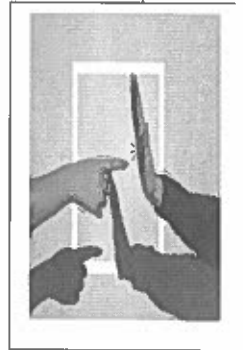


What is Abusive Behaviour?

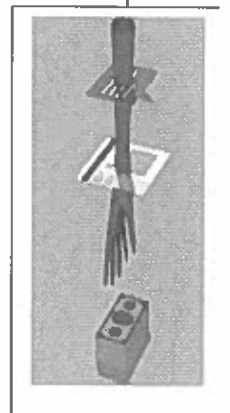
4. Mental/Psychological

Mental or psychological abuse happens when one partner, through a series of actions or words, wears away at the other's sense of mental wellbeing and health. It often involves making the victim doubt their own sanity. We've heard stories of abusers deliberately moving car keys (and in one case, the whole car!) or a purse, dimming the lights, and flat-out denying that certain things had taken place. The result of this, especially over a sustained period of time – and often with the isolation that abusers also tend to use – is that the victim depends on the abuser more and more because they don't trust their own judgment. They also hesitate to tell anyone about the abuse they're experiencing, for fear they won't be believed. Angela, a participant in one of our Support Groups, said, "He had called me crazy so many times, I was unsure if anyone would ever believe me about the abuse."



5. Financial/Economic

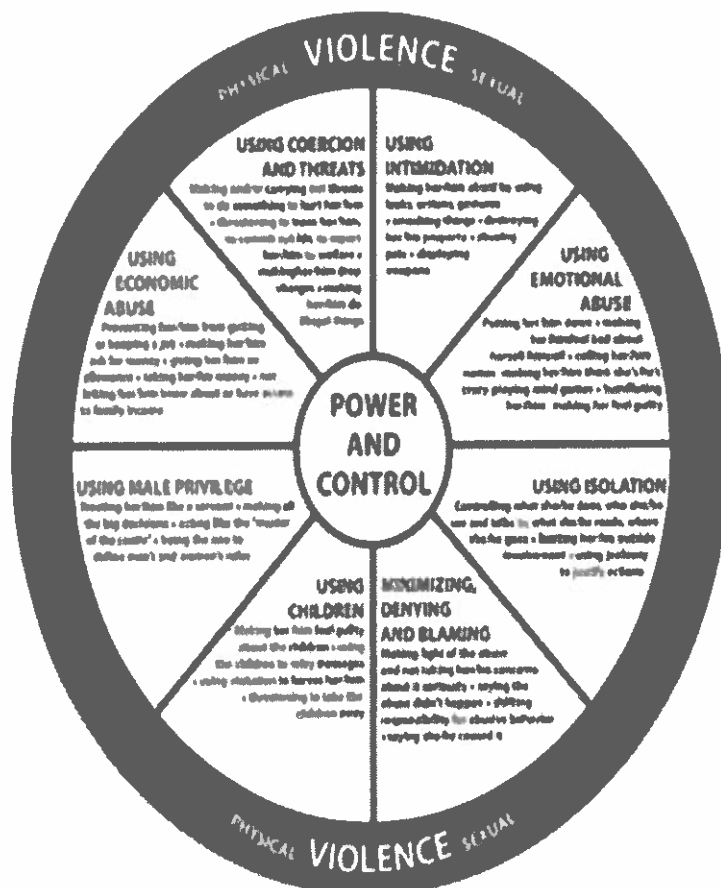
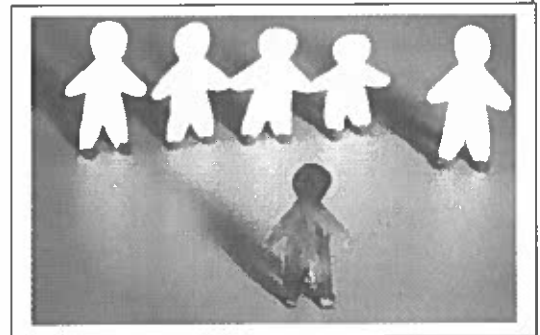
Because abuse is about power and control, an abuser will use any means necessary to maintain that control, and often that includes finances. Whether it is controlling all of the budgeting in the household and not letting the survivor have access to their own bank accounts or spending money, or opening credit cards and running up debts in the survivor's name, or simply not letting the survivor have a job and earn their own money, this type of abuse is often a big reason why someone is unable to leave an abusive relationship. Many of the survivors we work with have problems with their credit, because of an abuser's past behavior. A bad credit history can affect your ability to get an apartment, a job, a car loan, and any number of other things necessary for self-sufficiency. We work with survivors to get these issues resolved, but social safety nets such as food stamps, cash assistance, and health insurance can provide a much-needed bridge in the meantime.



6. Cultural/Identity

Cultural abuse happens when abusers use aspects of a victim's particular cultural identity to inflict suffering, or as a means of control. Not letting someone observe the dietary or dress customs of their faith, using racial slurs, threatening to 'out' someone as LGBTQ/T if their friends and family don't know, or isolating someone who doesn't speak the dominant language where they live – all of these are examples of cultural abuse.

An abusive relationship can include any or all of these types of behaviors, sustained over a period of time and often escalating. If you or someone you care about is experiencing this and you want to talk to someone about your concerns, REACH's hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-899-4000 to speak with a trained advocate who will listen without judgment.



What is Abusive? Recognize the Signs.

Look at the picture and explain what kinds of abuse you think is taking place and explain why:





