

**UNDERSTAND
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

NOVA

Northern Virginia
Community College

2021

A Confidential Resource at NOVA

NOVA has a confidential resource available to you at no cost. Our victim advocate is part of the Office of Wellness and Mental Health and offers confidential services. The advocate will be able to provide you with additional information on services for anyone impacted by sexual assault, dating/partner violence, stalking and sexual harassment. This resource is available to NOVA community members of any gender regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, or orientation.



Wellness@nvcc.edu



@nvcc_wellnessmh



facebook.com/novawellnessmh

To reach our confidential advocate:

Victim Advocate

(703) 323-2136 | cokirkland@nvcc.edu

The Purpose of this Booklet

is to provide you with some important information to help you understand domestic violence. Some of the content in this booklet may be difficult to acknowledge or process for both victims of domestic violence and those close to victims. We encourage you to contact us at The Office of Wellness and Mental Health if you have any questions about the contents of this booklet or the topics addressed. We want to support you in any way that we can. Topics included within this booklet are the following: definition of domestic violence, common effects of trauma, reporting options, and assistance in moving forward.

If you or someone you know has experienced domestic violence, then remember...

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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Myths about Domestic/Dating Violence: Know Your Facts

MYTH: The victim causes the abuser to react the way they do.

FACT: It is NEVER the victim's fault. There is no excuse for domestic or dating violence.

MYTH: Abuse is impulsive, and the abuser is out of control.

FACT: Abusers choose to abuse and do so with purpose.

MYTH: Since the victim does not leave, the situation must not be that serious.

FACT: It is often VERY HARD for a victim to leave abusive situations.

MYTH: If it's not a physical problem, then it must not be serious.

FACT: ALL forms of abuse need to be taken seriously.

MYTH: I never see violence happen in my community. It must not be going on.

FACT: Domestic and dating violence can happen EVERYWHERE.

MYTH: Domestic violence is a private issue.

FACT: It is important to seek help from someone who can help to end the violence.

MYTH: Abuse only happens to women in heterosexual relationships.

FACT: Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

What is Domestic/Dating Violence?

Domestic Violence: Domestic violence is violence, force, or threat that results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of bodily injury, sexual assault, or death and that is committed by a person against such person's family or household member, which includes a current or former spouse, a person with whom the complainant shares a child in common, or who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the person as a spouse or intimate partner.

Dating Violence: Dating violence is violence, force, or threat that results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of bodily injury, sexual assault, or death committed by a person who is or has been in a close relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the other person. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

While dating and domestic violence may be physical acts that intend to cause harm to victims, this type of abuse is not the only violence victims may experience.

Other forms of abuse include the elements of coercive control in which a deliberate and continuous pattern of behavior is designed to limit a person's freedom and may create a threat of harm if there is no compliance.

Domestic/Dating Violence: It's Not Just Physical

- **CULTURAL/IDENTITY:** isolation from cultural community, using cultural norms to justify behavior, threatening to "out", withholding identity documents, forcing conformity to idealized image of identity, dead-naming or using incorrect pronouns, using slurs, controlling gender/cultural/identity expression

- **EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL:** Silent treatment, blaming/accusations, jealousy, gaslighting, isolation, threats, calling partner crazy/paranoid/suicidal, humiliation, harming pets

- **FINANCIAL:** not allowing participation in education or work outside the home, identity theft, controlling choice of occupation, denying access to bank accounts, requiring justification for all money spent, selling or destroying possessions without permission, misuse of legal documents, not paying bills or support

- **PHYSICAL:** Scratching, slapping, stalking medication/mobility aids, pushing, hitting, throwing objects, Depriving sleep, strangling/choking, use of weapon(s), withholding

- **RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL:** insulting religious or spiritual beliefs, preventing practicing of beliefs, Using the beliefs to manipulate or shame, forcing children to be raised in a faith that is not mutually agreed upon, Using beliefs to minimize or rationalize abusive behaviors, forcing a religious or spiritual path or practice

- **SEXUAL:** ignoring of sexual boundaries, forcing to look at porn, withholding sex as punishment, rape, control of contraceptives/birth control sabotage, unwanted touching, intentionally infecting with STI, lying about STI status

- **TECHNOLOGICAL:** placing GPS devices in vehicles or items to track and monitor, controlling social media use or posting without permission, using social media or smart home devices to track and monitor, constant calls/texts

- **VERBAL:** expressing negative expectations, expressing distrust, threatening violence against a person or her/his family, yelling, lying, saying harsh insults or name calling



RED FLAGS: **Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship**

Sometimes red flags can lead to abuse. Keep in mind, abuse in a relationship doesn't look the same in every relationship because all relationships are different. An abusive partner will use different tactics to maintain power and control over their partner. This behavior may be unpredictable, or the abuser may brush it off as a "bad temper." There are red flags that you can be aware to ensure your safety.

Possessiveness

Betrayal

Isolation

Guilting

Emotionally Intense

Manipulation

Sabotage

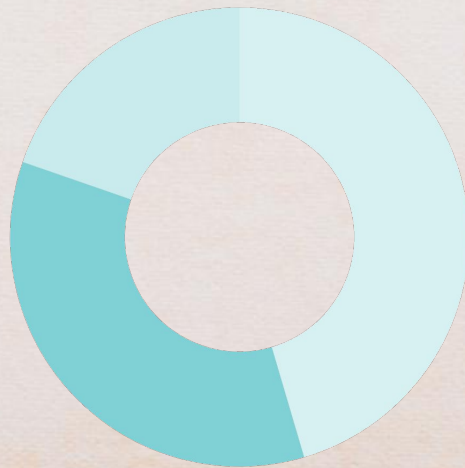
Belittling

Volatility

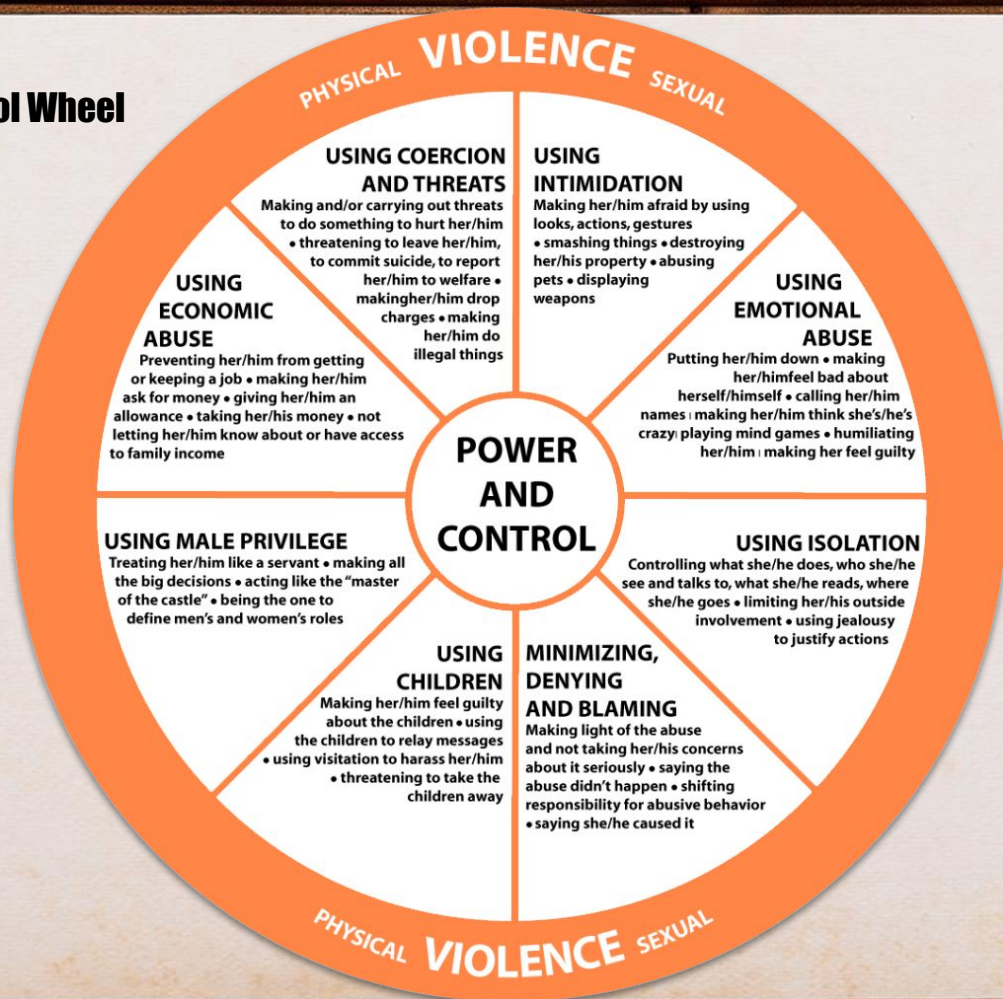
Deflection

Power and Control Wheels

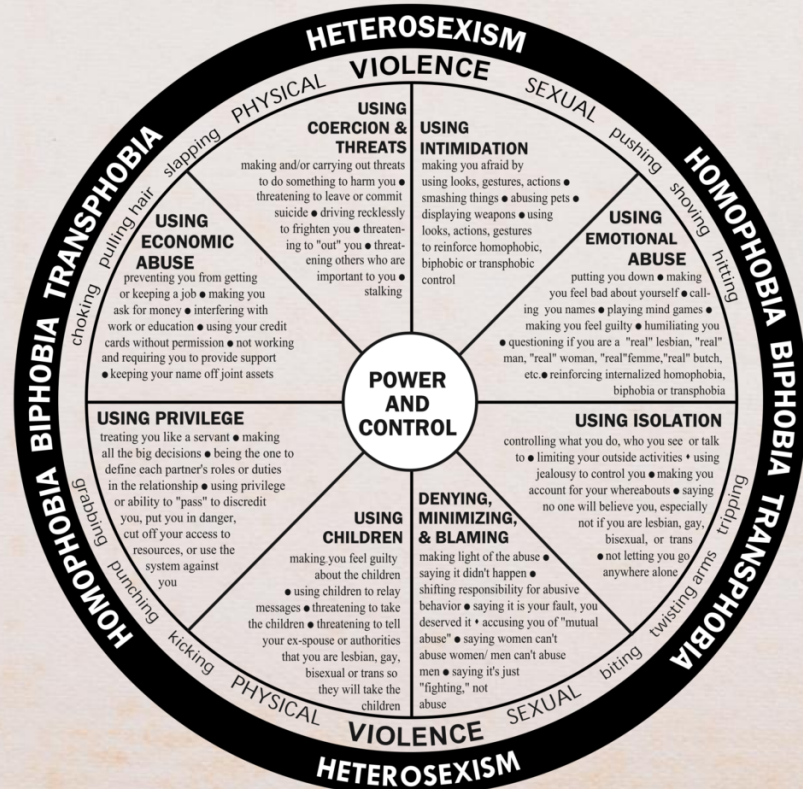
Power and Control Wheels were developed some years ago by a domestic violence agency to help victims and survivors understand how and why abuse may happen. On the next pages you will see several types of wheels that may be helpful for your understanding of this complicated issue.



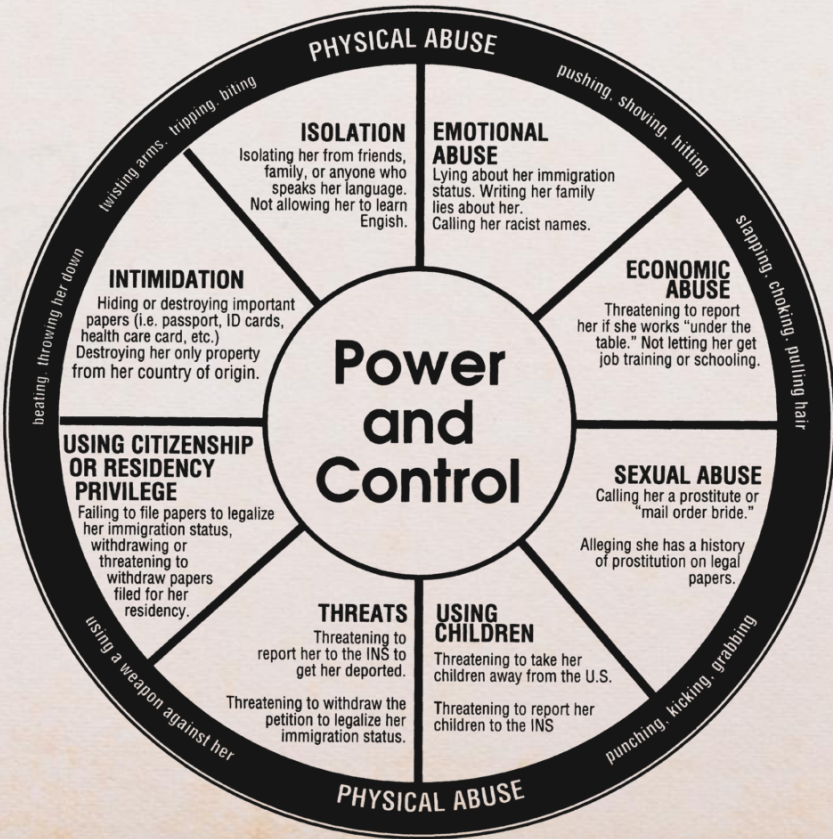
Original Power and Control Wheel



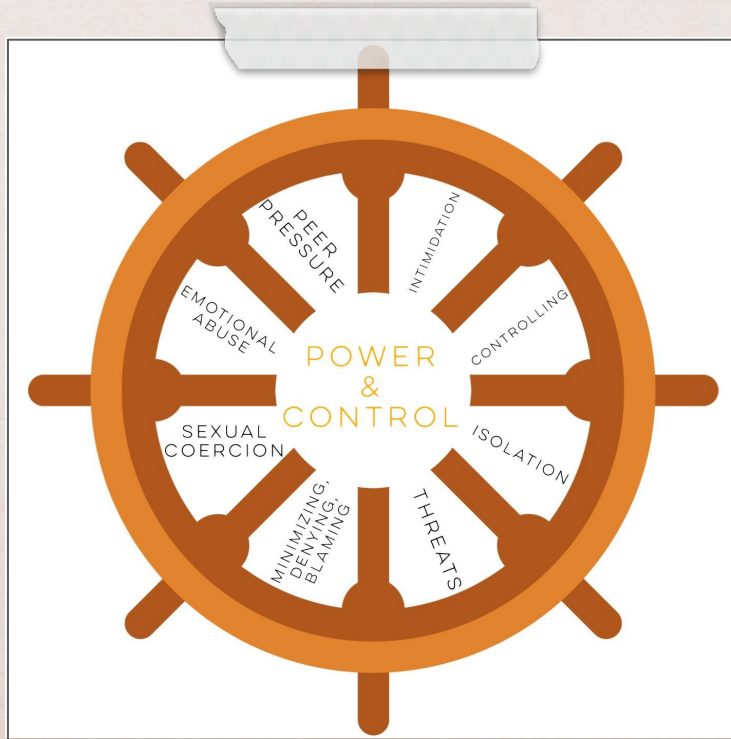
LGBTQIA+ Power and Control Wheel



Immigration Power and Control Wheel



Dating Violence Power and Control Wheel



Peer Pressure

- Threaten to expose someone else's weaknesses or secrets
- Spread rumors
- Tell malicious lies about an individual to a peer group

Emotional Abuse

- Put them down
- Make them feel bad about themselves
- Name-calling
- Humiliate them
- Play mind games
- Make them feel like they are crazy or unhinged

Intimidation

- Make them afraid by using looks, words, or action
- Smash or break things
- Abuse pets
- Display weapons
- Aggressive jokes

Controlling

- Lack of boundaries
- Insists on strict gender roles
- Tell them what their habits should be, how to wear their hair or dress
- Check their cell phone/social media
- Make them feel guilty

Sexual Coercion

- Manipulate or make threats to get sex
- Remove a condom without the victim's knowledge or consent
- Purposely expose them to an STI or getting them pregnant
- Threaten to take children away
- Get them drunk or providing drugs before sex

Minimize, Deny, & Blame

- Make light of the abuse, i.e. 'just joking'
- Not take concerns seriously
- Shift responsibility for abusive behavior onto victim
- Say abuse didn't happen or that is was not abuse

Threats

- Make or carry out threats to do something to hurt the victim
- Threaten to leave or break up with victim
- Threaten to commit suicide
- Threaten to report them to police or school
- Make them drop charges
- Make them do illegal things

Isolation

- Control what they do, who they see or talk to
- Limit their outside activities/involvement
- Make them account for their whereabouts
- Use jealousy/protection to justify actions

Why Victims Stay

Victims may stay in abusive relationships for many reasons. Some may believe that their abuser will become more violent or maybe even attempt to kill them. They may not have an adequate support system, or may not know how to get support. Abusers may restrict the victim's access to finances, which may cause the victim to be fearful of leaving and becoming homeless or financially unstable. Some victims may not have anywhere to safely go, or they may feel confused.

It's easy to feel confused because of the inconsistencies of the abuse. There may be periods of friendliness and love which are then followed by periods of anger and violence. Victims may question themselves: "Does my partner just need to let off steam?" or "Is this just the pattern I've become used to?"

If you are concerned about children being involved, then please read our section on 'Children and Safety' on pages 15-16.

Why Victims Stay: Societal Barriers

Societal barriers might influence you to stay in an abusive relationship

- An abuser might try to contact you despite having a protective order issued.
- There may not be enough shelters for housing victims.
- Society may try to pressure you think that you should fix a failing relationship. Remember, a failing relationship does make you a failure as a person.
- If your partner has isolated you from your friends and family, you may think you have nowhere to go for help.
- You may feel ashamed of being a victim because of how your community may look at you.
- Sometimes a prosecutor may not want to prosecute your case. A judge may also impose limited punishment for a convicted abuser such as a fine or probation.
- Sometimes law enforcement officers may wrongfully assess the situation, and either downplay the abuse as a “domestic dispute,” or falsely think that you are the abuser and not your partner
- Some religions may influence you into saving your relationship no matter what

If Children are Involved...

Victims may have a hard time leaving abusive situations when children are involved. Children may directly witness domestic violence or fall victim to the violence as well. Children in homes where one parent is abused may feel fearful and anxious. They may always be on guard, wondering when the next violent event will happen. This can cause them to react in different ways, depending on their age. If you need information on short term effects, then please contact your NOVA Victim Advocate.

90%

of children in domestic violence situations directly saw it in person

1 in 4

of children will witness domestic violence in their parents by the age 17

50%

of males who abuse their female partners will also abuse their children

Examples of witnessing abuse include seeing the abuse first hand, hearing it happen, being manipulated by the abuser to control the victim, trying to intervene, or actively participating in the violent acts.

Studies show that long term effects include a greater risk for these children to repeat the cycle as adults by entering into abusive relationships or becoming abusers themselves.

Children who witness or are victims of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse are at higher risk for health problems as adults. These can include mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety. They may also include diabetes, obesity, heart disease, poor self-esteem, and other problems.

You and Your Children's Safety

If you are not yet ready or willing to leave an abusive relationship, you can take steps to help yourself and your children now, including:

- Making a safety plan for you and your child
- Listening and talking to your child and letting them know that abuse is not OK and is not their fault
- Reaching out to a domestic violence support person who can help you learn your options

If you are thinking about leaving an abusive relationship, then you may want to keep quiet about it in front of your children. Young children may not be able to keep a secret from an adult in their life. Children may say something about your plan to leave without realizing it, which could jeopardize your safety.

Safety Planning:

How to Ensure Your Safety

DURING:

- Get to know your neighbors and community
- Have a plan to leave
- Memorize at least 3 phone numbers in case you need to call someone in an emergency
- Have a code word for others to know in case you are in trouble
- Keep your car full of gas and set aside money
- Keep evidence of the abuse: Take pictures or have audio recordings

LEAVING:

- Gather important files, documents, or information
- Tell someone about the abuse
- Know the safest time to leave and go to a place where your abuser won't find you
- Keep your cell phone charged or invest in a burner phone if you need to
- Change your phone number
- Notify schools if children are involved

AFTER:

- Change the locks on your doors
- Change your work hours and daily routine
- Show your community photos of your abuser so they may recognize them
- Know your legal resources
- Install security at home, such as cameras or motion detectors
- Always be aware of your surroundings

Safety Planning: Protective Orders

Protective orders are legal documents put in place in order to protect someone from their alleged abuser. These documents are issued by a court magistrate, and the paperwork must be filled out at a courthouse. They are free of cost and are issued for ANY acts of violence, force, or threat. It is recommended to have as much information about the abuse and the abuser as possible when filling out the paperwork for a protective order.*

EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDER:

These last 72 hours, and may be obtained by the police on behalf of the victim. These are often issued after police respond to a domestic call.

PRELIMINARY PROTECTIVE ORDER:

These may be granted upon initially filing for a protective order. They last 15 days or until the trial date.

PROTECTIVE ORDER:

These may be granted for up to two years. A trial usually occurs in order to determine if this will be granted and for how long.

*While it is not essential to do so, reporting to the police is a great first step in obtaining a protective order.

Options:

Resources at NOVA

- NOVA Police can help you file a report and assist you in the next steps
- You can submit an online report to on the Office of Wellness and Mental Health's website
- The NOVA Victim Advocate can provide confidential support as well as options for reporting and other resources
- Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination. The TITLE IX Office can offer support and protections

NOVA Police: 703.764.5000
(For emergencies, call 911)

NOVA Victim Advocate:
703.323.2136
cokirkland@nvcc.edu

NOVA Title IX: 703.323.2262
titleix@nvcc.edu

Options:

Resources in Your Community

Local police can help you file a protective order after you have filed a police report.
In an emergency, always call 911 for assistance

- Alexandria Domestic Violence Program: [703.683.7273](tel:703.683.7273)
- Fx CO Sexual and Domestic Violence Services: [703.360.7273](tel:703.360.7273)
- Loudoun Citizens for Social Justice : [703.777.6552](tel:703.777.6552)
- Prince William CO ACTS Domestic Violence Services: [703.368.4141](tel:703.368.4141)
- SPARC: WWW.STALKINGAWARENESS.ORG

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE: [1.800.799.SAFE \(7233\)](tel:1.800.799.SAFE)

YOU ARE WORTHY



Pathways to Happiness:

Life After Abuse

It may seem hopeless to find happiness after suffering from domestic abuse. You may feel like you will never trust anyone again or may suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, or depression. It is important to take care of yourself and heal your emotional trauma in order to find your inner happiness... It's more than possible! Always remember that the abuse was never your fault, and that other people who were not your abuser did not cause you that pain.

Happiness:

- Consider taking therapy sessions. Check your local community to see if there are free group meetings, or free counseling sessions.
- Try meditating to ease anxiety
- Connect with who you were before the abuse: Pick up an old hobby you use to enjoy, such as dancing or painting
- Avoid substances such as alcohol or drugs when healing emotional pain
- Eat a well-balanced diet and exercise often
- Surround yourself with things that make you feel comfort and joy

New Relationships:

- Take things slowly and at your own pace. Do not rush into anything new. Take your time when showing your new partner your home or job.
- Stay alert: not only of your new partner but also of your own triggers that may arise
- Know your red flags and walk away from your new partner if you feel uncomfortable
- Understand that your new partner is not your past abuser: You do not want to take your aggression out on your innocent partner
- Love yourself first

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