

# In Our Hearts

## Assisting Youth and Students with Dating Violence and Exposure to Woman Abuse

2009



*The London Abused Women's Centre*

For information, please contact:

Executive Director  
The London Abused Women's Centre  
217 York Street, Suite 107 London, Ontario N6A 5P9  
phone: 519-432-2204 fax: 519-679-3918  
e-mail: [info@lawc.on.ca](mailto:info@lawc.on.ca)

© Copyright information  
London Abused Women's Centre  
217 York Street, Suite 107  
London, Ontario  
N6A 5P9

Cite reference as: In Our Hearts, Assisting Youth and Students with Dating Violence and Exposure to Woman Abuse, London Abused Women's Centre (2009); London, Ontario:  
Author, Emma Walker, Megan Walker and Sara Zuber

All rights reserved.

## **Dedication**

This manual is dedicated to the lives of Ashley and Stephanie Daubs. For those of you who didn't know them, they were amazing young women. Their lives came to a tragic end, but their hearts and souls live on in each of those who they touched.

The manual is also dedicated to Debbie Daubs-Ratelle. Debbie is an incredibly strong woman, who has dealt with the grief and loss of her daughters in the public eye, and yet has never hesitated to share her time at the assemblies, memorials and banquets held in her daughters' honour. You inspire all of us.

The manual is also dedicated to the wonderful students of Clarke Road Secondary School as well as Ashley and Stephanie's friends attending other schools throughout Thames Valley who created the video [In Our Hearts](#). Your lives changed on May 29, 2006 and you chose to rise above the loss of your friends and leave a legacy for others to learn from. Your friendship, love and commitment to this project, at one of the busiest times in your lives, was amazing. We love you all.

Special thank you to Megan Walker and Laura Visconti of the London Abused Women's Centre and Heather Kean, a University of Western Ontario student, for supporting us in our journey. We cried, laughed and learned so much by doing this project and your patience, understanding and insight helped us to continue to create a project that we hope will touch others.

All the best,

Mrs. K.J.

Denise Kussner-Jajal  
Educator, Clarke Road Secondary School

## Introduction

Woman abuse is a serious issue affecting all sectors of society. The documentary In Our Hearts accompanying this teaching manual was developed by a group of students who witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of woman abuse when their friends and classmates Ashley and Stephanie Daubs were tragically murdered by their father who also took his own life. The goal of this manual is to make clear what woman abuse is; the forms it can take; and to provide information about how to help and support women and girls who are being abused in their dating and hooking up relationships as well as those exposed to woman abuse in their homes.

Violence and abuse in intimate relationships, especially among young women and girls, is often misunderstood. It is the intent of the manual to inform teachers and students about healthy behaviour in dating and hooking up relationships. The manual is separated into three sections. The first outlines woman abuse, how to recognize it and what to do to support students and friends who may be victims of abuse or exposed to it in their homes. The second section addresses the effects exposure to violence and abuse in the home may have on children. The third section deals with abuse in dating and hooking up relationships and internet and cyber abuse. Discussion questions and class activities are included in each section.

Providing students with information about woman abuse may prevent a tragedy like the one suffered by the Daubs family from happening again. Lack of awareness can be a serious barrier in addressing and preventing woman abuse. It is hoped that at the very least, the barrier will be crumbled and more people will become aware of the serious dangers and potential lethality to women and children as a result of woman abuse.

## SECTION ONE

### What is Woman Abuse?

“Violence against women includes: any act of gendered-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”<sup>1</sup> Abuse can be described by the need for the perpetrator to have total control, to demean, to intimidate, and to put the victim in a position of powerlessness.<sup>2</sup> Abuse takes many forms and can affect not only the woman, but also the other members of the family. These tactics of abuse are outlined on the Power and Control Wheel (see appendix A) and include:

**Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse can be perpetrated against women and children and can be described as any activity that is unwanted or coerced. It includes, but is not limited to, sexual name calling or accusations, forced pregnancy or termination of pregnancy, and any non-disclosure of STD/HIV status.

**Scenario:** Kate is a 14 year old elementary school student dating Jim, a 17 year old high school student. One day after a football game, Kate and Jim went to his place to hang out. Kate had previously told Jim she was not ready for a sexual relationship. However, Jim had continued to pressure her for sex. On this occasion, he told her he would break up with her if she didn't have sex with him. Since this was Kate's first relationship and she loved him, she felt like she had no other choice but to submit.

**Using Isolation:** A boyfriend or partner may control his partner by isolating her from friends and family members. He does this by controlling who she sees and talks to, where she goes, and/or limits her outside involvement. He may use jealousy to justify his actions and might also sabotage her friendships and new relationships.

**Scenario:** Emma and Matt have been dating for three years. During the past year of their relationship, Matt has been sabotaging Emma's relationships with her friends and family by purposely not informing her when they have called. He has gone out of his way to delete any messages that have been left for her.

**Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse can include name calling, making an individual feel badly about oneself, using mind games to make her feel crazy, or humiliating her in front of friends and/or co-workers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. New York: United Nations, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, Alison, and Linda Baker. *Little Eyes, Little Ears: how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow*. Ottawa: Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007.

**Scenario:** Alana and Joe have been dating for six months. Joe has recently started to make fun of Alana's weight. Last night, they went out for dinner with friends and in front of everyone Joe made a comment about Alana's menu choice. He suggested that she choose a light dish to help her lose weight. Alana has never noticed her weight and has always been happy with the way she looked. She now feels embarrassed and uncomfortable in front of people and wears baggy sweatshirts to cover her body.

**Using Children:** Children may be used by an abuser in an attempt to gain and maintain control over the child's mother. Abusers may use access visits with the children to harass their mothers, use the children to relay messages telling them bad things about their mothers, threaten to take children away from their mothers, or make their mothers feel badly about her parenting. In worst case scenarios, children can be killed as a way to make their mothers suffer a lifetime of sadness and grief.

**Scenario:** A clear example of using children to control a woman was demonstrated in the documentary In Our Hearts. Ashley and Stephanie Daubs were killed by their father as a way to hurt their mother for leaving him. Debbie Daubs was fearful she might be killed by her ex-husband after he was charged with uttering death threats against her. She never imagined he would kill their children in his quest to gain ultimate control over her.

**Using Intimidation, Coercion & Threats:** An abuser may intimidate his partner by making her afraid using looks, actions, or gestures. He may also smash or break her personal possessions. He may threaten to report her to welfare or immigration. He might purchase or display weapons to exert power. He may also abuse the family pets or destroy her cherished items.

**Scenario:** Sarah and Bill were sixteen and had been dating for only three months. Bill was very jealous of Sarah's friendships with other boys and threatened to kill her cat if he ever caught her talking to other guys or left him. One day at lunch, Bill walked into the cafeteria and saw Sarah standing in the food line talking to a guy from her chemistry class. When she came home after school, her cat was missing. Bill called to say he had the cat and would return it safely only if Sarah promised not to talk to any other guys.

**Minimizing, Denying & Blaming:** When the abuser makes light of the abuse, denying the abuse even happened or blaming the abuse on the women.

**Scenario:** After Brandon slapped Mary across the face, he told her he wouldn't have hit her if she didn't nag him all the time.

**Physical Abuse:** When the abuser hits, slaps, punches, bites, kicks, and/or pushes a woman. He might also confine the woman and prevent her from leaving her home. He could withhold or prevent a woman's access to physical care, food or medication.

**Scenario:** Greg hits and pushes his girlfriend whenever she disagrees with him or says or does something that he says is embarrassing. She continues to go to school with bruises on her arms and legs and lies about how she gets them telling her friends she's slipped, run into things or fallen in the bath.

**Using Social Status and Privilege:** When an abuser controls a woman because of her gender, race, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, age, occupation, wealth, physical or developmental ability. Abusers may also use institutions to reinforce power or privilege.

**Scenario:** Joe was the captain of the senior football team. He really liked Anna but she wasn't interested in him. Joe asked Anna out and said that if she said no he would spread rumours about her to all of the football team.

**Using Economic Abuse:** When the abuser prevents his partner from getting or keeping a job. He might also take her money and have her ask for an "allowance." She may not be allowed to participate in financial decision making.

**Scenario:** Julia is a full-time student and works part time and the local restaurant. Every month her boyfriend makes her hand over all of her tips to pay for his car payments. Julia doesn't think this is fair, but he threatens to end the relationship if she doesn't comply.

"People who have experienced violence often say that it is the psychological, verbal, and spiritual violence that hurts the most and the longest. Some say that most physical wounds heal, but the damage to their self respect and ability to relate to others caused by emotional, verbal, and spiritual violence effects every aspect of their lives."<sup>3</sup>

### A healthy Relationship

The equality wheel demonstrates aspects of a non-abusive relationship. These eight qualities should always be present in a healthy relationship. Both partners should demonstrate fairness, non threatening behaviour, respect, trust and support, honesty and accountability, responsible parenting, shared responsibilities, and an economic partnership.

**Negotiation and Fairness:** A couple should seek mutually satisfying resolutions to conflicts. They should be able to accept change and be willing to compromise.

---

<sup>3</sup> DeKeseredy, Walter S., and Linda MacLeod. *Woman Abuse; A Sociological Story*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1997, 5.

**Non-Threatening Behaviour:** A woman should be able to talk and act in a manner that she feels is safe and should feel comfortable expressing herself and doing things.

**Respect:** Couples should be able to listen to each other without being judgemental. They should be emotionally affirming and understanding and value each other's opinions.

**Trust and Support:** A woman's partner should support her life goals. He should respect her right to her own feelings, friends, activities, and opinions.

**Honesty and Accountability:** A woman's partner should accept responsibility for his behaviours. He should be able to acknowledge any past violent or abusive behaviour. Individuals need to admit when they are wrong and communicate openly and truthfully.

**Responsible Parenting:** Both partners should share parental responsibilities equally and be positive nonviolent role models for their children.

**Shared Responsibility:** Parents should mutually agree on a fair distribution of work. They should be able to make family decisions together.

**Economic Partnership:** In a healthy relationship, partners should make financial decisions together. Both partners should benefit from financial arrangements.

**Scenario:** Kate and Jon have been dating for eight months. They are both very happy and supportive towards each other. When Kate tells Jon she is going out with her friends, Jon says "That's great, have a good time!"

**Abusers may use only one tactic or multiple tactics to control a woman. Abusers may change tactics if they believe doing so will help them gain and maintain power and control over a woman. All tactics, whether physical or not, are considered to abusive.**

**Class Activity:** Break the students into groups of four to six students. Each group is given one of the tactics of abuse. Ask them to create their own scenarios using the information above. After 10 to 15 minutes have the groups perform their scenarios in front of the class.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Abuse:<sup>4</sup>**

- Frequent injuries, with the excuse of "accidents;"
- Frequent and sudden absences from work or school;
- Frequent, harassing phone calls from the partner;

---

<sup>4</sup> Helpguide.org. Helpguide. 24 June 2009  
<[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic\\_violence\\_abuse\\_types\\_signs\\_causes\\_effects.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm)>.

- Fear of the partner, references to the partner's anger;
- Personality changes (e.g. an outgoing woman becomes withdrawn);
- Excessive fear of conflict;
- Submissive behaviour, lack of assertiveness;
- Isolation from friends and family;
- Insufficient resources to live (e.g. money, credit cards, transportation, drugs, groceries);
- Depression, crying, low self-esteem.

It is important to report suspected cases of woman abuse. If you're fearful for your personal safety or of destroying your friendships, remember that your report is confidential and everything possible will be done to protect your privacy. Your name will remain anonymous, and the suspicions will be investigated before anyone is taken into custody. Most importantly, you can protect the victim from further abuse or even save their life by calling for help.<sup>5</sup>

### **Why do some Partners Abuse?<sup>6</sup>**

Abuse is caused because of women's lack of equality in society:

- This behaviour may be learned in their family of origin (many abusers have witnessed their fathers abusing their mothers);
- Some men may try to maintain a macho image reinforced by society and multi-media;
- Some men believe it is an appropriate expression of power and control;
- Some men may want their partner to remain dependent on them;
- Men may know there are few, if any, consequences for violent acts.

---

<sup>5</sup> [Helpguide.org. Helpguide. 24 June 2009 <http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic\\_violence\\_abuse\\_types\\_signs\\_causes\\_effects.htm>](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm).

<sup>6</sup> "Dating Violence." [The Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence. 15 June 2009 <http://www.acadv.org/dating.html>](http://www.acadv.org/dating.html).

## Why Do Women Stay?

Because they:

- Love their partner, want their relationships to work and hope their partner will change;
- Fear their partners will hurt them or seek revenge if they leave (abused women are most at risk of serious injury or death at the time of separation);
- Feel guilt and shame;
- See no other alternative;
- Are not aware that help is available;
- Believe a partner who is occasionally violent is better than no partner at all;
- Believe the violence and abuse is normal;
- Think that the violence will go away after they get married;
- Have no place to go;
- Do not have access to legal resources;
- Have no money to help once they have left;
- Are worried about losing custody of their children or the care of their children while with their abusive partner.

**Asking, “why women stay?” shifts the responsibility for the abuse from the abusers to the victims. This is called re-victimization. Rather than asking women why they stay, we should be holding abusers accountable and asking them, “why do abuse?”**

## Myths<sup>7</sup>

Myth: Woman abuse only happens to poor or uneducated women

Fact: Women from all ages, socioeconomic, ethnic, culture, educational, occupation and religious groups are abused. Perpetrators of woman abuse can be found in all age, cultural, socioeconomic, education occupational and religious groups.

Myth: It is easy for a woman to leave an abusive relationship

Fact: There are many very real reasons why women stay. The primary reason given by victims for staying with their abusive partner is fear of escalating violence and the lack of real options to be safe with their children. The fear of violence is real. Abusers will often threaten the woman's safety or that of her family if she leaves the relationship. Strong societal and cultural messages create barriers for women who seek safety for themselves and for their children. Some of the messages include, "you made your bed now lie in it," "it is a woman's responsibility to make a marriage work," or, "children need two parents in the home." Statistics also show that 70 percent of women who do leave an abuser experience an escalation in abuse, sometimes resulting in serious injuries or death. The Daubs case is an example of this. When Debbie Daubs left her abusive husband, she thought that she and her girls would be able to live their lives free from violence and abuse. She never imagined her children would be murdered by their father because of her decision to leave.

Myth: It is only abuse if it includes physical violence<sup>8</sup>

Fact: Physical violence is the easiest to detect but abuse includes various tactics which are often misunderstood and unreported. Abuse can be emotional, verbal, psychological, financial, sexual and physical

## **Section Two:**

### **Impact on Children**

On any given day in Canada, about 2,500 children are living in an abused woman's shelter with their mother. 67 percent are under 10 years of age.<sup>9</sup> Woman abuse affects women regardless of their race, religion, or economic background and because a large

---

<sup>7</sup> Why Women Stay in Abusive Relationships. London, Ontario: London Abused Women's Centre, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> "Myths and Misconceptions of Domestic Violence." *Shalva*. 24 June 2009 <[www.shalvaonline.org](http://www.shalvaonline.org)>.

<sup>9</sup> Cunningham, Alison, and Linda Baker. *Little Eyes, Little Ears: how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow*. Ottawa: Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007.

majority of these women are mothers, it is estimated that more than three million kids witness the horrors of abuse in their homes each year.<sup>10</sup>

Children who witness or are exposed to abuse against their mothers are the most recent victims of woman abuse to become visible. These children have been called the “silent,” “forgotten,” and “unintended,” victims of woman abuse.<sup>11</sup> Children are exposed to abuse in many different ways. They may see their mothers being assaulted, demeaned or the aftermath of a situation (injuries). They will often hear the conflict and violence. Children can also be used by an abusive partner as a party to the abuse to make their mothers come home.<sup>12</sup> Or, the abuser could force the child to watch assaults against the mother or to participate in the abuse, and might use the child as a spy and interrogate him or her about their mothers’ activities.<sup>13</sup>

Children are often considered witnesses to the abuse; however, most children don’t take a passive role when violence occurs in their homes. They are most likely to interpret, predict and assesses their roles in causing a fight; worry about the consequences; engage in problem solving; and/or take measures to protect themselves or siblings, both physically and emotionally.<sup>14</sup>

Children who have witnessed or are exposed to woman abuse tend to exhibit more aggression and may be anti-social as well as fearful. They may show lower social competence than other children. Children exposed to violence were also found to show more depression, temperament problems, angry, anxiety, and low self-esteem than those who have never seen their mother being abused. Children from homes where their mothers are being abused have shown fewer skills in comprehending how others feel when compared to children from non-violent households.<sup>15</sup>

Boys and girls who observe an abusive event tend to be more immature than their fellow classmates. Those who witness or are exposed to violence may justify their own use of violence. Girls and boys differ in what they learn from these violent experiences. Boys who observe woman abuse are more likely to approve of violence than girls who witness it.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> [Helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org). Helpguide. 24 June 2009

<[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic\\_violence\\_abuse\\_types\\_signs\\_causes\\_effects.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm)>.

<sup>11</sup> Edelson, Jeffrey. "Children's Witnessing of Adult Domestic Violence." National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence. 24 June 2009 <<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/ChildrenWitnessingAdultDV.pdf>>.

<sup>12</sup> Cunningham, Alison, and Linda Baker. Little Eyes, Little Ears: how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow. Ottawa: Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Edelson, Jeffrey. "Children's Witnessing of Adult Domestic Violence." National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence. 24 June 2009 <<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/ChildrenWitnessingAdultDV.pdf>>.

<sup>14</sup> Cunningham, Alison, and Linda Baker. Little Eyes, Little Ears: how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow. Ottawa: Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> IBID

<sup>16</sup> IBID

Children who witness or are exposed to woman abuse can experience a variety of immediate short-term effects as well as long term effects. These include behavioural and emotional functioning, cognitive functioning and attitudes, and physical functioning.<sup>17</sup> The exposure to violence normalizes it in such a way that it can change the child's worldview completely. Some children will blame themselves. They feel guilty and ashamed for not being able to step in and protect their mothers. Adolescent children exposed to woman abuse are at particular risk. Drug and alcohol abuse can become an outlet for their fear, guilt, shame and frustration. Adolescent boys are also more likely to become abusers themselves. "Sons of severe batterers have wife abuse rates at ten times the levels of sons of non-violent fathers."<sup>18</sup> As well, adolescent girls are less likely to report or seek assistance if they become abused by their intimate partners.<sup>19</sup>

There are many immediate effects that happen to children while witnessing or being exposed to their mothers being abused. It can negatively affect the relationships with their fathers and mothers, particularly the bond between mother and child. It can leave children feeling isolated as well as leading to the development of negative beliefs about themselves.<sup>20</sup>

There are certain features that should be present in a nurturing home for healthy childhood development. These include a supportive family as well as the opportunity to connect with people outside of the family, for example peers, teachers and neighbours. Woman abuse impedes a child's ability to obtain this kind of healthy development. Links have been made between problems with social development and exposure to violence and abuse in the home. Children who are witnesses to violence or are victims of violence themselves often suffer from symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, ranging from sleeplessness, disorganized behaviour, re-experiencing the event, avoidance or numbing, and in some cases hyper-arousal.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, there is a tendency in homes where the mother is a victim of abuse for the children to be physically and/or sexually abused as well. When a man is abusive to his partner, he not only becomes a poor role model, he also demonstrates bad parenting. It is not uncommon for his bad parenting to lead to the maltreatment of his children. In violent family situations, children are physically abused or neglected at a rate fifteen times higher than the national average.<sup>22</sup>

During incidents of rage and violence, children are forced to take on adult responsibilities. They try to rescue their mothers; to deflect the abuser's attention onto themselves; to distract the abuser, take care of younger siblings; and/or seek outside

---

<sup>17</sup> Edelson, Jeffrey. "Children's Witnessing of Adult Domestic Violence." National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence. 24 June 2009 <<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/ChildrenWitnessingAdultDV.pdf>>.

<sup>18</sup> IBID 376

<sup>19</sup> IBID 376

<sup>20</sup> Cunningham, Alison, and Linda Baker. Little Eyes, Little Ears; how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow. Ottawa: Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Osofsky, Joy D. Children Exposed to Marital Violence: Theory, Research and Applied Issues. Ed. George W. Holden, Robert Geffner, and Ernest N. Jouriles. Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1998, 101.

<sup>22</sup> IBID 101

help.<sup>23</sup> While the abuse is occurring, children may experience a cycle of emotional upheaval including fear, anxiety, guilt, distress, worry, self-blame, grief, anger, confusion, embarrassment, shame and the hope to be rescued.<sup>24</sup>

### **Teacher's Tips: What to do when a child discloses information<sup>25</sup>**

- Stop and listen
- When a child makes a disclosure of abuse, stop and take stock of the enormous responsibility you have.
  - Allow the child to tell her/his story
- Do not pressure the child to talk. Your goal is to listen, rather than gather information.
  - Re-assure the child by validating her/his feelings
- Be positive and supportive; try to understand what the child has experienced. “You have been very brave to have witnessed such scary events”
  - Do not criticize or speak negatively about the abusive parent
- In order to keep the lines of communications open, be careful not to be critical of her/his parents. Most children feel a sense of loyalty and protectiveness towards their parents.
  - Do not make commitments you cannot keep
- Do not promise to save the child from an abusive relationship. If the abuse takes place and your promise fails, you will let the child down.
- Follow the child's lead
  - Let the child tell you as much or as little as they want

---

<sup>23</sup> Cunningham, Alison, and Linda Baker. Little Eyes, Little Ears: how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow. Ottawa: Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007, 6.

<sup>24</sup> IBID 7

<sup>25</sup> IBID

## Myths<sup>26</sup>

Myth: If abuse is kept out of sight it won't impact the children

Fact: Children are highly aware of what is going on in their homes. They are intuitive to changes in family dynamics. Almost 90 percent of children living in an abusive home are aware of the abuse. Witnessing or being exposed to violence can have devastating long term effects on these children.

Myth: Abused women often abuse their children

Fact: Although witnessing violence can be traumatic for children, there is no evidence to suggest that women who are abused will abuse their children. Overwhelming concern for children often plagues mothers who are being abused at home. Their goal tends to be to shield their children from violence the best way they can.

### **Section Three:**

#### **Dating Violence**

"I went to this party one night and everyone was having a great time. After awhile my girlfriend and her steady started arguing. He was drinking a lot and so was she. Anyhow, they started to yell at each other and then he began hitting her. I screamed at him to stop and Cindy started freaking out. Finally, a couple of guys made him stop. Cindy ended up with a black eye and a swollen lip. When we left the party they were acting like nothing happened. It was weird."<sup>27</sup>

In one study, more than 49 percent of female students in high school had been emotionally abused, 14.5 percent reported being physically forced into sex, and 9.1 percent had been physically assaulted.<sup>28</sup>

Dating violence is not always defined as the traditional role of a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship. It can include many different types of relationships between straight, gay, and lesbian couples. It can also include hooking up on occasion, hooking up one time at a party, or friends with benefits. As previously mentioned, these relationships may not appear to be typical, but can include many types of interpersonal interactions.

---

<sup>26</sup> Why Women Stay in Abusive Relationships. London, Ontario: London Abused Women's Centre, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> [How to Help A Teen](#). Toronto: United Way.

<sup>28</sup> DeKesredy, WS, and Schwartz, MD, February 1998, Measuring the Extent of Woman Abuse in intimate Heterosexual relationships: A critique of the Conflict Tactics Scales, National Resource Centre on Domestic Violence

## What Constitutes Dating Violence?

### **Dating violence can manifest in many forms:**

- Emotional abuse in casual or serious relationships;
- Physical violence in casual or serious relationships;
- Sexual assault or date rape.

Dating violence is often hidden because teenagers are not experienced with dating. They often feel pressure by their friends to use violence, they want to be totally independent from their parents, and they have a false view of love.<sup>29</sup> 26 percent of girls in grades nine through 12 have been the victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse or date rape.<sup>30</sup>

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the deliberate attempt to belittle someone with the intention of gaining personal power by weakening the victim's sense of self as a valid and worthy member of society.<sup>31</sup>

### **The abuser may use a variety of methods to achieve this goal, including;**

- Name calling;
- Accusations;
- Intimidation;
- Guilt trips;
- Jealously;
- Manipulation.

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is more clearly defined because it leaves visible scars on the bodies of its victims. In any relationship (a dating relationship or not) physical abuse, like hitting,

---

<sup>29</sup> "Dating Violence." *The Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence*. 15 June 2009 <<http://www.acadv.org/dating.html>>.

<sup>30</sup> Schoen, C, et al, November 1997, "The Commonwealth Fund Survey for the Health of Adolescent Girls."

<sup>31</sup> "Physical and Emotional Abuse in Dating Relationships." Carleton University. 24 June 2009 <<http://www.carleton.ca/womensstudies/activism/emotional.htm>>.

slapping, biting, shoving and kicking constitutes seriously physical abuse. This behaviour is never justified; it is never okay.

### Sexual Assault and Date Rape

Sexual assault is a serious problem among teenagers. It is any form of unwanted sexual activity forced upon a person without that person's consent. It can include anything from unwanted sexual touching to forced intercourse. Usually, the person who commits the assault is someone known to the victim. While most sexual assaults are perpetrated against women, men too can be and are sexually assaulted.<sup>32</sup> It is a category of dating violence that is often overlooked or seen as something else entirely. The truth is that sexual assault is often perpetrated by a friend, former or current partner, or a casual acquaintance rather than by the typical image of a stranger in a dark alley or parking garage. More than 80 percent of rapes on university and college campuses are committed by someone the victim knows, and 50 percent occur on dates. Many of these assaults happen during the first eight weeks of classes. Most women who experience sexual assault or date rape know their attacker. Sometimes, knowing the perpetrator makes the victim feel partially responsible; leaving them to wonder if in fact what happened to them constitutes "real" rape or "real" sexual assault. The answer is clear - it does. No one has the right to touch your body in any unwanted way. It is important to keep this in mind. The victim should never be encouraged to feel guilty or responsible for what has happened to them.<sup>33</sup>

### Date Rape

Date rape is a form of sexual assault but requires special attention here because of its prevalence among young people. Date rape drugs like Rohypnol and Ketamine can be used to by an attacker to subdue his victim; however the most common date rape drug is alcohol. 70 to 80 percent of sexual assaults among college students occur while one or both parties are intoxicated.<sup>34</sup> Victims of alcohol induced sexual assault can feel responsible for what has happened to them. Sex without consent is always rape. When someone is too drunk to consent, date rape has occurred. It is important to understand that when you say no at any point during a sexual counter, your partner is obligated to stop immediately.

### What to do

The information provided in this section is based on the policies and guidelines administered by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Therefore, the information provided may not be the norm for other Canadian Provinces. Please ensure that you investigate the information current to your Provincial jurisdiction prior to presenting it to your class.

---

<sup>32</sup> Partners in Healing. Toronto: Ontario Network of Sexual Assault Treatment Centers.

<sup>33</sup> "Common Reactions to Sexual Assault." Student Health Services. Illinois State University. 23 June 2009  
<[http://www.shs.ilstu.edu/sexual\\_assault/assaulted/reactions.shtml](http://www.shs.ilstu.edu/sexual_assault/assaulted/reactions.shtml)>.

<sup>34</sup> IBID

If you have been sexually assaulted or have any concerns that your health has been put at risk, you should go to the local emergency centre where, depending on where you live, you may be referred to a specialized sexual assault treatment centre. Once you have arrived, it is important to provide the nurse with as many details as you can remember. Remember to be honest; the nurses are not there to judge you, but to help you. The nurse will ask you a variety of questions and may suggest further examinations which could include: blood or urine samples, vaginal or anal evaluations, the collection of clothing worn during the assault, mouth swab, and/or a sample from under your fingernails. If you are not comfortable with any of these examinations, you will be supported in declining. The information collected is placed together in a kit which is stored for six to 12 months. If, later on you decide to involve the police or explore additional further charges, the kit will be available for you and only for you.

The nurse will make appropriate medicines available to you at no charge. These include a pregnancy test, Plan B, and any medication required for sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. You are not required to take anything that you are not comfortable taking. Nurses will also provide you with a counselling specialist should you decide to pursue this.

**If you have been sexually assaulted, please consider the following advice:**

- Do not eat, drink, or smoke;
- Try not to use the washroom as it may interfere with test results;
- Bring the clothing that you were wearing while assaulted to the emergency centre in a paper bag;
- If you are unsure what to do, call the local police station anonymously and ask them for direction;
- Timelines are important. Better test results will be achieved if you go to an emergency centre within 72 hours of the assault. However, even if you have been sexually assaulted in the distant past, it is not too late to receive help and get proper medication;
- If you are not comfortable going to the hospital, talk to someone you are comfortable with and trust. This could include your parents, siblings, teacher, guardians, police, or even a child/youth hot line.

In the Province of Ontario, these procedures and guidelines are intended for both males and females. Males, or females with the assistance of males, are usually the perpetrators of sexual assault. There is a high suicide rate for males who have been sexually assaulted, and it is important to remember that male victims are in need of proper care

(Interview conducted with St. Joseph's Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre, London, ON).

Remember, the attacker is usually someone known to the victim. Whether you know the attacker or not, if you have not consented to sex, you are a victim of sexual assault or date rape. Counselling and help are available to assist you in understanding the assault is not your fault.

### Why is dating violence a reality?

Partners manifest themselves in intimate relationships in different ways depending on gender. Males in relationships often follow the theme of control. Men's aggression towards women then is a way of enforcing and maintaining that control. Women on the other hand are encouraged to be dependent on men in relationships. This creates an unequal balance of power in dating relationships. Violence can often result when men feel dissatisfied with the amount of power they have in a particular relationship and need to reassert their dominance through force.<sup>35</sup>

Maltreatment in a child's life such as witnessing or being exposed to violence in their homes or being a victim of violence can be a risk factor for boys in committing physical aggression against their partners. However, this effect is based on the boys' attitudes and emotional distress, for example, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>36</sup> Boys may learn that violence is an appropriate response to conflict.<sup>37</sup>

Women are often economically dependent on men or at least have a vested interest in the economic security provided to them through marriage. Women then are sometimes looking for security and protection through marriage giving men greater control even in the early phase of relationships. The notion then that, "any man is better than no man," triumphs and women are more apt to accept violence and aggression from their partners as a result.<sup>38</sup>

### Signs and Symptoms

There are many signs that a partner is abusive. Most victims will fear their abusive partner. Other signs could include a partner who believes he is better than his partner or tries to control his partner, and feelings of low self esteem, helplessness, and desperation.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Ronfeldt, Heidi M., Rachel Kimerling, and Ileana Arias. "Satisfaction with Relationship Power and the Perpetration of Dating Violence." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60 (1998): 71.

<sup>36</sup> Zurbriggen, Eileen L. "Understanding and Preventing Adolescent Dating Violence: The Importance of Developmental, Sociocultural and Gendered Perspectives." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 33 (2009): 30-33.

<sup>37</sup> Stets, Jan E., and Maureen A. Pirog-Good. "Violence in Dating Relationships." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 50 (1987): 238.

<sup>38</sup> Lloyd, Sally. "The Darkside of Courtship; Violence and Sexual Exploitation." *Family Relations* 40 (1991): 16.

<sup>39</sup> [Helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org). Helpguide. 24 June 2009

<[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic\\_violence\\_abuse\\_types\\_signs\\_causes\\_effects.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm)>.

Teachers Guide: Provide this questionnaire to your students. Assure them that all information is confidential and only for their own interest. Explain there are options and helpful tools to help them if they are being abused.

### Is my Relationship Good For Me? (Quiz)

Scoring for each statement: Always, Sometimes, Never.<sup>40</sup>

- I feel pressured to do things sexually even though I have said no  
Always      Sometimes      Never
- I feel like I'm walking on eggshells to make sure my boyfriend doesn't get mad  
Always      Sometimes      Never
- My boyfriend doesn't like it when I want to spend time with my friends or family  
Always      Sometimes      Never
- My boyfriend is often suspicious or jealous without reason  
Always      Sometimes      Never
- My boyfriend constantly puts me down or criticizes my friends, my clothes, my ideas, my beliefs  
Always      Sometimes      Never
- My boyfriend has hurt me and then said it was my fault  
Always      Sometimes      Never
- There are things I'd like to get off my chest, but I'm afraid of his anger  
Always      Sometimes      Never
- Our relationship is fine - except when alcohol or drugs are involved  
Always      Sometimes      Never

---

<sup>40</sup> Shelternet for Abused Women. Shelternet for Abused Women 2009. 23 June 2009 <<http://www.shelternet.ca/en/>>.

- I've learned that I'd better not disagree or there will be trouble

Always          Sometimes          Never

- I want to break up, but I'm afraid things might get worse

Always          Sometimes          Never

- My boyfriend bullies me into saying yes (alcohol, drugs, sex)

Always          Sometimes          Never

- He "messages" me constantly, even when I ask him to stop

Always          Sometimes          Never

- I'm ignoring his behaviour because I don't want to be single

Always          Sometimes          Never

If you answered always or sometimes to any of these statements, think about this: healthy, non-abusive relationships are built on a foundation of mutual respect, trust and support. Unhealthy relationships, where abuse exists, make you feel put down, humiliated, or controlled. You should always feel okay about being yourself.

Research shows that 40 percent of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 reported knowing someone their age who had been hit or beaten by a boyfriend.<sup>41</sup>

### What Can Students Do?<sup>42</sup>

#### **If you witness a friend being abused or if a friend tells you they are being abused in a relationship...**

- Listen calmly and take the concerns seriously;
- Reassure your friend that nobody deserves to be abused;
- Support your friend in looking at the risks of more or escalated situations of abuse;

---

<sup>40</sup> Children Know/Kaiser Permanente, 1995, National Poll on Kids' Health and Safety

<sup>42</sup> Violence in Relationships: Students Can Make A Difference. London: Thames Valley District School Board.

- Suggest talking to a trusted adult such as a teacher, guidance counsellor or school psychologist, or call one of the agencies listed in the appendix (see back of manual for additional information);
- Realize the situation will not change overnight.

**If a friend tells you he is abusing his partner:**

- Support him in recognizing his problem;
- Suggest talking to a trusted adult such as a teacher, guidance counsellor or school psychologist, or call one of the agencies listed in the appendix (see back of manual for additional information).

**If you witness a friend displaying abusive behaviours (verbal or physical) towards his partner:**

- Tell your friend that nobody deserves to be abused;
- Help your friend in looking at the risk factors contributing to his behaviour;
- Support the woman your friend is abusing.

Internet Violence

“Cyber-bullying” is when an individual is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted through the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.<sup>43</sup> Social networking sites include Facebook, myspace, msn, twitter and can also include text messaging. Not only do these sites provide an alternative way of communicating, they also increase the risk of abuse and alienation through cyber-bullying. Because social networking provides others with personal information, it allows others to make abusive comments or be critical towards the individual. Many teens who experience cyber-bullying never reveal it to parents or teachers.

There are many consequences if you are caught as cyber-bullying. If you are using the internet to hurt others at school you can have all computer privileges taking away from you and you could also be suspended. Some more serious consequences include criminal charges including uttering threats, criminal harassment and defamatory libel.

---

<sup>43</sup> Stop Cyber Bullying. WiredKids Inc. 25 June 2009 <<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html>>.

If you are being bullied on the internet take the following steps:

- Save all documents;
- Don't reply to any messages;
- Delete contact immediately;
- Contact your parent, teacher or local police department;
- Remember, if you engage in the conversation your action will be held accountable as well.

#### 4 R's of Internet Safety

- Recognize techniques used by online predators to deceive their victims;
- Refuse requests for personal information;
- Respond assertively if you are ever in an uncomfortable situation while online - exit the program, log off or turn off your computer;
- Report any suspicious or dangerous contact that makes you uncomfortable to a parent or other trusted adult.

#### Internet Safety Plan<sup>44</sup>

##### **Do's for using social networking sites:**

- Use privacy preferences to keep your page as private as possible;
- Save or keep a record of all harassing or abusive messages, posts and comments, in case you decide to get law enforcement involved;
- Choose passwords that are hard to guess and change them often;
- If you are being abused or harassed, change your username and email address - it may seem extreme but it may be your best option.

---

<sup>44</sup> "Technology and Abuse." The Safe Space. Break the Cycle. 24 June 2009 <<http://www.thesafespace.org/the-basics/technology-abuse/>>.

## Dating Bill of Rights<sup>45</sup>

I have the right to:

- Ask for a date
- Refuse a date
- Suggest activities
- Refuse activities
- Have my own feelings
- Have my limits respected
- Spend my money the way I want to
- Tell my partner I want affection
- Be heard
- Refuse to lend money
- Refuse affection
- Say “No”

## Responsibilities in a Healthy Relationship

I have the responsibility to:

- Determine my limits
- Respect the limits of others
- Communicate clearly and honestly
- Not violate the rights of others
- Be considerate, but not submissive or aggressive

## **Dating Safety Tips**<sup>46</sup>

- Consider double dating the first few times you go out with a new person;
- Before leaving on a date, know the exact plans for the evening and make sure a parent or friend knows these plans and what time to expect you home. Let your date know you are expected to call or tell that person when you get in;
- Be aware of your decreased ability to react under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- If you leave a party with someone you do not know well, make sure you tell another person you are leaving and with whom. Ask a friend to call and make sure you arrived home safely;
- Assert yourself when necessary. Be firm and straightforward in your relationship;
- Trust your instincts. If a situation makes you uncomfortable, try to be calm and think of a way to remove yourself from the situation;

---

<sup>45</sup> Dating Bill of Rights. London, Ontario: London Abused Women's Centre, 2002

<sup>46</sup> "Dating Violence." The Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence. 15 June 2009 <<http://www.acadv.org/dating.html>>.

## **Myths**<sup>47</sup>

Myth: It can't happen to me

Fact: More than one in 10 teenagers experience physical violence while dating

Myth: Jealousy and possessiveness are signs of true love

Fact: Jealousy and possessiveness are indicators that the person sees you as a possession. It is the most common early warning sign of abuse.

---

<sup>47</sup> "Myths and Facts About Dating Violence." New Beginnings. 22 June 2009 <<http://www.newbeginningsnh.org/html/myths.html>>.

## References

Bender, Eve. "PTSD, Other Disorders Evident in Kids Who Witness Domestic Violence." Psychiatric News 39 (2004): 14.

<http://http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/39/11/14-a>.

"Common Reactions to Sexual Assault." Student Health Services. Illinois State University. 23 June 2009

[http://www.shs.ilstu.edu/sexual\\_assault/assaulted/reactions.shtm](http://www.shs.ilstu.edu/sexual_assault/assaulted/reactions.shtm).

Cunningham, Alison, and Linda Baker. Little Eyes, Little Ears; how violence against a mother shapes children as they grow. Ottawa: Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, 2007.

Dating Bill of Rights. London, Ontario. London Abused Women's Centre, 2002

"Dating Violence."

The Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence. 15 June 2009

<http://www.acadv.org/dating.html>.

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. New York: United Nations, 1993.

DeKeseredy, Walter S., and Linda MacLeod. Woman Abuse; A Sociological Story. Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1997.

Edelson, Jeffrey. "Children's Witnessing of Adult Domestic Violence." National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence. 24 June, 2009

<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/ChildrenWitnessingAdultDV.pdf>.

Gelles, Richard J. Intimate Violence in Families. Third ed. London: Sage Publications, 1997.

Helpguide.org. Helpguide. 24 June 2009

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic\\_violence\\_abuse\\_types\\_signs\\_causes\\_effects.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/domestic_violence_abuse_types_signs_causes_effects.htm).

How to Help A Teen. Toronto: United Way.

Lloyd, Sally. "The Darkside of Courtship; Violence and Sexual Exploitation." Family Relations 40 (1991): 14-20.

"Myths and Facts About Dating Violence." New Beginnings. 22 June 2009

<http://www.newbeginningsnh.org/html/myths.html>.

"Myths and Misconceptions of Domestic Violence." Shalva. 24 June 2009  
[www.shalvaonline.org](http://www.shalvaonline.org).

National Poll on Kid's Health and Safety. Children Know/Kaiser Permanente, 1995

Osofsky, Joy D. Children Exposed to Marital Violence; Theory, Research and Applied Issues. Ed. George W. Holden, Robert Geffner, and Ernest N. Jouriles. Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1998.

Partners in Healing. Toronto: Ontario Network of Sexual Assault Treatment Centers. "Physical and Emotional Abuse in Dating Relationships." Carleton University. 24 June 2009 <http://www.carleton.ca/womensstudies/activism/emotional.htm>.

Ronfeldt, Heidi M., Rachel Kimerling, and Ileana Arias. "Satisfaction with Relationship Power and the Perpetration of Dating Violence." Journal of Marriage and the Family 60 (1998): 70-78.

Rosen, Karen H. "Intervention Strategies for Treating Women in Violent Dating Relationships." Family Relations 42 (1993): 427-33.

Schoen, C. The Commonwealth Fund Survey for the Health of Adolescent Girls. 1997.

Shelternet for Abused Women. Shelternet for Abused Women 2009. 23 June 2009  
<http://www.shelternet.ca/en/>.

Stets, Jan E., and Maureen A. Pirog-Good. "Violence in Dating Relationships." Social Psychology Quarterly 50 (1987): 237-46.

Stop Cyber Bullying. WiredKids Inc. 25 June 2009  
<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html>.

"Technology and Abuse." The Safe Space. Break the Cycle. 24 June 2009  
<http://www.thesafespace.org/the-basics/technology-abuse/>.

Why Women Stay in Abusive Relationships. London, Ontario. London Abused Women's Centre 2001

Violence in Relationships; Students Can Make A Difference. London, Ontario: Thames Valley District School Board.

Zurbriggen, Eileen L. "Understanding and Preventing Adolescent Dating Violence: The Importance of Developmental, Sociocultural and Gendered Perspectives." Psychology of Women Quarterly 33 (2009): 30-33.

## **Glossary**

**MSN Messenger:** an instant messaging service that allows users to chat live to other users who are signed into the service. Users may choose to accept or decline invitations to chat with friends.

**Facebook/Myspace:** are websites that allow users to connect and share with people in their lives. Members have a homepage where they can display pictures, provide personal information and view and send messages and comments to friends. Information can be kept private but can also be made public.

**The Friend List:** the list of approved friends within the facebook or myspace network - this includes anyone a particular user has given permission to view his or her page or “space.”

**The Facebook Wall:** a public space on the website where users can write to one another. These comments are then made public to everyone on that user’s friend list.

**Twitter:** a website that allows users to create short entries providing information about their day-to-day lives or other information (within a 140 character limit) with friends or followers on the site.

**Text Messaging/SMS:** A quick way to communicate through cell phones. Direct written messages can be sent from cell phone to cell phone through text messaging. It is one of the most common ways for young people to communicate.

**Defamatory Libel:** A false statement made about another person which causes that person to suffer harm. These statements must be printed in some form of fixed medium such as a magazine or website for a charge to be laid.

## **Helpful Websites**

Ontario Women's Directorate  
[www.ontariodirectorate.gov.on.ca](http://www.ontariodirectorate.gov.on.ca)

Sexual Assaults/Domestic Violence Treatment Centre  
[www.sadvttreatmentcentres.net](http://www.sadvttreatmentcentres.net)

Education Wife Assault  
[www.springtideresources.org/](http://www.springtideresources.org/)

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/nfv-cnivf/index-eng.php>

Assaulted Women's Helpline  
<http://www.awhl.org/>

Centre for Children and Families in the justice System  
<http://www.lfcc.on.ca/>

Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence against Women and Children (METRAC)  
<http://www.metrac.org/>

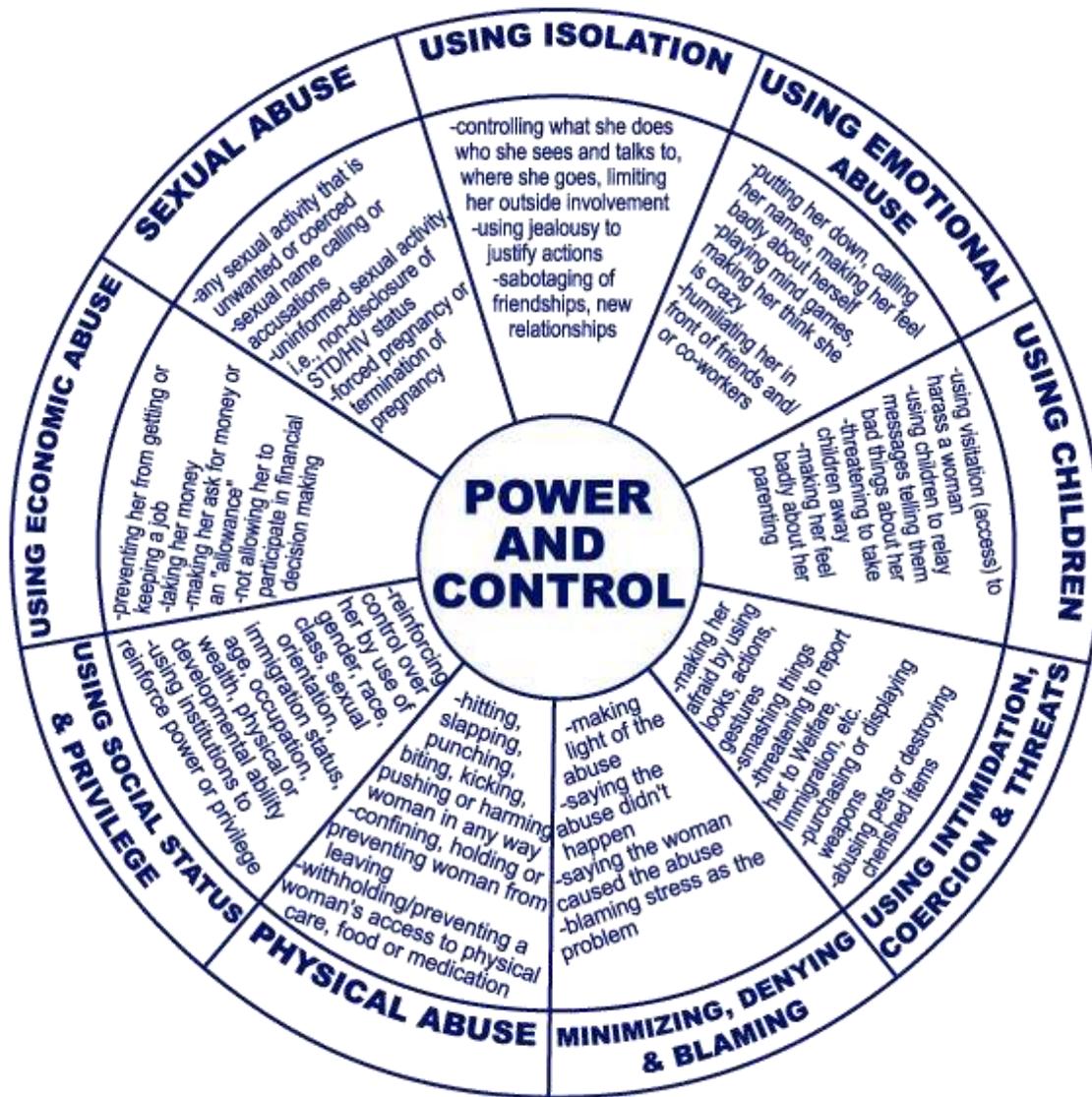
Canadian Women's Foundation  
<http://www.canadianwomen.org/>

Silence Speaks: Digital Story Telling in Support of Healing & Violence Prevention  
<http://www.silencespeaks.org/>

London Abused Women Centre  
[www.lawc.on.ca/](http://www.lawc.on.ca/)

## ABUSE IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS – “THE WHEEL” Power & Control Wheel

*Woman abuse in adult relationships is generally defined as: The intentional and systematic use of tactics to establish and maintain power and control over the thoughts, beliefs, and conduct of a woman. The tactics can include, but are not limited to, the examples below.*



# ABUSE IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS – “THE WHEEL”

## Equality Wheel



*Originally developed by:*  
The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, USA

*Further adapted by:*  
London Abused Women's Centre