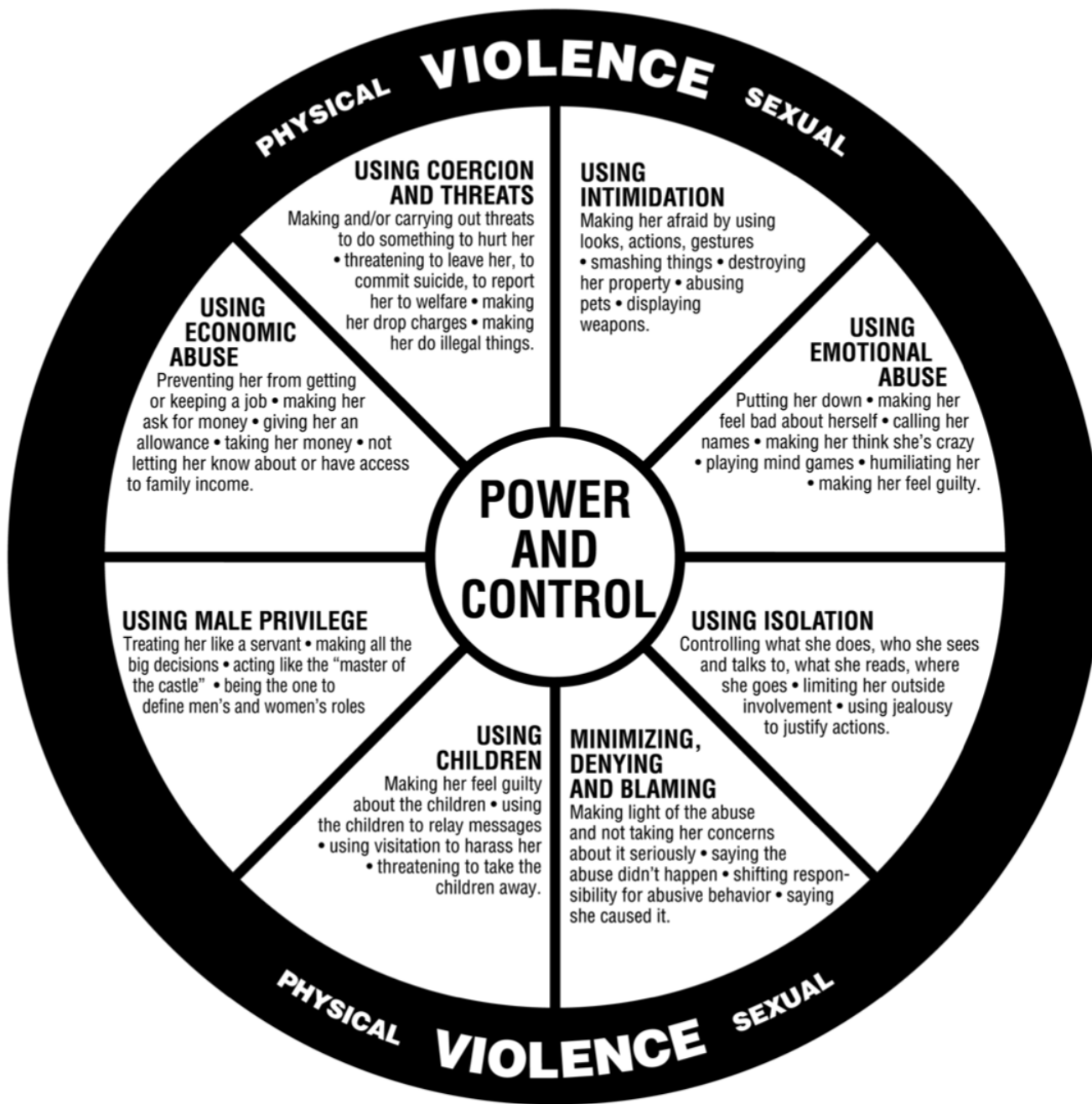


# God Hates Abuse (Oppression) & His Heart is for the Oppressed

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, **to set at liberty those who are oppressed**, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Luke 4:18-19

“Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, **against those who oppress** the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.” Malachi 3:5





One of many wheels developed to show how power and control is used in various situations.



# Types of Coercive Control Tactics

Intimidation

Isolation

Emotional abuse

Threats

Using children

Financial/ Economic

Using Male Privilege

Minimizing, Denying,  
Blaming

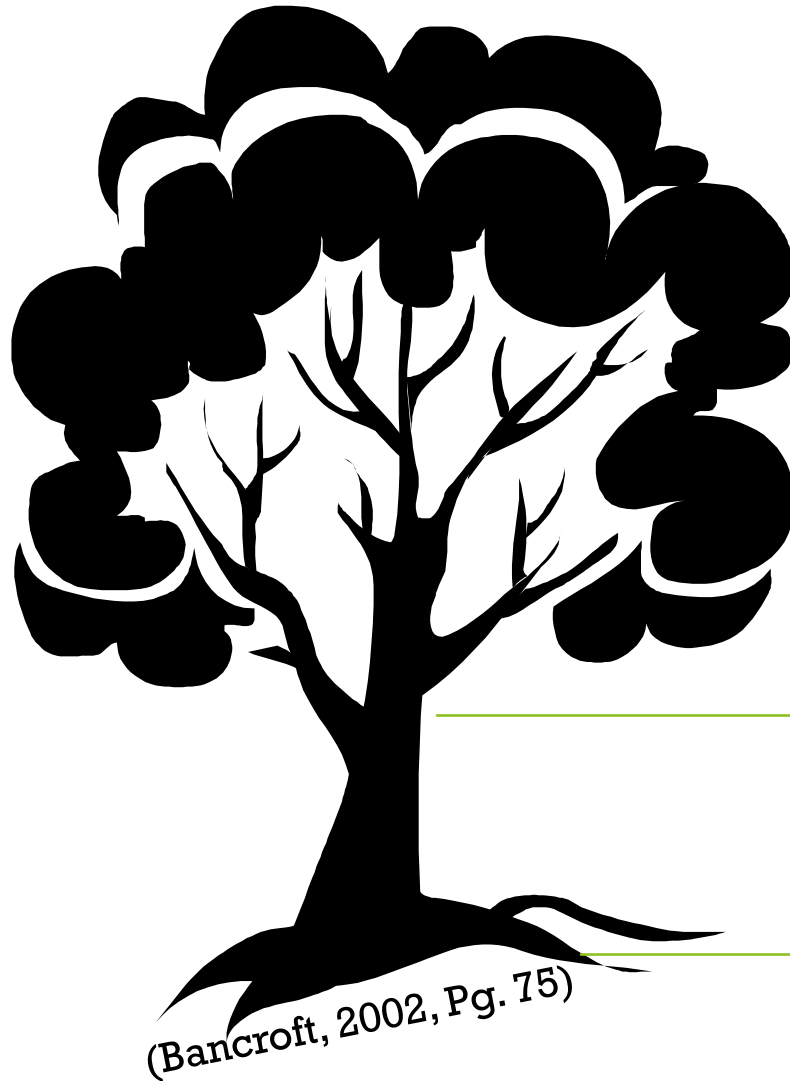
Non-physical sexual  
abuse

Control

Spiritual abuse

Physical and sexual  
abuse

# Abuse Grows From Attitudes & Values, Not Feelings



## **CONTROL**

*“He wants to shut her up, retaliate or take revenge on her”- Michael Paymar*

## **MOTIVATION**

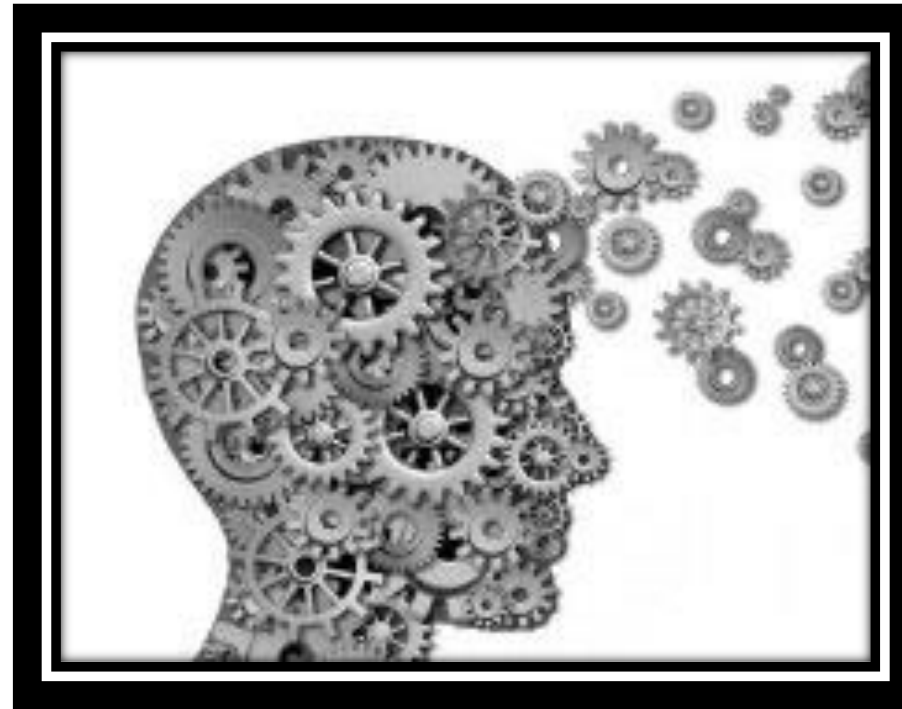
*Entitlement, Survival, & Sadism  
(Stucky-Halley, 2015)*

## **OWNERSHIP**

*(Bancroft, 2002, Pg. 75)*

- ▶ His attitude always seems to be: “you owe me.”
- ▶ He manages to twist everything around so that it’s my fault.
- ▶ I feel suffocated by him. He’s trying to run my life.
- ▶ Everyone seems to think he’s the greatest guy in the world. I wish they could see the side of him that I have to live with.
- ▶ He says he loves me so much. So why does he treat me like this?  
(Bancroft, 2002, pg. 49)

## Abuser Mindset



# Women's Voices

Bancroft (2002)

He's two different people. I feel like I'm living with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

He really doesn't mean to hurt me. He just loses control.

I feel like he's never happy with anything I do.

He's fine when he's sober. But when he's drunk, watch out.

He scared me a few times, but he never touches the children. He's a great father.

Why does he do that?

He messes up my mind sometimes.

The thing is, he really understands me.

He calls me disgusting names, and then an hour later he wants sex. I don't get it.



Everyone else thinks he's great. I don't know what it is about me that sets him off.

# Grounding Break



# Coercive Control

Specific Behavioral Tactics

# EYES WIDE OPEN



## HELP!

*with*

## Control Freak Co-Parents

Debra Wingfield, Ed. D.

# Intimidation

Used by abusers primarily in 3 ways:

- Threats
- Surveillance
- Degradation (Stark, 2007, Pg. 249)

Purpose:

- Instills fear
- Secrecy
- Dependence
- Compliance
- Loyalty
- Shame (Stark, 2007, Pg. 249)
- Impacts Children (Katz, 2016, 2022)

# Intimidation Tactic Examples

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Embarrassed their wives/partners on social occasions to get them to do as instructed

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Openly followed their wives/partners or had them followed

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Engaged in frequent sexual inspections

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Described in detail how wives/partners could have been killed without detection

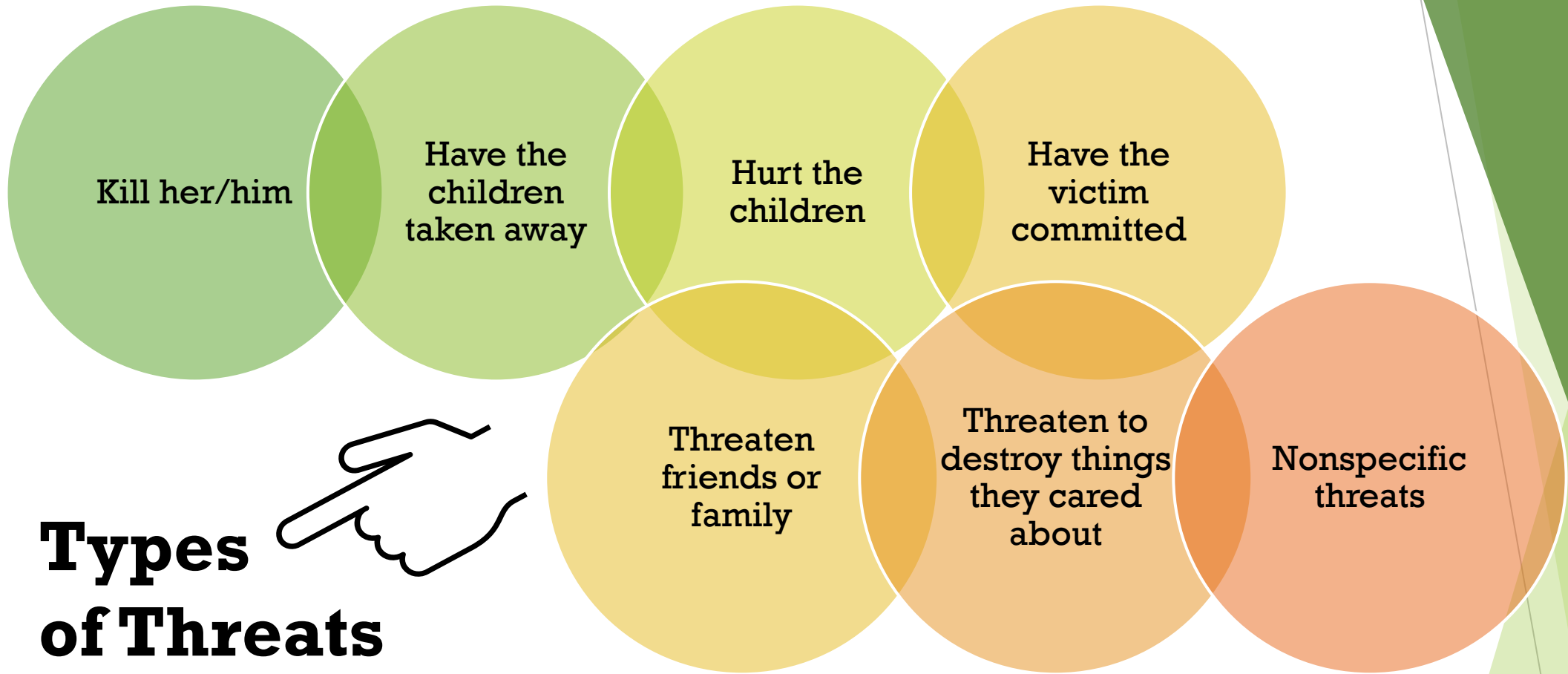
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**Visit link for full Intimidation checklist:**

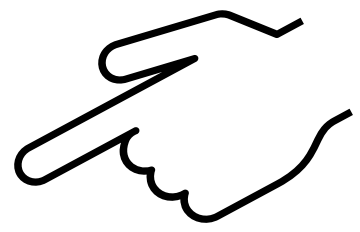
<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/documents/UsingIntimidationrev2.pdf>







# Types of Threats



**Visit link for full Threats and Coercion checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/documents/ThreatsandCoercionCoerciveControlTacticsrev-2.pdf>

# What Threats Do

---

Violate the person's right to physical and psychic security and tranquility

---

Immediate effect on the victim's autonomy regardless of whether or not they are carried out

---

Spiritual threats remove autonomy and personhood

---

Community threats contribute to isolation, autonomy and personhood

---

Workplace threats contribute to isolation and remove autonomy

---

Family threats contribute to isolation and outside support

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# Victim Impacts of Threats

Feels isolated in her fear

Feels crazy because her terror contrasts with the positive reaction of others

Cuts off contact with friends and family by phone, visits, driving self to work

Implant the idea of physical harm in victim's mind, more devastating effect than actual violence

Impacts on children-feel fearful of doing anything wrong; walk on eggshells; run and hide

# Isolation

## Purpose:

- “designed to enforce dependence of victims, secure exclusive possession, monopolize their time, skills and resources, and ‘keep the secret’ of abuse by cutting them off from core sources of support and reality testing, such as family, friends, coworkers or helping professionals.” (Stark, 2010, pg. 11-13)



# Isolation Tactic Examples

Forbidding wives/partners from leaving the house, going to church, or forcing them to quit home-schooling network

Controlling who children have contact with including church friends, extracurricular activities, having friends visit in the home.

Taking the only cell phone to prevent her from making calls while he is gone.  
(adapted)

**Visit link for the full Isolation checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/documents/UsingIsolationCoerciveControlTacticsRev2.pdf>

# Economic Control

## **Purpose:**

- To create economic instability and/or make one partner economically dependent, which limits their freedom.
- Without access to money, it is difficult to leave an abuser and access safety.
- Someone experiencing this type of abuse can become trapped in a relationship with the abuser, unable to resist the abuser's control and at risk of further harm. In this way, economic safety underpins physical safety.

## **Impact:**

- Makes rebuilding challenging. Many leave with nothing — having no money even for essentials — and have to start again from scratch.
- Many leave with large amounts of debt and poor credit ratings, affecting their long-term economic stability, and many are unable to maintain savings that provide economic security.

# Economic Control Tactic Examples

Steal the car keys or take the car so you couldn't go look for a job or go to a job interview.

Keep you from having the money you needed to buy food, clothes, or other necessities.

Decide how you could spend money rather than letting you spend it how you saw fit.

**Visit link for the full Economic/Financial Abuse checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/documents/UsingEconomic-Financialabuserev2.pdf>



# Using Children

Children who experience coercive and controlling behaviors of a parent may:

- ▶ Learn “destructive patterns about the use of violence and power in relationships” (Lee, Wells, Gray, & Esina, 2020)
- ▶ Experience “narrower space for action” (Katz, 2016)
- ▶ Experience “isolation from sources for support” (Katz, 2016; Lawler, Sterne, & Armstrong, 2021)
- ▶ Internalize victim-blaming attitudes and/or harmful views about unequal power relations between men and women (Cunningham & Baker, 2007)
- ▶ Be at higher risk of severe injury, death threats, and/or homicide (Gill & Aspinall, 2020)



# Using Children Examples

Using visitation as a way to harass her

Using child custody court as a way to control her

Undermining her parenting



**Visit link for the full Using Children checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/UsingChildrenCCAssessment-rev2.pdf.pdf>

# Spiritual Abuse

A form of psychological and emotional abuse that takes place within a faith context, which for many people permeates their entire lives.

Victims may experience being controlled and coerced within a church or places of worship.

Spiritual abusers *may* be a person of power and influence within the place of worship, but don't have to be preachers or leaders of worship.

The use of scripture and an abuser's interpretation of "the word of God" has been documented justification for many types of abuse and violence against intimate partners.



# Spiritual Abuse Tactic Examples

- ▶ Using the spouse's or intimate partner's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate them
- ▶ Preventing the spouse/partner from practicing their religious or spiritual beliefs
- ▶ Undermining relationships with people connected to her spiritual community

**Visit link for the full Spiritual Abuse checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/documents/SpiritualAbuseCoerciveControlTactics-Rev2.pdf>



# God Hates Abuse (Oppression) & His Heart is for the Oppressed

## ▶ Isaiah 58:5-10

- ▶ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?
- ▶ “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: **to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?** Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.
- ▶ “**If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,** then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

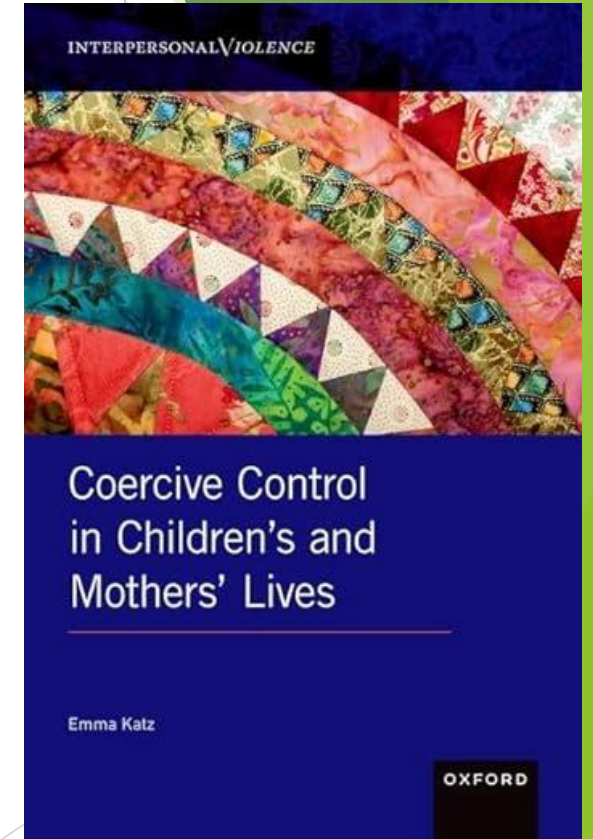
# Coercive Control Impacts on Children

Emma Katz  
research  
(2016, 2022)  
found that  
**children**  
**were**  
**affected by**  
**many forms**  
**of coercive**  
**control**  
**beyond the**  
**physical**  
**violence**  
**against their**  
**mother,**  
including:

**Control of time and movement**

**Deprivation of resources and imprisonment**

**Isolation**



“

“Violence is experienced as ‘**subjugation**’ rather than a physical threat, we have to listen to women and children talk, together and separately, about the cumulative effect of ‘**a thousand cuts,**’ and harms to their **dignity, safety, autonomy, intelligence, and liberty,** not just about physical safety.”

”

-*Children of Coercive Control*, Evan Stark, 2023





# Emotional Abuse

Verbal  
assaults

Humiliation

Sexual  
coercion

Psychological  
abuse

Economic  
exploitation

**DEATH BY A  
THOUSAND  
CUTS**

# Emotional Abuse Tactic Examples

Early generosity turning more and more to selfishness

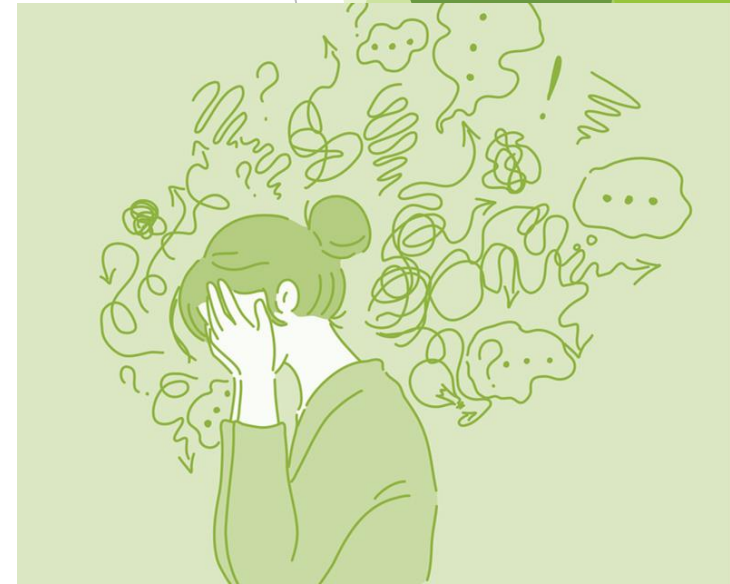
His changing moods are especially perplexing. He can be a different person day to day or even hour to hour.

His growing attitude that he knows what is good for her better than she does

He twists her words around so that she always ends up on the defensive. "I just can't seem to do anything right."

**Visit link for the full Using Emotional Abuse checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/UsingEmotionalAbuserev-2.pdf.pdf>





# Verbal Abuse

A subset of emotional abuse

## Effects

- Patricia Evans states “surely the creative and intellectual potential of each one of us can thrive best when there are no emotionally debilitating obstacles thrown in our path – obstacles such as verbally abusive diminishment and invalidation.” (Evans, 1993, pg. 15)
- The abuser’s desire to have *power over* his victim, to dominate her, overrides the prospect of *mutuality* in a loving relationship. (Evans, 1993, pg. 16)
- Projection by the abuser of their own attributes and actions onto the victim highlights a verbally abusive relationship. (Evans, 1993, pg. 16)
- See handout- evaluation adapted from Patricia Evans, *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*



# Using Male Privilege

Drives domestic abuse and coercive control

Rooted in **entitlement**- the woman is viewed as property

“...the notion that as a man in relationship with a woman, I believe that **I get to dominate you-control you, use physical violence if necessary-to get you to submit to me.**” (Duluth Model Batterer Intervention Specialist)

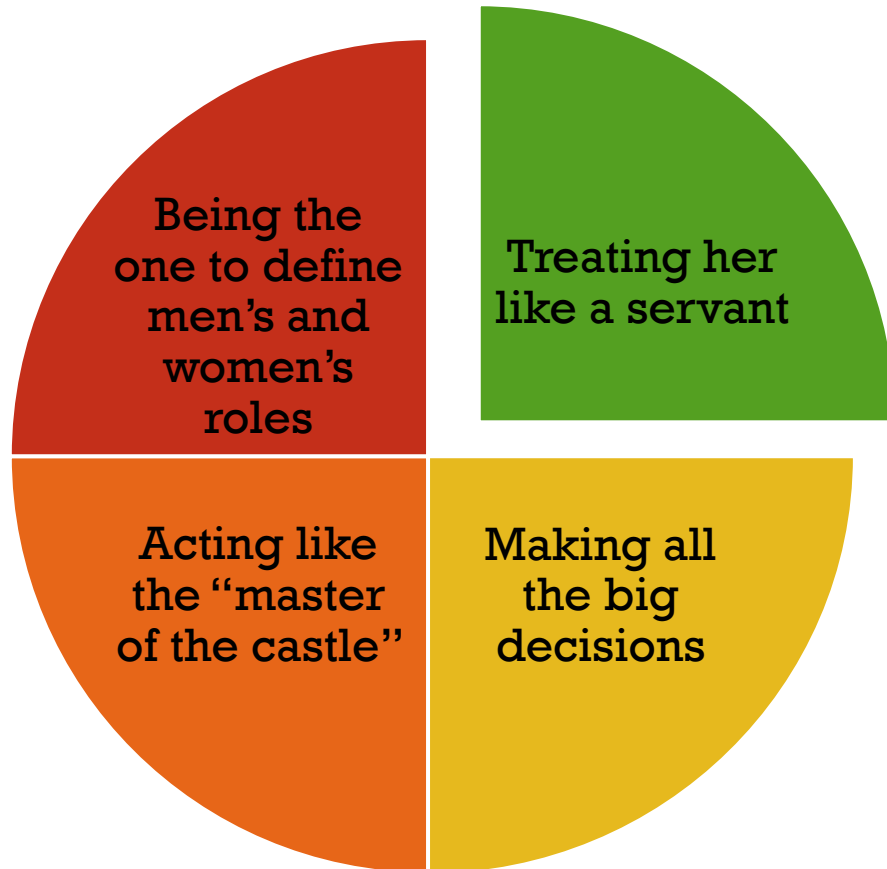
Male privilege goes to the core of the abuser's identity- his identity is so grounded in the notion of **superiority**, that he views equality with the woman as diminishing him.

Everyone is entitled to my opinion.



your eCards  
someecards.com

# Using Male Privilege Examples



**Visit link for the full Using Privilege checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/UsingPrivilegerev-2.pdf.pdf>

# Minimizing, Denying, Blaming

- ▶ Anytime something does not go the way he thinks it should, he uses these tactics
- ▶ To **avoid responsibility, protect his image, and to regain power and control** (Smyth, Teicher, & Wilde, 2023)
- ▶ When he blames her, if she attempts to blame back, he will “up the ante.”
- ▶ Impacts
  - ▶ Gradually loses her own way of thinking
  - ▶ Ultimately, she takes on his way of thinking and blames herself (sometimes even before he does)- “I should have...,” “if I would have just...”

# Minimizing, Denying, Blaming Tactics

Makes light of the  
abuse

Says the abuse  
didn't happen

Blames woman  
for his problems

**Visit link for the full Using Minimization, Denial, Blaming checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/documents/UsingMinimization-rev2.pdf>

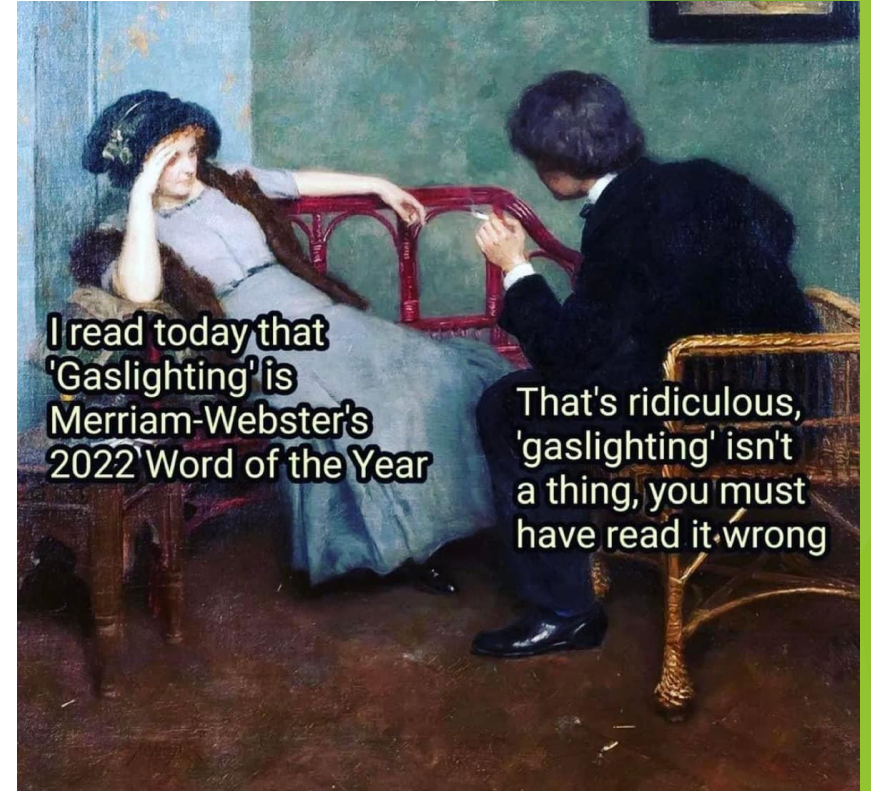
# Gaslighting

## Psychological manipulation of a person

- usually over an extended period of time
- that causes the victim to question the validity of their own thoughts, perception of reality, or memories
- typically leads to confusion, loss of confidence and self-esteem, uncertainty of one's emotional or mental stability, and a dependency on the perpetrator

## Examples

- “make wife/partner feel she is crazy by sabotaging a common activity like turning off the stove after she has turned it on and then asking innocently about dinner or...
- moving her car without her knowledge or putting her car keys in a strange place.” (Stark, 2010, pg. 11-13)



# Non-physical sexual abuse

## Sexual harassment

- Ridiculing another person to try to limit their sexuality or reproductive choices

## Sexual exploitation

- Sexual trafficking
- Forcing someone to look at pornography, or forcing someone to participate in pornographic film-making

## Sexual intimidation

- Making inappropriate sexually laden comments about a partner's dress or hairstyle
- Choosing a partner's clothes they can wear in public
- Demanding a partner wear certain clothes at home that are sexually revealing and inappropriate for the situation

**Visit link for the full Non-physical Sexual Abuse checklist:**

<https://houseofpeacepubs.com/documents/UsingNon-physicalsexualabuse-rev2.pdf>

# Grounding Break





# Crossover of Stalking & Coercive Control

**Stalking** is harassment of or threatening another person, especially in a way that haunts the person physically or emotionally in a repetitive and devious manner.

“[C]oercive behaviors overlap with many of the forms of surveillance and persistent communication used by stalkers.”

The motives most consistently associated with persistent pursuit are:

- a desire to control the partner,
- jealousy of the partner's interest in others,
- fear of abandonment, and
- a feeling of entitlement to maintain the existing norms of gender inequality (Stark 2007)

Davis, K. E., Swan, S. C., & Gambone, L. J. (2012). *Why Doesn't He Just Leave Me Alone? Persistent Pursuit: A Critical Review of Theories and Evidence*. *Sex Roles*, 66:328–339.



# Stalkers Employ a Number of Threatening Tactics

Repeated phone calls, sometimes with hang-ups

Following, tracking (possibly even with a global positioning device)

Finding the person through public records, online searching, or paid investigators

Watching with hidden cameras

Suddenly showing up where the victim is, at home, school, or work

Sending emails; communicating in chat rooms or with instant messaging (cyberstalking: see next slide)

Sending unwanted packages, cards, gifts, or letters



Using Children's Technology

# Stalking Tactics (cont.)

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Monitoring the victim's phone calls or computer-use

---

Contacting the victim's friends, family, co-workers, or neighbors to find out about the victim

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Going through the victim's garbage

---

Threatening to hurt the victim or their family, friends, or pets

---

Damaging the victim's home, car, or other property

- ❑ Stalking is unpredictable and should always be considered dangerous. If someone is tracking you, contacting you when you do not wish to have contact, attempting to control you, or frightening you, seek help immediately.
- ❑ Stalking can end in violence whether or not the stalker threatens violence and can turn into violence even if the stalker has no history of violence.
- ❑ Women stalkers are just as likely to become violent as are male stalkers.
- ❑ Those around the stalking victim are also in danger of being hurt.

## **How likely is it that stalking will turn into violence?**

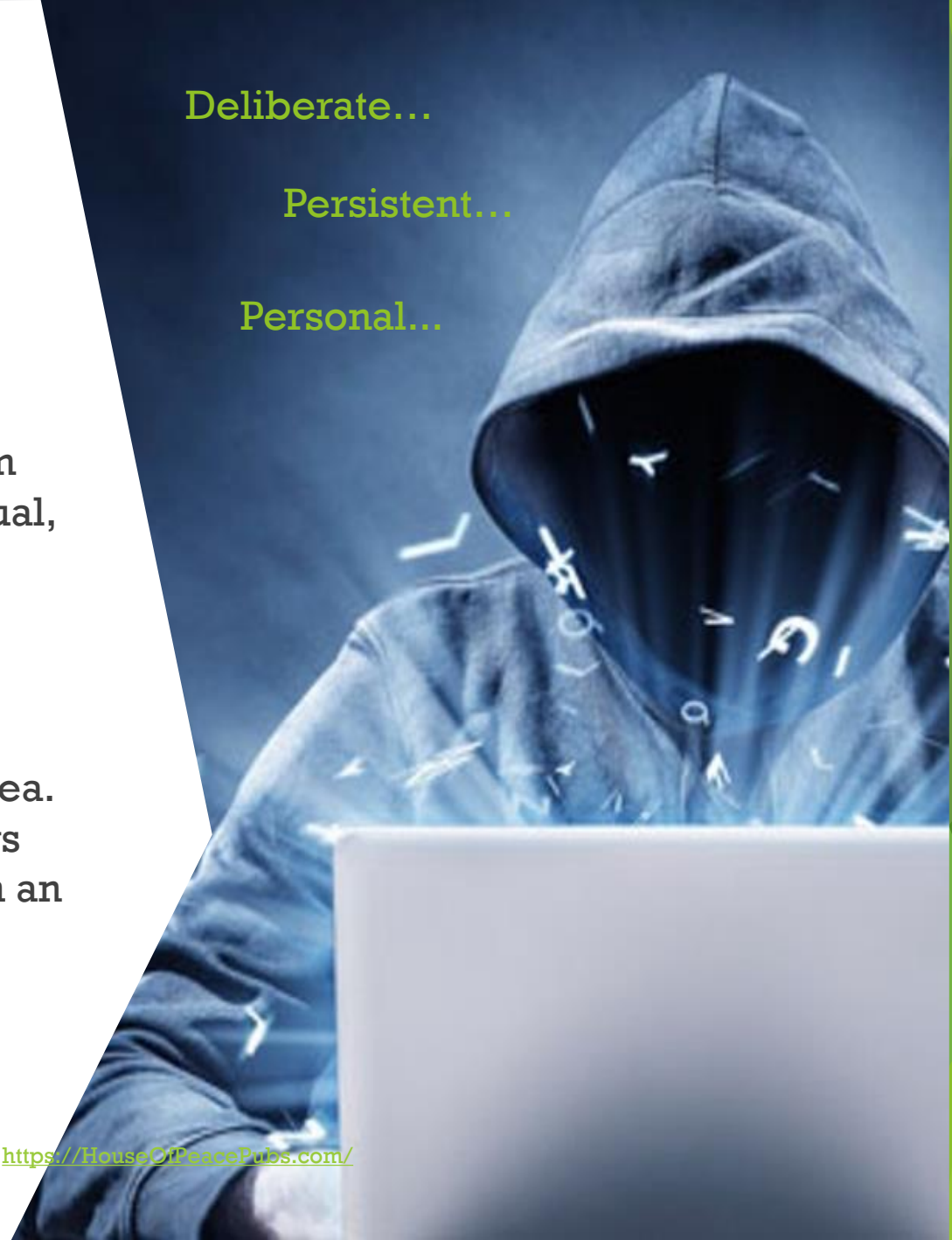
# What is Cyberstalking?

- ▶ **Cyberstalking**- use of telecommunication technologies such as the Internet or email to stalk another person.
- ▶ **Spamming with unsolicited email**- different from cyberstalking. Spam does not focus on the individual, whereas a cyberstalker methodically finds and contacts the victim. Like spam, you cannot stop the contact with a request. The best response to cyberstalking is no contact.
- ▶ **Law enforcement**- cyberstalking falls in a gray area. Enforcement of most state and federal stalking laws requires that the victim be directly threatened with an act of violence (not implied).
- ▶ **Take it seriously!** Cyberstalking sometimes advances to real stalking and physical violence.

Deliberate...

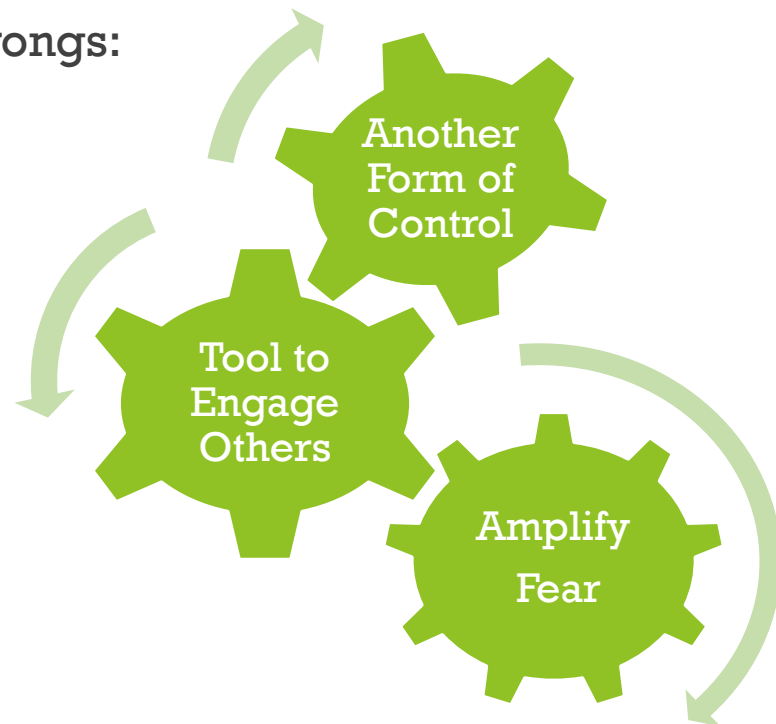
Persistent...

Personal...

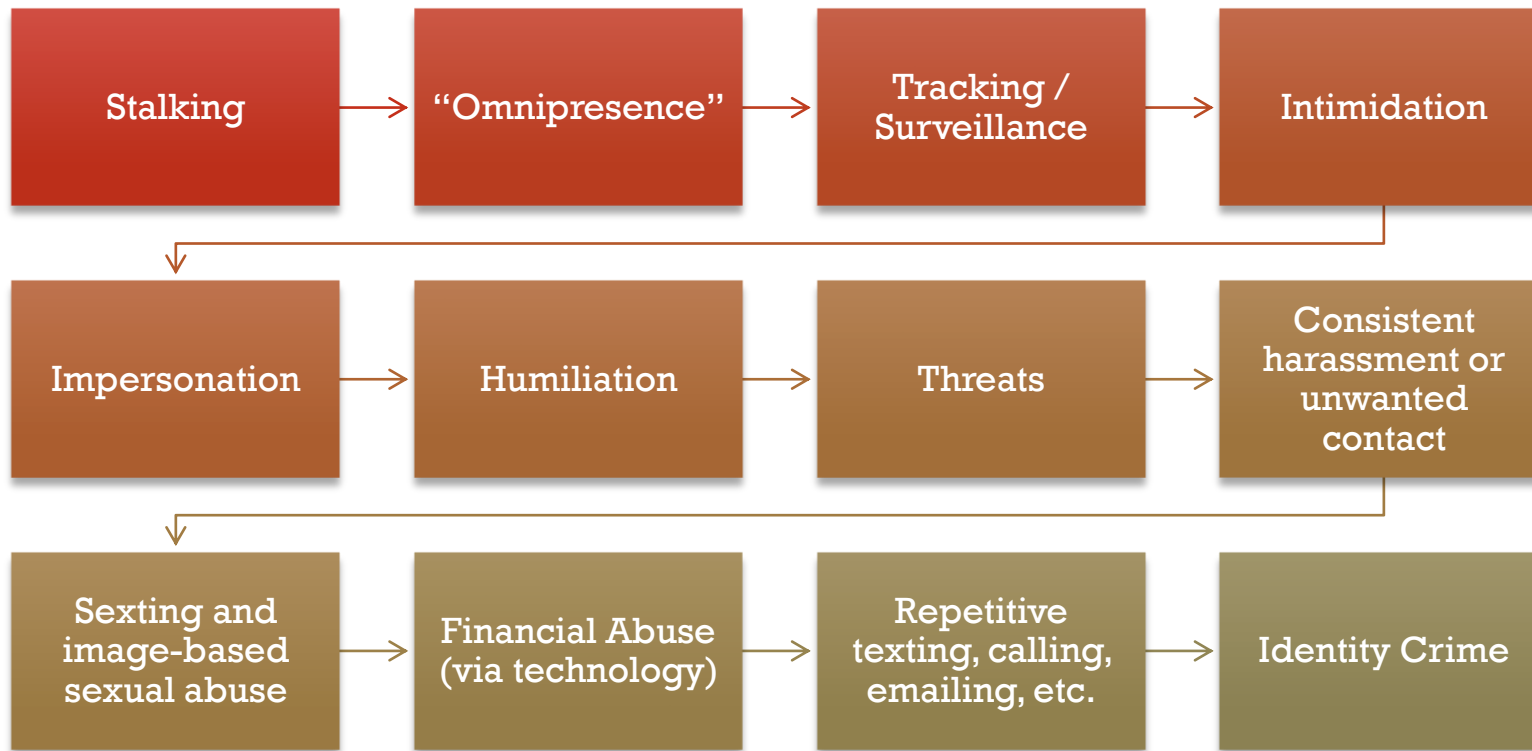


# Technology Facilitated Domestic Abuse/Coercive Control (TFCC)

- ▶ Perpetrator does not need physical access to maintain control.
- ▶ **TFCC**- “controlling and coercive behaviors used by intimate partners **through the use of technology**” (Fiolet, et al., 2021).
- ▶ 3 prongs:



# Forms of TFCC



# Image-based Sexual Abuse

- ▶ When abusive partners **create, distribute, or threaten to distribute intimate images without consent**
- ▶ Used as a means of exerting **power and control** and a tactic of:

intimidation

entrapment

degradation

isolation

(Henry et al., 2023)





# Technology Facilitated Parental Stalking

Perpetrator may provide child/ren with device/s to covertly stalk the survivor's activities, communications, and whereabouts. (Fiolet et al., 2021)

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## **Threats of violence and death**

Undermines child/ren's relationships and mental wellbeing and hinder the child's education and employment prospects

---

## **Intrusive and obsessive fatherhood**

Communicates a continuous sense of threat in child/ren's lives

---

## **Disparaging and insulting motherhood/womanhood**

Undermines child/ren's positive views of their mother

(Nikupeteri, et al., 2021)

---

	Use of technology	Targets	Contents and motives
<b>Unwanted contacts</b>	Sending SMS, WhatsApp messages and emails, making phone calls, voice messages, sending private messages in social media platforms (for example, Facebook, Snapchat), creating and using pseudo profiles	Ex-partner, children, victim's relatives, friends	Threats, raise fear, control Issues related to taking care of children and visiting them, property and separation issues
<b>Sharing information</b>	Writing texts and sharing written and visual material in social media platforms (for example, Facebook wall, Instagram, LinkedIn), making phone calls, sending messages and emails, communicating through pseudo profiles in social media	Ex-partner, wider audience, victim's loved ones, kindergarten and school staff, colleagues and employees	Tarnishing the reputation, humiliating, showing control, publishing the victim's private information or sexualised content without consent, disseminating false information about the victim
<b>Gathering information</b>	Installing or threatening to install spy software in cars or mobile phones, taking photos of children and/or ex-partner, identity theft, hacking bank accounts, e-mail or other internet/on-line accounts	Ex-partner, children	Monitoring, controlling, harming, hindering victim's activities

## Three Components of Technology Facilitated Stalking

(Dragiewicz et al., 2019)

# Impact of TFCC

Technology abuse increases at separation

“One of the challenges for understanding and dealing with TFCC is that some of the behaviors and technologies used by abusers can be innocuous in the context of a non-abusive relationship.”  
(Dragiewicz et al., 2019)

“It’s an extension of their power. It allows the perpetrator the power to be reaching into their private space, no matter where they are. Because its boundary-less.” (Fiolet et al., 2021)

**Significantly increases adverse effects of coercive control and poses an additional safety concern for survivors and their children.**

# Supporting Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence



Federal  
Communications  
Commission

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**The Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**- adopted an order in November 2023 implementing provisions of **Safe Connections Act**

The new rules allow a survivor of domestic abuse to separate a mobile phone line from an account shared with an abuser.

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs/fcc-adopts-rules-implementing-safe-connections-act-survivors-domestic-abuse>

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# Our God Understands Oppression

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

Isaiah 53:3, 7-8

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