

# The Many Faces of Abuse

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Domestic violence is **"premeditated, repetitive, intentional, conscious and knowing acts used with the intent to control and dominate an intimate partner."** (*~adapted from Alternatives to Domestic Aggression, Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor, MI*)

It's more than physical. Look or listen for evidence or reports of:

## Luring & Grooming (formerly "Honeymoon Phase")

- Promising to change abusive behaviors
- Temporarily changing abusive behaviors
- Offering gifts, special favors or privileges
- Keeping old or making new promises
- Bribing to maintain partner's silence
- Temporarily allowing contact with family or friends
- Threatening suicide if the partner doesn't go back or otherwise comply
- Complying with partner's requests for counseling, help with household duties, etc.

## Exploiting Privileged or Male Status

- Dictating family roles, duties and rules, which are mandatory for family, but optional for abuser ("Do as I say, not as I do")
- Avoiding personal responsibilities, unless there is personal benefit or social equity to be gained
- Treating partner as a servant ("King of the Castle")
- Using status in community/relationship to discredit partner's account of abuse
- Demanding that all personal needs and desires be met first, despite needs/desires of partner
- Using knowledge of culture, institutions and systems to partner's disadvantage
- Schmoozing professional intervenors to avoid arrest or accountability for abusive behaviors
- Demanding "respect" as "head of the house"

## Monitoring & Stalking

- Following or "checking up" on partner to monitor her activities/whereabouts/social contacts
- Tracking mileage on partner's car
- Monitoring partner's computer/phone usage
- Reading/hacking partner's mail, e-mail, etc.
- Asking partner's connections for information about her/his daily routine
- Harassing/calling/texting partner constantly
- Demanding to know partner's whereabouts, or telling partner where s/he can/can't go
- Making partner account for every minute away
- Using surveillance technology to track partner
- Leaving "messages" to scare or threaten partner

## Emotional Abuse

- Constant criticizing/belittling partner
- Characterizing partner as "useless" (as a parent, partner, child, person, etc.)
- Blowing partner's mistakes out of proportion
- Bringing up past "wrongs" to subdue partner
- Deliberately starting/looking for arguments
- Often behaving surly or out-of-sorts
- Calling partner names or refusing to use given name
- Giving partner "The Silent Treatment"
- Often failing to keep promises
- Disregarding partner's feelings and opinions
- Behaving in a jealous or possessive manner
- Refusing to allow partner to make decisions
- Yelling/shouting/swearing at partner
- Talking over or interrupting partner
- Humiliating partner in front of others
- Ridiculing partner's family and friends
- Minimizing/denying partner's hurt feelings
- Threatening to leave to keep partner "in line"
- Using guilt as a means to control partner
- Saying the partner provoked anger/abuse

## Economic Control

- Trying to make partner financially dependent
- Destroying partner's credit rating
- Misusing partner's social security to gain access to credit, utilities, etc.
- Refusing to contribute to household income
- Squandering household finances, to the detriment of the partner or family
- Withholding money, or access to money
- Making demands on how partner spends, or requiring partner to justify how money was spent
- Confiscate partner's earnings
- Endangering partner's employment by harassing
- Removing partner from accounts or deeds to assets, or demanding access to partner's accounts or assets
- Emptying accounts in retaliation for restraining orders or cooperating with public servants
- Hiding financial resources in preparation for divorce
- Failing to make timely court-ordered payments

## Medical Neglect

- Denying partner medical treatment or routine care
- Monitoring partner's conversations with medical providers to prevent her reporting abuse
- Taking away partner's medical devices (inhaler, wheelchair, walker, etc.) to create helplessness
- Over/under medicating partner
- Refusing to care for sick or injured partner
- Coercing partner to use alcohol or drugs
- Dropping partner's medical insurance
- Filing an involuntary committal to retaliate against a partner's efforts at independence

## **Spiritual Abuse**

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- Mocking partner's moral values or faith
- Creating situations to "test" partner's moral boundaries
- Misusing religious texts to justify abuse
- Sabotaging, limiting or deciding the partner's religious practices
- Forcing partner to violate religious beliefs or participate in/witness ritual sacrifice
- Participating in religious activities to monitor or prevent the partner's disclosures to clergy
- Enlisting clergy to be character witness for abuser
- Claiming to be all-powerful, all-knowing

## **Psychological Torment**

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- Referring to partner by title or nicknames, rather than given name; objectifying partner
- Playing mind games, causing intense emotional pain
- Making partner feel like s/he's going crazy
- Minimizing or denying partner's injuries
- Making gestures or movements meant to frighten or intimidate partner
- Destroying partner's personal belongings
- Punching walls, or throwing things at partner
- Driving recklessly with partner or children in the car
- Threatening to harm or kidnap partner or loved ones
- Describing detailed plans to kill self/partner/family
- Abusing or killing family pets
- Causing partner to believe her life or children's lives are in mortal danger
- Following through on past threats to punctuate or legitimize new threats

## **Legal Harassment**

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- Coercing partner into doing illegal acts
- Threatening to call police or child protection
- Threatening costly or lengthy legal battles
- Threatening to press charges or otherwise compromise partner's legal standing
- Threatening harm if partner cooperates with law enforcement or child protection
- Using children as pawns in legal battles; particularly seeking custody to eliminate child support
- Filing costly and frivolous motions; particularly to reduce or stop court-ordered child support or alimony payments
- Ignoring court directives such as restraining orders, division of property, payments due partner, etc.
- Refusing to allow an immigrant partner to gain citizenship, or threatening with deportation
- Filing false charges/reports; having the partner arrested for self-defensive actions
- Using superior legal resources to harass partner



**Created by Kathy Jones,  
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## **Deprivation & Isolation**

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- Depriving partner of basic necessities or sleep
- Sabotaging housing, schooling, transportation, job, activities, personal connections, etc.
- Cutting off utilities
- Restricting or ending outside/independent activities
- Refusing or limiting partner's contact with others
- Sabotaging partner's relationships with others
- Denying partner access to outside services
- Aggravating circumstances that force family to become homeless

## **Sexual Coercion & Force**

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- Accusing partner of infidelity
- Refusing to take responsibility for birth control methods, or forbidding birth control
- Refusing to take "no" for an answer
- Manipulating partner into unwanted sex
- Degrading partner sexually or using sexual names ("cunt," "whore," "frigid," "impotent," etc.)
- Threatening to "out" the partner
- Forcing "make up" sex
- Coercing partner to have unprotected sex
- Exposing unwilling partner to pornography
- Exposing unknowing partner to STDs
- Hurting or mutilating partner's genitals
- Having sex with partner while s/he's sleeping
- Using dangerous and inappropriate objects (guns, bottles, knives, etc.) as "sex toys"
- Pressing sex that partner finds painful or humiliating

## **Physical Assault**

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- Spitting on partner
- Grabbing or pinching
- Shoving or pulling
- Slapping or hitting (w/ or w/o objects)
- Elbowing or kneeing
- Head-butting or hair-pulling
- Biting or burning
- Twisting partner's arms, fingers, etc.
- Kicking or punching
- Strangling or smothering; restricting breathing
- Restraining partner from leaving or preventing partner from calling for help
- Menacing the partner with a weapon
- Stabbing/stabbing partner or objects near partner

## **Common Partner Disclosures: Does S/he...**

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- Report walking on eggshells all the time?
- Feel tired or sick frequently?
- Report that her/his efforts are never good enough?
- Have difficulty following through with plans, directives or instructions?
- Report having to read the other person's mind?
- Describe the partner as Dr. Jeckyl/Mr. Hyde?
- Constantly make excuses for the other person?
- Frequently voice feeling sad, ashamed, worthless, or deserving of abuse?
- Report feeling afraid or abused?