

# Family Violence – Types of Abuse

## Emotional / Psychological Abuse

Is the use of words or actions to control, dominate, intimidate, degrade, and / or intentionally harm another psychologically. It encompasses a wide range of behaviours that attack a person's sense of self-worth. It is about a misuse of power to control another person.

These behaviours are terrorizing, isolating, ignoring, corrupting, exploiting, controlling, and could include:

- Name calling, constant criticism, yelling, blaming, put downs, starting rumours.
- Making fun, intentionally embarrassing or humiliating another person in public.
- Preventing or making it difficult for a person to see and / or talk to their friends and family.
- Controlling what someone wears, who they see, where they go.
- Intimidating behaviours, such as damaging property (throwing objects, punching walls, kicking doors, standing in doorways, etc.).
- Blaming others for their abusive or unhealthy behaviours, gas lighting.
- Threats of violence or suicide to prevent someone from leaving relationship.
- Threats to expose secrets, such as sexual orientation, identity, or immigration status.
- Threatening to take away children.
- Jealousy as an excuse for abusive or controlling behaviours. Jealousy is often romanticized as a reflection of caring, but actually reflects feelings of ownership. Jealousy is the number one risk factor for domestic homicide.

## Stalking / Harassment

Stalking is when a person repeatedly watches, follows, or harasses another person making them feel afraid or unsafe. Someone who stalks can be a known person such as a current or past romantic partner, or a stranger.

Stalking is normalized and romanticized in the media (often romcoms), but in reality it is draining, often terrifying experience for victims, and is a crime.

- Sending unwanted text messages, letters, emails, voicemails. Constantly calling and then hanging up.
- Waiting in frequented places, showing up unannounced or uninvited.
- Leaving unwanted items, gifts. Sending flowers.
- Using social media or other technologies to track a person.

## Financial / Economic Abuse

Financial abuse happens when someone uses money or property to control and / or exploit another person.

- Withholding or taking money, limiting or no access to bank accounts.
- Giving an allowance and monitoring what the person buys.
- Creating debt in that person's name.
- Stealing money or property, selling or damaging possessions.
- Interfering with the abused person's work or efforts to better themselves (school).
- Limiting the hours a person can work.
- Using their money to hold power over the other person.

## Spiritual Abuse

- Criticism of or barring participation from a person's spiritual practices.
- Forcing someone to behave in a way that is contrary to their beliefs.
- Misuses of scripture to support abusive behaviour.
- Forcing a person to engage in spiritual / religious activities against their will.

## Cultural / immigration Abuse

- Ranges from criticism, to barring participation, forcing the abused person to behave in a way that is contrary to their community's norms.
- Threats of deportation, outing, destroying status card or immigration papers.
- Using a person's immigration status or treaty status against them.
- Threatening to harm people in their home country.
- Threatening to take children overseas and not return.
- Threatening to take permanent residency documents or passport.

## Physical Abuse

Is the intentional use of force, or threats of force, on another person in an attempt to control behaviour, intimidate, or punish. It may consist of a single incident, or multiple, repeated and potentially escalating incidents. It can cause physical pain or injury that can create ongoing health issues.

- Pushing, slapping, hair pulling, biting, kicking, burning, punching, shoving, hitting, pinching, withholding / overdosing medication, strangling, stabbing, cutting, poisoning, shooting, throwing objects, or killing someone.
- Restricting movement (holding someone down), confining.
- Denying access to medical care, food, appropriate clothing, and shelter.
- Threatening with a weapon.
- Seniors – confusing senior to gain control of finances, speed admission to care facility. Not filling prescriptions (for financial reasons), stealing medication for resale.

## Sexual Abuse

Refers to any non-consensual action that pressures or coerces someone to do something sexually they don't want to do. It can also refer to behaviour that impacts a person's ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which sexual activity occurs.

- Unwanted sexual contact, touching, fondling, forced oral contact (non-consensual kissing).
- Non-consensual intercourse.
- Unwanted rough or violence sexual activity.
- Sexual name calling, or sexual insults.
- Forced / unwanted exposure to pornography.
- Forcing sexual behaviours with others.
- Tampering with birth control, refusing to use birth control, restricting access to birth control or protection from STIs.
- Threatening someone into unwanted sexual activity, pressuring someone into sexual activity, making someone feel guilty or immature when they don't consent to sexual activity.

For more information or support, contact the Today Family Violence Help Centre 780-455-6880