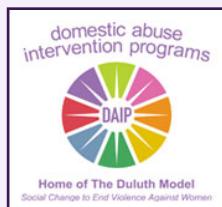


Understanding the Tactics of Coercion, Threats and Intimidation and the Impact on Victims

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Coercive Control

Early on the battered women's movement defined battering as a "a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another. Abusers use physical and sexual violence, threats, emotional insults and economic deprivation as a way to dominate their partners and get their way."

SUSAN SCHECHTER, GUIDELINES FOR MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES 4 (1987).

Also see Pence and Paymar, Education Groups for Men Who Batter: The Duluth Model, 1993



Coercive Control

"Physical violence may not be the most significant factor about most battering relationships. In all probability, the clinical profile revealed by battered women reflects the fact that they have been subjected to an ongoing strategy of intimidation, isolation, and control that extends to all areas of a woman's life, including sexuality; material necessities; relations with family, children, and friends; and work. Sporadic, even severe violence makes this strategy of control effective."

- Evan Stark (1995, p. 987)

Establishing Coercive Control

Become a threat to her physical, emotional and/or spiritual wellbeing.

Identify and use her needs and attachments as leverage.

Restrict, deplete or destroy access to needs and attachments to wear down her resistance to demands.

Intermittent episodes of overt violence to reinforce the pattern of coercive control.

Feeling like a victim

Part of the experience of establishing power and control over a partner is feeling like a victim. For the batterer, its synonymous with the experience of being victimized.

Being victimized

Using Coercion, Threats and Intimidation

Video: Eric

Actions:

Intents:

Beliefs:

Effects:

How did Eric's feeling that he was a victim get shaped by his beliefs?

Living with Coercion, Threats and Intimidation

Video: Cami

Actions:

Intents:

Beliefs:

Effects:

How was Cami impacted because her abuser felt like a victim?

How the Abuser May Present

Truly believes he is a victim and are therefore convincing.

Because they are not afraid, can appear relaxed and reasonable.

Focused on the deficits he believes she has (doesn't understand, unreasonable, argumentative, crazy, bad mother, bad with money, irresponsible, dangerous).

The goal is to punish in every way possible

- Money
- Kids
- Delay signing documents or any action that costs her more money including dragging out a mediation session
- Preserving contact

How the Victim May Present

Will be worried about contact from arriving to driving away.

Withdrawn, angry, fearful, suspicious, distrustful, resistant.

Trauma will inhibit critical thinking. Feeling safe is the only remedy.

What does compromise mean with an abuser?

Will likely believe that she won't be believed/lack credibility.

May focus on details that don't seem important or relevant to the process.

A good deal in the divorce may not feel like a good deal given what she has lost over time.

Using Children

Child abuse can take different forms:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Used as tools to abuse/control the mother

When children are used by a batterer to dominate, coerce, punish, train/teach or to win against the other parent, children and the other parent suffer.

The priority is almost always to get his way or to punish.

Children

The more control over the children, the more control and ability to inflict punishment on the victim.

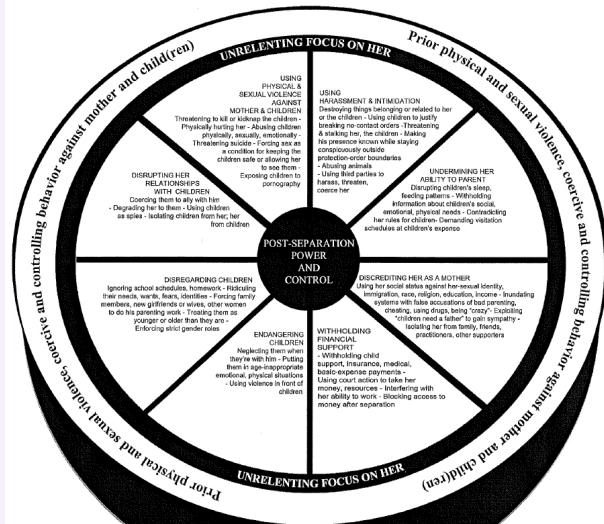
Mother will typically prioritize the child and the abuser will prioritize control, winning and punishment.

“If this is the agreement, how might this get used against you?”

He will use the kids as tools. Ask as the agreement develops how this might happen.

“There was no purpose to the mediation process. He kept pushing for mediation over every little detail and after 2 years, he had everything he wanted on the front end.”

Post Separation Wheel



Child's Letter to His Father - Audio Recording

Exercise:

What is the child experiencing?

What is the child asking for?

Resources

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs
www.theduluthmodel.org