

What is Coercive Control in Intimate Partner Violence?

Defining Coercive Control



It is a pattern of intimate partner violence that encompasses various tactics to "hurt, humiliate, intimidate, exploit, isolate, and dominate their victims".¹

It is **NOT** a one-time event. It is repetitive and continuous with cumulative effects over time. ²

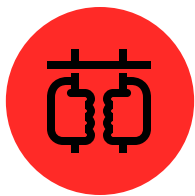
It is a "liberty" crime: reaching into all economic, political and social spheres, removing the victim's sense of individuality, autonomy, liberty and capacity to make decisions for themselves. ¹

Tactics of Coercive Control

Coercive control utilizes all forms of violence (emotional, financial, physical, sexual, spiritual) to isolate and cause fear to victims, including but not limited to: ^{3 4 5 6}

- Denying access to transportation
- Denying access to household utilities
- Withholding money
- Disconnecting phone lines
- Controlling food consumption
- Preventing attendance at work/school
- Controlling who the victim speaks to
- Denying access to personal documents/identification
- Harass/threaten via social media
- Tracking GPS
- Threatening/persistent text messages
- Unauthorized access to email accounts

Impacts of Coercive Control



Coercive control impacts all areas of a victim's life such as day-to-day activities; changes in their personal appearance and health; relationships with family and friends; reduced opportunities for education/employment; reduced access to economic resources; and understandings of their legal rights.^{5 7}

Tactics allow the perpetrator to maintain or increase control even when separated. Victims feel they cannot escape and remain on an "invisible leash" .^{1 4}

¹ Stark, E. (2007). Coercive control: How men entrap women in personal life. Oxford University Press.

² Walklate, S., & Fitz-Gibbon, K. (2019). The criminalization of coercive control: The power of law? International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy, 8(4), 94-108.

³ Crossman, K. A., & Hardesty, J. L. (2017). Placing coercive control at the center: What are the processes of coercive control and what makes coercive control? Psychology of Violence, 8(2), 196-206.

⁴ Dragiewicz, M., Burgess, J., Maramoros-Fernandez, A., Salter, M., Suzor, N. P., Woodlock, D., & Harris, B. (2018). Technology facilitated coercive control: Domestic violence and the competing roles of digital media platforms. Feminist Media Studies, 18(4), 609-625.

⁵ Hamberger, K., Larsen, S. E., & Lehrner, A. (2017). Coercive control in intimate partner violence. Aggression and Violent Behaviour, 37, 1-11.

⁶ Sharp-Jeffs, N. (2017). Coercive or controlling behaviour: How it relates to economic abuse. Surviving Economic Abuse.

⁷ Dutton, M. A., & Goodman, L. A. (2005). Coercion in intimate partner violence: Toward a new conceptualization. Sex Roles, 52(11/12), 743-756.