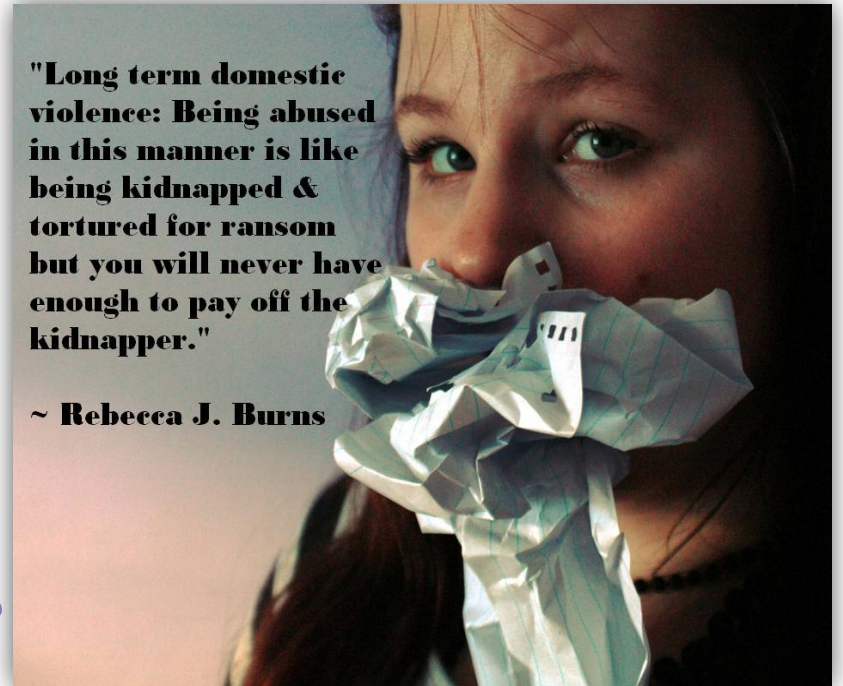


# Coercive Control/ Domestic Abuse Victim Dynamics



# Course Description

Through an exploration of victim history, behavior, and psychological responses, the course highlights how coercive control impacts a victim's identity, decision-making, relationships, and sense of safety.

Emphasis is placed on how fear and trauma influence a victim's outward presentation, often leading to misinterpretation, minimization, or blame by professionals and support systems.

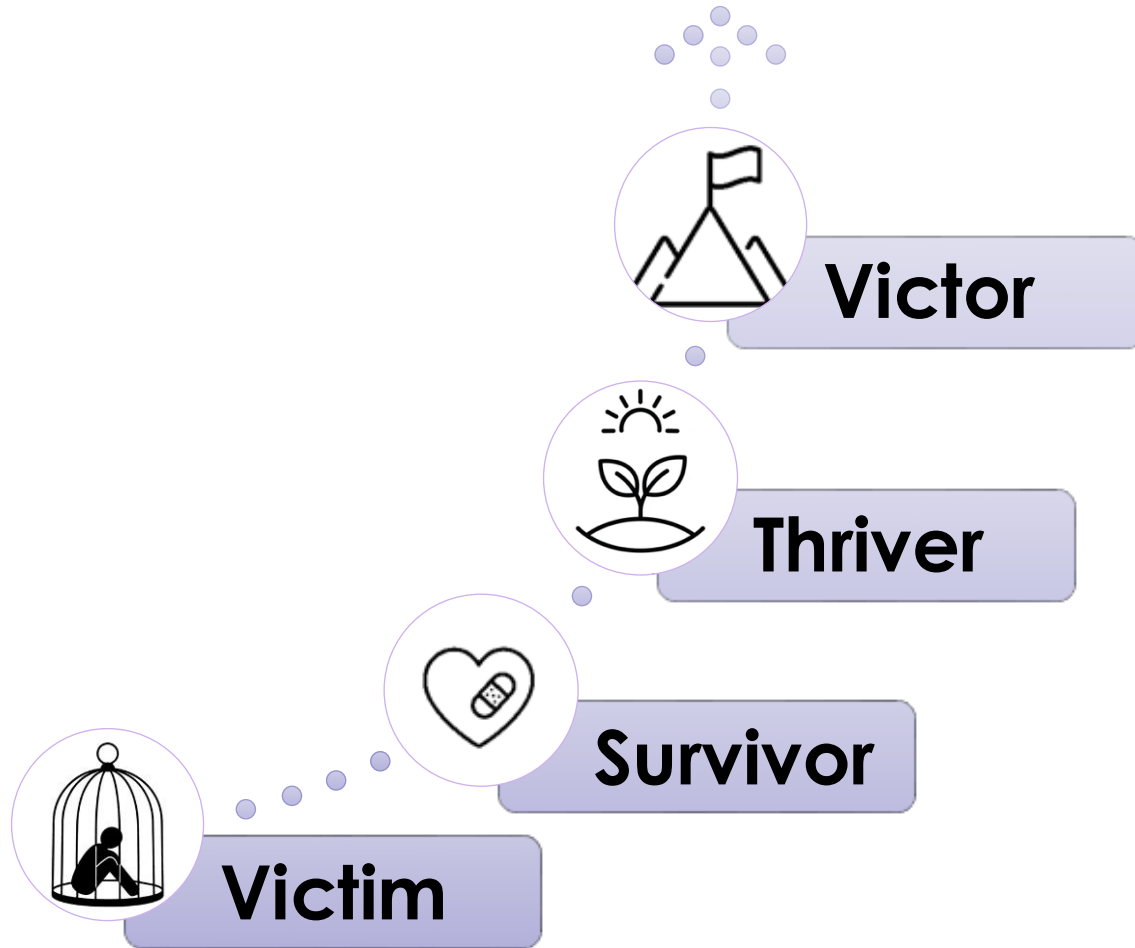
The course also highlights risk factors associated with escalation and lethality.

Throughout the training, attention is given to the impact of systemic/societal responses to coercive control—both harmful and helpful—and the importance of approaches that prioritize victim safety, autonomy, and dignity.

# Course Objectives

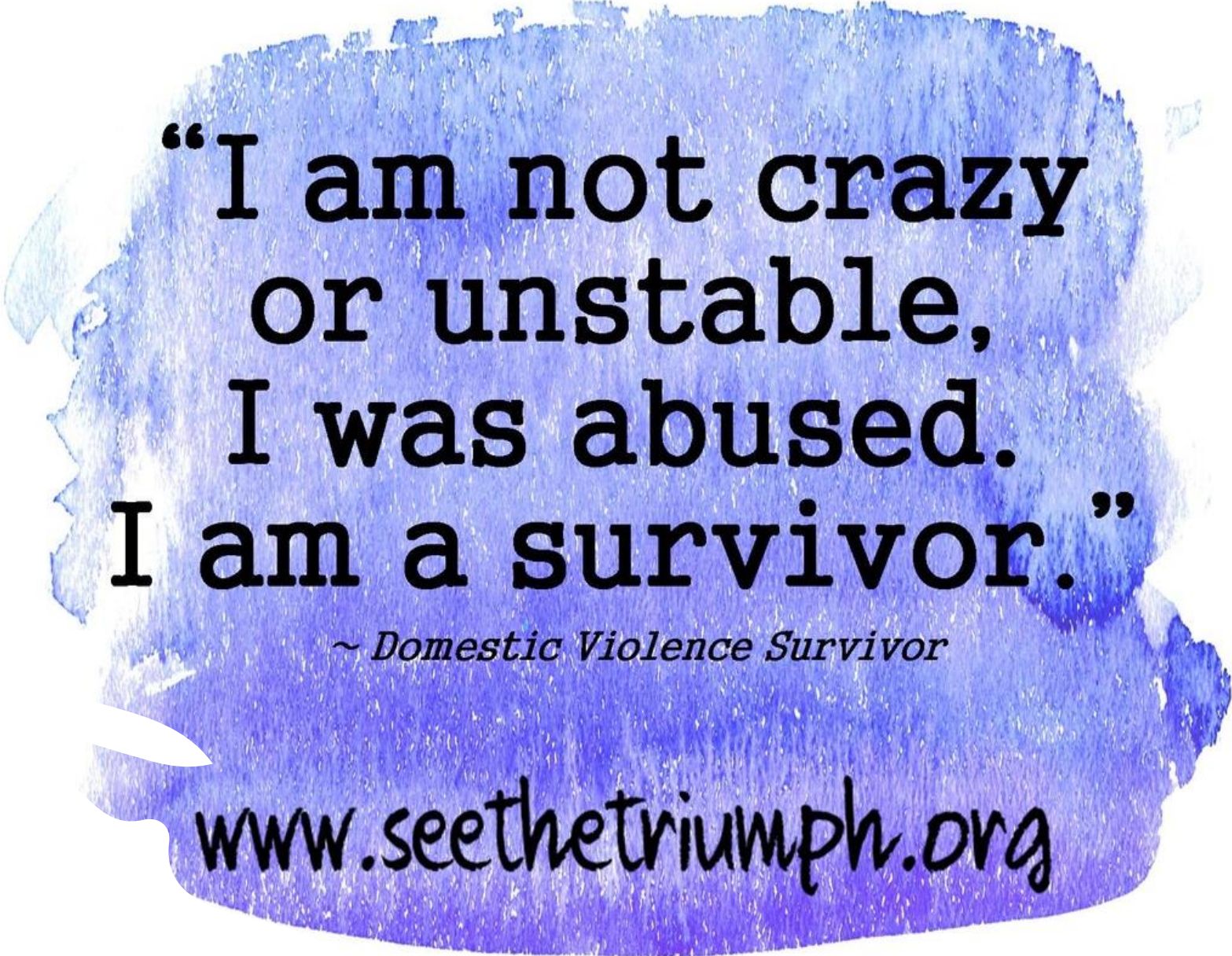
- ✓ **Identify** patterns in victims' personal histories that increase vulnerabilities, and how coercive controllers manipulate them to maintain control.
- ✓ **Recognize** common presentations of victims experiencing coercive control and domestic abuse.
- ✓ **Explain** trauma-related processes affecting victims of coercive control, including trauma-coerced attachment (trauma bonding).
- ✓ **Analyze** common myths surrounding coercive control and **apply** evidence-based facts to counter victim-blaming beliefs.
- ✓ **Assess** risk indicators associated with escalation of coercive control, including sexual violence, strangulation, stalking behaviors, and progression toward lethal violence.
- ✓ **Describe** the psychological stages commonly observed in victims of coercive control as they move from denial toward autonomy and safety.
- ✓ **Describe** the key components of effective safety planning for victims of coercive control.
- ✓ **Evaluate** how these strategies can be tailored to address individual needs, risks, and resources available to the victim.

# Hope & Healing



## Matthew 12:20

A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smoldering wick he will not  
snuff out, till he has brought justice  
through to victory.



**“I am not crazy  
or unstable,  
I was abused.  
I am a survivor.”**

*~ Domestic Violence Survivor*

[www.seethetriumph.org](http://www.seethetriumph.org)



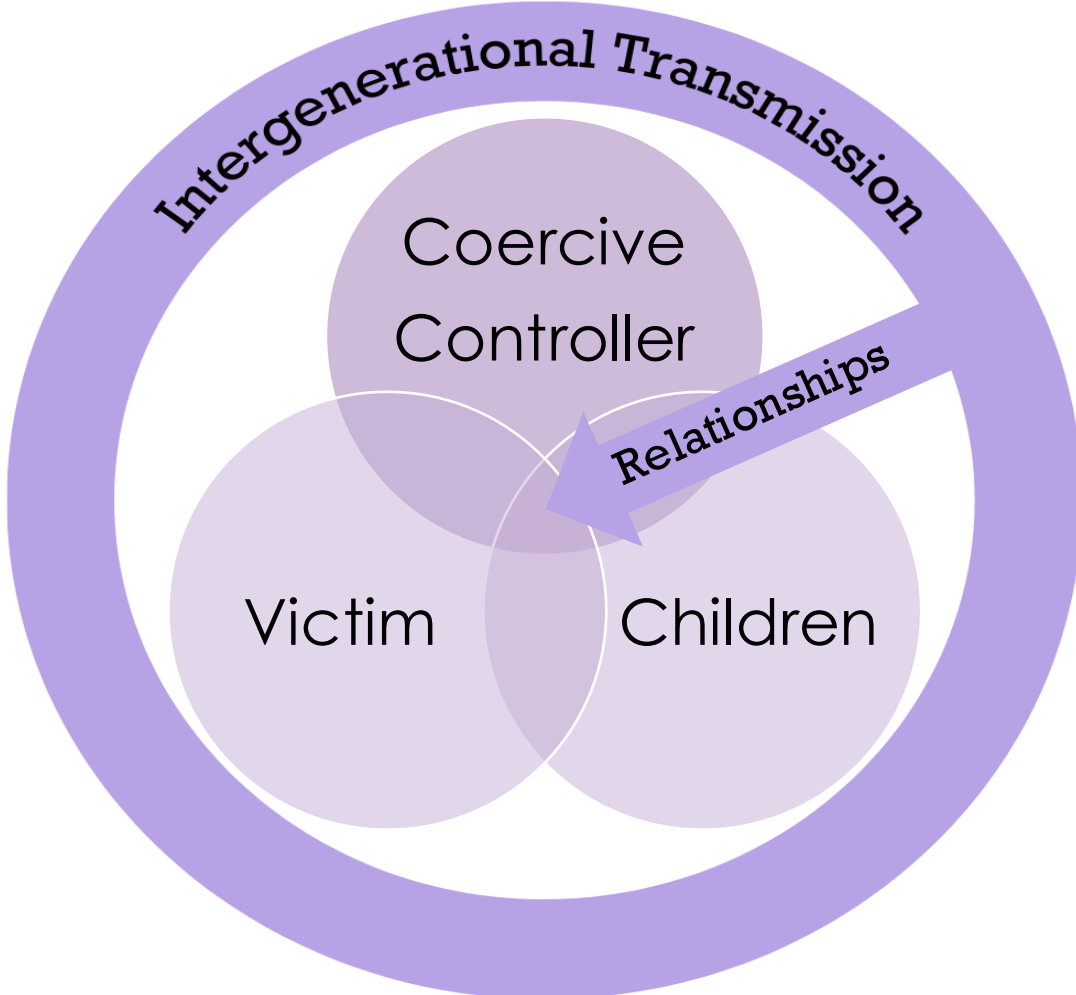
# Important Points

**Remember:** When coercive control/abuse is occurring, there is **NO** healthy communication possible with the two people.

If the survivor is being controlled/abused, the primary concern and first order of business is **her (and her children's) safety.**

Problems are unable to be solved and feelings are unable to be expressed safely as long as one person is abusing another.

# Familial Impacts of Coercive Control



# The Oppressed Woman: Warning Signs of Coercive Control

The following indicators can help to identify coercive control and domestic abuse. Any single characteristic is not a sign of trouble, but several combined would be grounds for further investigation.

- Shows (false/undue) guilt, ambivalence, and fear over her circumstances



- Feels isolated and untrusting of others even though she may be involved in the community



- Feels angry, embarrassed, ashamed, and is fearful of being insane



# The Oppressed Woman: Warning Signs of Coercive Control

Is emotionally and economically **dependent**

Has **poor self-concept/worth**

May have been **abused** as a child or **experienced** her/his parents' abusive/coercive-controlling relationship

Has learned to feel **helpless** and feels **powerless**



Has unexplained **injuries** that may go untreated

# The Oppressed Woman: Warning Signs of Coercive Control

Believes she **deserves to be coercively controlled**, punished, or beaten

Believes she is **responsible for his happiness** and well-being

Frequently caught between **conflicting emotions**, such as love and hate

Considers the relationship/marriage a **prison**

Often lives a life of almost total **isolation** (socially isolated and withdrawn)

Has learned to be “submissive” (**subjugation**)

# The Oppressed Woman: Warning Signs of Coercive Control



Feels **frightened** to call police or leave, due to the threat of retribution or retaliation from her partner, family, friends, or church

Struggles to see she has alternatives or that she may make **her own decisions and choices**

Feels **ashamed** about her situation because she feels that it reflects on her abilities as a woman, wife/relationship partner, mother, and/or Christian

# Victim Presentation: Range of Behaviors

- May appear overwhelmed, stressed, or scattered
- Exhibits poor/low impulse control
- May have nervous habits and/or poor hygiene
- May be anxious, depressed, apathetic, or suicidal
- May believe she has to submit to all of partner's wishes

## Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me **to proclaim freedom for the prisoners** and recovery of sight for the blind, **to set the oppressed free...** (emphasis added)



# Victim Presentation

- ❖ May feel angry and fearful at the same time
- ❖ May talk negatively about self and life in general
- ❖ May present with obvious physical injuries
  - ❖ Wears sunglasses to hide blackened eyes, long-sleeved shirts to cover bruises
  - ❖ Other physical signs include swollen lips, red eyes (petechiae) broken teeth, scratch marks, and contusions



Adapted from The Women's Rural Advocacy Center, [www.letswrap.com](http://www.letswrap.com)

# Victim Presentation

Protecting, minimizing, defending, or explaining away the behaviors of the coercive controller

Recanting, denying, changing of mind, reluctance/refusing to cooperate; extreme privacy (secret keeping) through withholding or protecting critical information

Estrangement from family/support systems

Making custody the primary issue when applying for orders of protection

Failure to show up for interviews or court

Rationalization

Becoming aggressive toward the coercive controller after helpers arrive



# *Grounding Break*

## **John 10:14-15**

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.



# From “Linguistic Indicators of Coercive Control”

Victims consistently complied with **microregulation** and **surveillance**

Victims engaged in discursive **overelaboration**

Coercive controller’s use of **nonphysical** and **implied threats**

Dynamic of **implicit compliance** in the context of coercive control

# Trauma Coerced Attachment (TCA)/ Trauma Bonding

A **powerful coerced affiliation** that manifests as a dependency on the coercive controller and a significant shift in world- and self-view to take that of the oppressor's.

(Doychak & Raghavan, 2018)



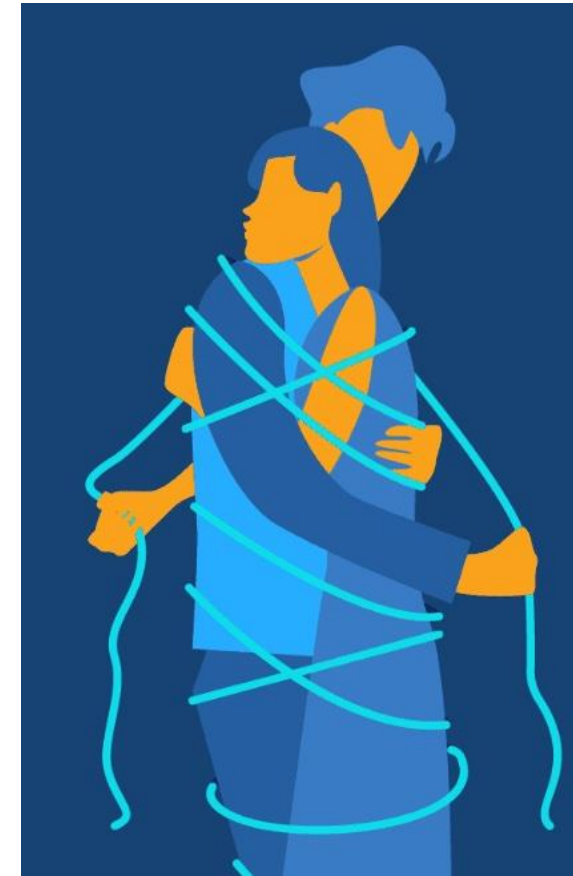
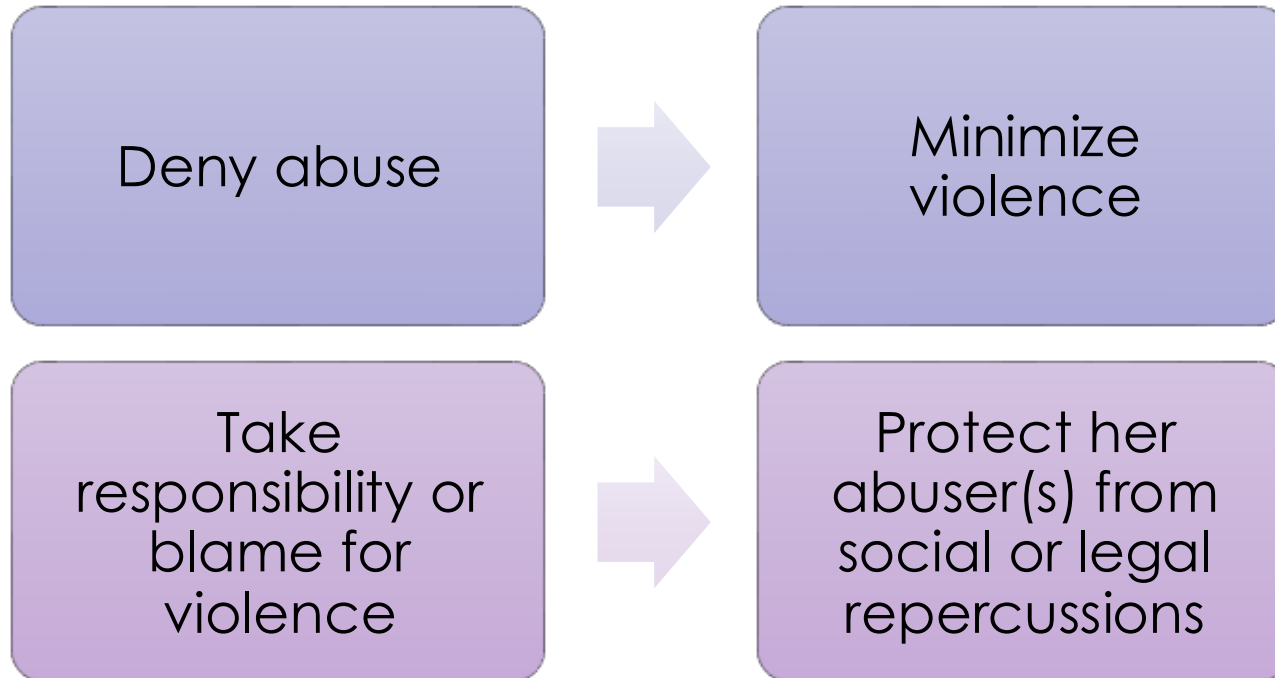
This results in an **idealization of the abuser** and feelings of love, loyalty, or gratitude toward the coercive controller.

(Doychak & Raghavan, 2018; Raghavan & Doychak, 2015)



# Trauma Coerced Attachment (TCA)/ Trauma Bonding

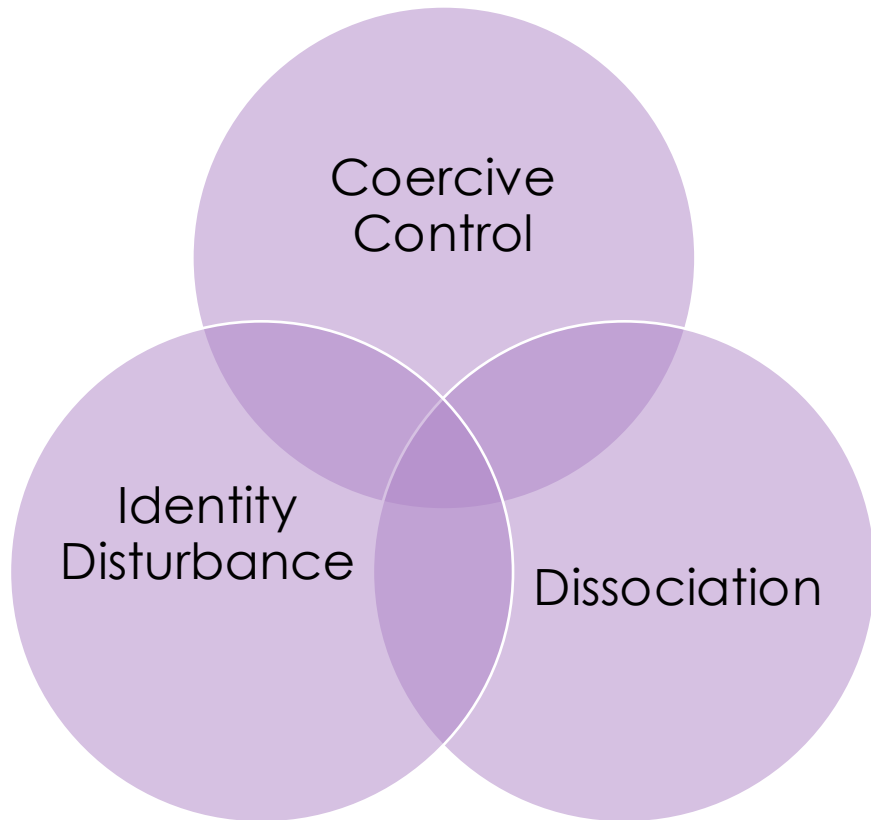
Those who form these attachments may:



(DeFabrique et al., 2007; Doychak & Raghavan, 2018; Dutton & Painter, 1981; Reid et al., 2013; Stein, 2021; Williamson, 2010)

# Trauma Coerced Attachment (TCA)

Three important elements of TCA:



TCA develops as a result of a chronically abusive and inescapable environment, which is comprised of myriad micro and macro forms of **aggression, degradation, intimidation,** and **manipulation**— tactics which are efficiently captured by the psychological concept of **coercive control.**

1 A powerful complex attachment between a survivor and an abusive partner maintained by **cycles of fear, intermittent kindness, coercive control, and manipulation.**

2 Includes **psychological, relational, and neurobiological factors** underlying intimate partner violence (IPV).

3 Results from **intentional reinforcement and domination** by the abusive partner, shaped by the survivor's trauma history and adaptive survival responses.

4 **Not signs of weakness or mutual dysfunction,** but predictable outcomes of psychological entrapment.

5 Advocates must understand these dynamics to **avoid misreading survivors' behaviors.**

## **Trauma Bonding: “Why Survivors Remain Attached to an Abusive Partner” (Kaiser, 2025)**

# *He distorts her reality...*

to think and believe like him.

Healing (from TCA) is a process  
of reconnecting with reality-  
based thinking:

**Stage 1:** Brain  
Fog- realization  
abuser distorted  
her reality

**Stage 2:**  
Acknowledging  
the distorted  
thinking

**Stage 3:** Running  
everything  
through his way  
of thinking to  
make decisions  
(still walking on  
eggshells)

**Stage 4:**  
Adopting her  
**own** thoughts  
and beliefs that  
help her stand  
up to his  
distorted reality

**Stage 5:** Freely  
expressing her  
views without  
fear of  
consequences  
from the  
coercive  
controller

## **Romans 12:2**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

“By this twenty-third year of our relationship, I had experienced nearly every type of abuse shown on the [Power & Control Wheel]. Over the years, his control of me had grown to the point where I filtered nearly every thought through his possible reaction. *It was idolatry of the worst sort, and the resulting bondage was unbearable.*”

Forrest, Joy. *Called to Peace: A Survivor's Guide to Finding Peace and Healing After Domestic Abuse*. Blue Ink Press, LLC. Kindle Edition.

**Jonah 2:8**  
Those who cling to  
worthless idols turn away  
from God's love for them.

# Psychology of the Oppressed Woman

## Denial

The woman refuses to admit - even to herself - that she has been abused or that there is a "problem" in her marriage. She may call the abuse an "accident." She offers excuses for her husband's coercive control and abuse and each time firmly believes it will never happen again.

**Four psychological stages of the coercively-controlled woman:**



## Guilt

She now acknowledges there is a problem, but considers herself responsible for it. She feels she "deserves" to be abused or coercively controlled because she has defects in her character and is not living up to her husband's expectations.

# Psychology of the Oppressed Woman

## Enlightenment

The woman no longer assumes responsibility for her husband's abusive treatment, recognizing that no one "deserves" to be coercively controlled or abused. She is still committed to her marriage, though, and stays with her husband, hoping they can work things out.

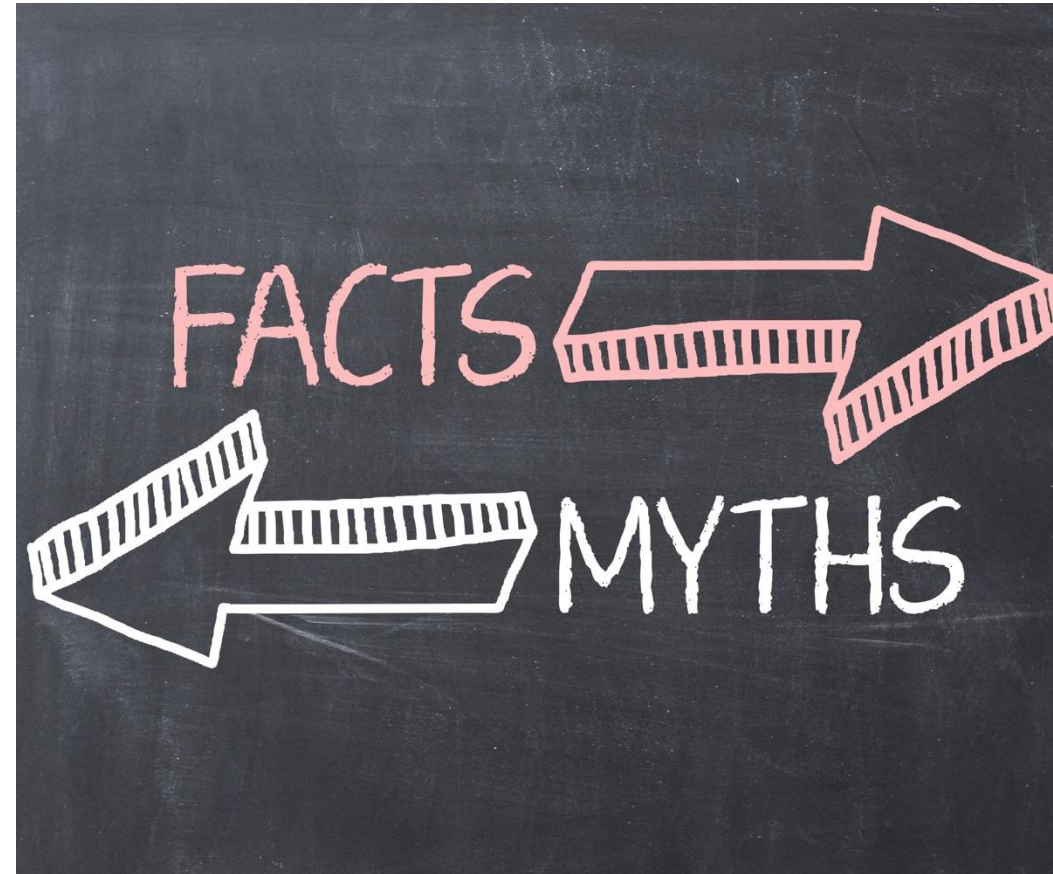
**Four psychological stages of the coercively-controlled woman:**

## Responsibility

Accepting the fact that her husband will not, or cannot, stop his coercive control or violent behavior, the abused woman decides she will no longer submit to it and starts a new life.

# Coercive Control: The Myths

- There are some commonly-held beliefs about coercive control **which are actually myths.**
- These myths become more powerful than the facts because they influence the ways coercively-controlled women, their friends and family, the professional personnel they encounter, and the general public react to specific instances of coercive control.



## **Matthew 10:16**

I am sending you out like  
sheep among wolves.  
Therefore be as shrewd as  
snakes and as innocent as  
doves.



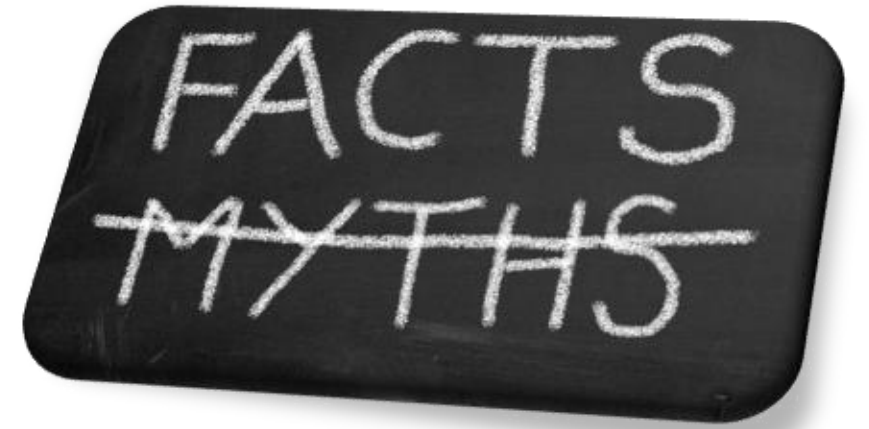
- ✘ "Good wives" and "nice girls" don't get abused.
- ✘ Coercive controllers abuse their partners because they love them.
- ✘ Coercive control is confined to the poor, disadvantaged, uneducated, or particular age or ethnic groups.
- ✘ Abused women provoke their own abuse and coercive control.
- ✘ Abused women like to be abused or coercively controlled.
- ✘ Alcohol and drugs cause abuse and coercive control.
- ✘ She should just leave.
- ✘ All an abused woman has to do is call the police and deal with the situation.

# Common Myths

## **John 8:32**

**And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**

# Myth vs Facts



## Myth

- Coercively-controlled women hate men.
- A man's home is his castle. No one should interfere with the family.

## Fact

- Coercively-controlled women hate being coercively controlled.
- No one has the right to coercively control another person. *In the UK and certain countries and states, coercive control is a crime.*

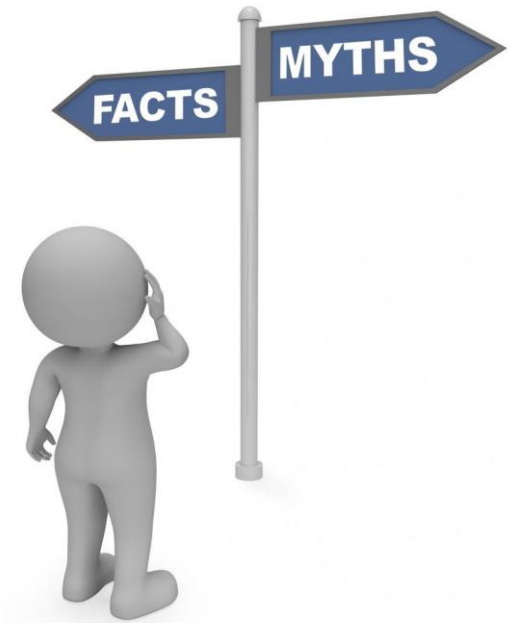
# Myth vs Facts

## Myth

- Coercive control is a "loss of control."

## Fact

- Coercive control is a **choice** used to control their victims. Instead of losing their control, they are **using their control**. Their actions are very deliberate.



# Myth vs Facts

## Myth

- A woman who gets abused brings it upon herself by nagging or provoking her spouse.

### **Ephesians 4:26-27**

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

## Fact

- People are abused for reasons as ridiculous as: the dinner is cold; the TV was turned to the wrong channel; the baby was crying. Abusive people may look like their behavior is impulsive, however, it is intentionally controlled to obtain the desired impact. Even where the person may have reason to be angry, they have no right to express their anger in an abusive way.

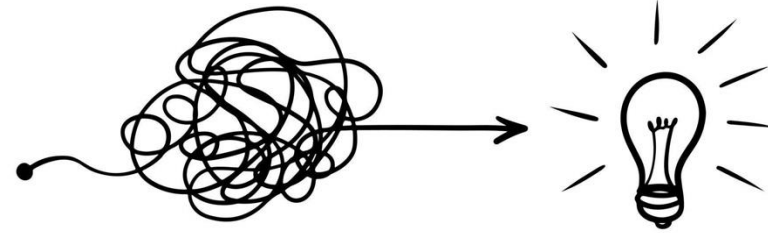
# Myth vs Facts

## Myth

- Middle and upper class women do not get abused as frequently as poor women.
- Abusers are physically/emotionally abusive in all their relationships.

## Fact

- Coercive control occurs in all socio-economic levels. Because women with money usually have more access to resources, poorer women tend to utilize community agencies, and are, therefore, more visible.
- Abusers choose to be abusive toward their intimate partners in ways they would never consider treating other people.



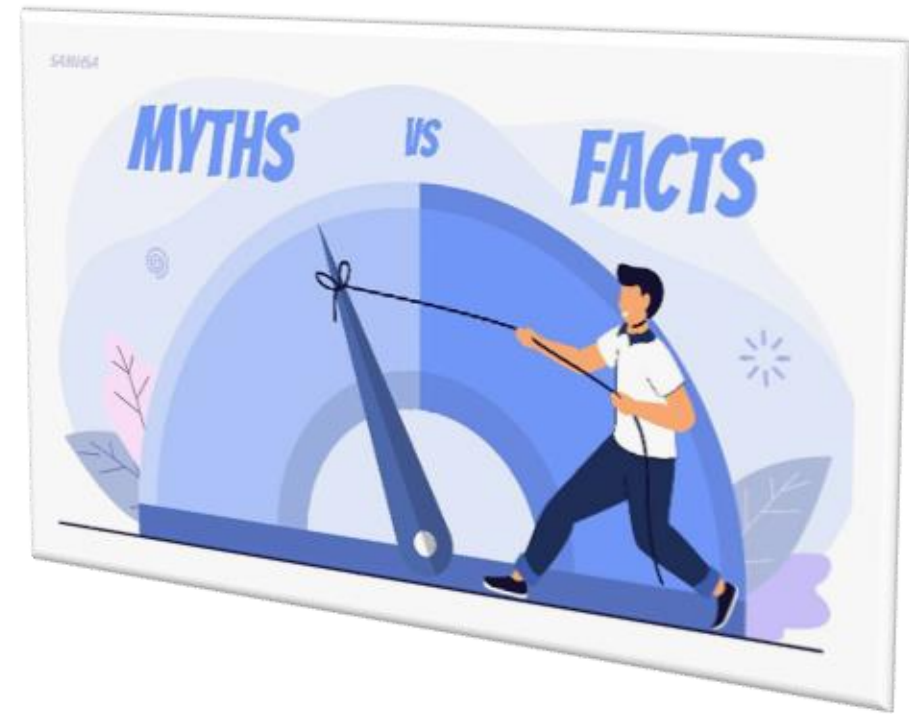
# Myth vs Facts

## Myth

- Coercive control only occurs in a small percentage of relationships.

## Fact

- Coercive control is common in intimate partner relationships. It happens commonly in the church as well.
- Self-report estimates vary depending on the study/source.



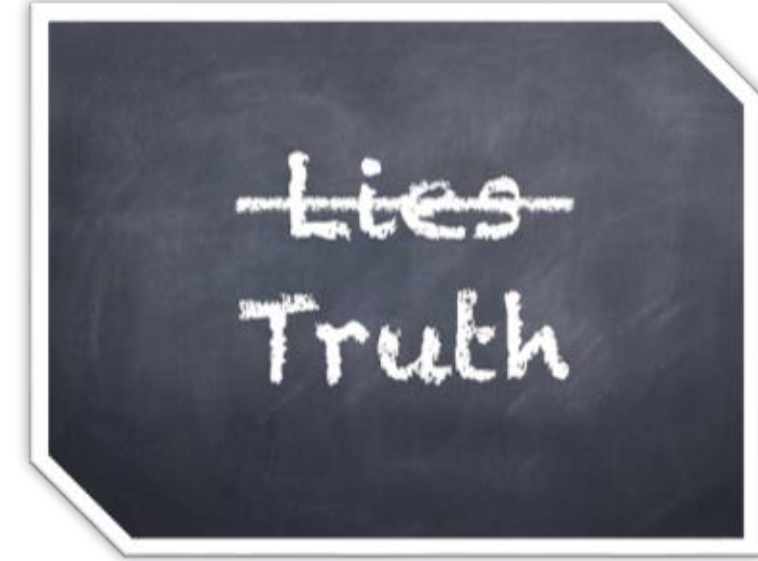
# Myth vs Facts

## Myth

- A person who stays with a coercive controller after being physically and emotionally harmed must like to be abused. If it was bad enough, she would leave.

## Fact

- Being abused physically and/or emotionally hurts and no one likes it. There are many reasons why victims remain with abusers, including:
  - fear of further physical and emotional violence
  - financial hardship of leaving
  - religious reasons
  - emotional attachment to their partners
  - believes families should stay together



# Myth vs Facts

## Myth

- Alcohol/drugs cause abusive behavior.
- Once an abused woman, always an abused woman.

## Fact

- Many abusers use alcohol/drugs as an excuse to explain their abuse. This is not an underlying cause of the coercive control.
- While some abused women have been in more than one abusive relationship, women who receive domestic abuse services are the least likely to enter another abusive relationship.





# Instead of “Why Does She Stay?”

**Ask this question:**

Why does he feel he has a right to coercively control or abuse her?

# "Why Victims Stay"

Patterns that keep victims in coercively-controlling relationships:

## **Frequency and severity of the coercive control**

- Patterns reoccur over a short period of time
- Abuser vows this is last incident
- Less severe or less frequent, more likely to stay
- More benefits from relationship deter leaving
- Previous mental or physical disability
- Elderly, more extensive physical injuries or restrained from leaving

## **Frequency and Severity of the Coercive Control**

# "Why Victims Stay"

Patterns that keep victims in coercively-controlling relationships:

## **The abused woman's childhood**

- Father abused/coercively controlled mother, so this is "normal"
- More physical abuse in childhood, learned it's "right to hit someone you love"
- Survivor of child abuse, including sexual abuse
- Experienced non-contingency between what she does and what happens from critical events

## **The Abused Woman's Childhood**

# "Why Victims Stay"

Patterns that keep victims in coercively-controlling relationships:

## **Economic dependence**

- Maintaining economic security is more important than leaving
- Low or no marketable skills
- Abuser controls money
- Abuser has health insurance, she's disabled and depends on his insurance
- Elderly women may depend on his pension/retirement funds



**Economic  
Dependence**

# The Oppressed Woman's Fears

- Afraid if abuse reported, abuser will lose job
  - Afraid no one will believe her
  - Afraid everyone will blame her
  - Afraid she will lose the children
  - Afraid of incurring wrath of extended family or community
  - Afraid church will take side of abuser; invoke church discipline on her
  - Afraid church will punish her if she wants to divorce
- 
- Experienced abuse many times without being protected- sees abuser as omnipotent
  - Believes reporting abuser will make her vulnerable to attack for revenge; staying will prevent attacks on others



# The Oppressed Woman's Fears



---

Afraid "hidden" event from past will create problems for her

---

Undocumented persons fear arrest and deportation

---

Afraid race, sexual orientation, other differences will lead to unfair treatment by the system

---

Fear perpetrator would be unfairly treated by police because of race, undocumented, etc.

---

Some cultures see police/social services as enemy

---

Fear offender will commit suicide if she leaves

---

Rural areas- fear neighbors talking; law enforcement/judges drinking buddies; fewer resources

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Elderly or person with disability fears not being believed

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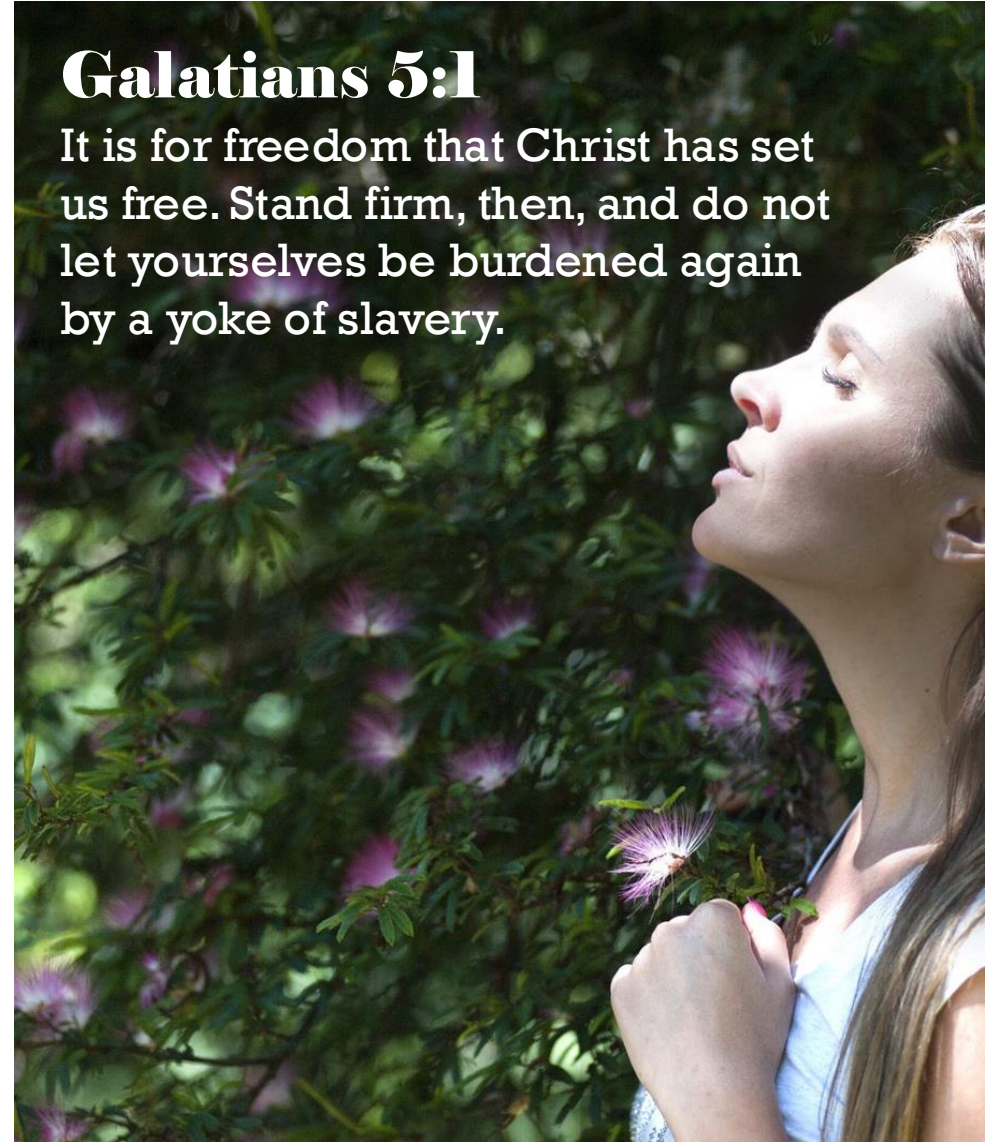
Elderly less likely to reach out for services

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# *Grounding Break*

## **Galatians 5:1**

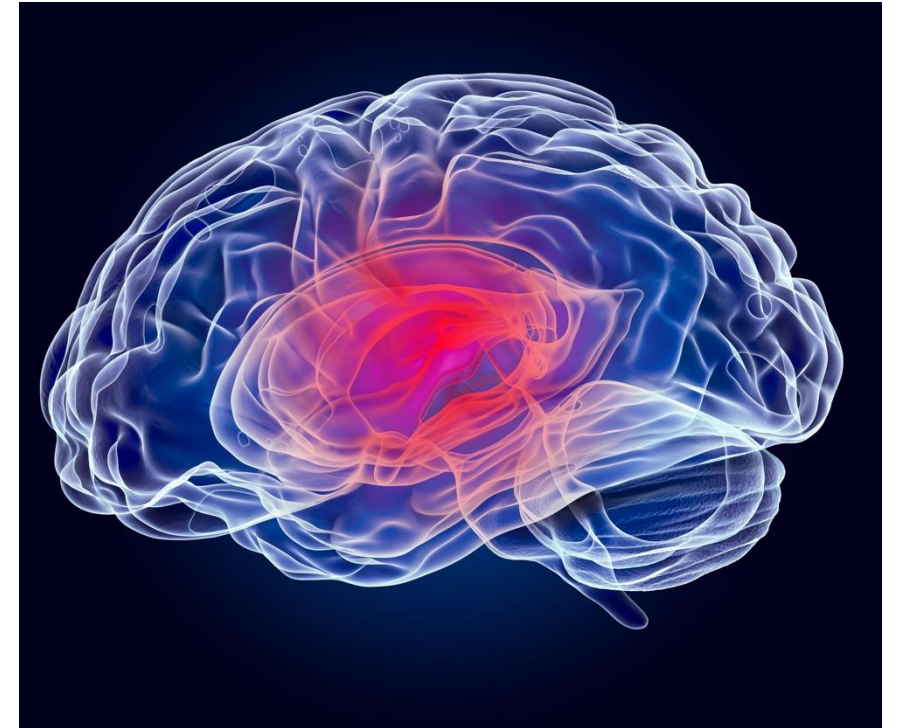
It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.



# Trauma Brain Issues

(More in *Trauma Issues* course)

- **Battered Women's Syndrome (BWS)-**
  - Identified by psychologist Dr. Lenore Walker (1979)
  - Historically used as a legal defense
- **Learned Helplessness-**
  - A trauma response in which a person suffers from a sense of powerlessness, arising from a traumatic event or persistent failure to succeed. It is thought to be one of the underlying causes of depression.
- **Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD)-**
  - Can result from chronic, repeated interpersonal trauma (such as ongoing abuse or coercive control). It includes core PTSD symptoms and additional difficulties, such as challenges with emotional regulation, a persistent sense of threat, negative self-beliefs, and difficulty trusting others or the world.



## **2 Corinthians 5:17**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,  
he is a new creation. The old has  
passed away; behold, the new has  
come.

## **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)-**

an injury that causes damage to the brain. It may happen when there is a blow, bump, or jolt to the head (closed head injury). A TBI can also happen when an object penetrates the skull (penetrating injury).

## **Strangulation-**

the sustained impairment of air or blood flow through the neck due to external pressure (manual, ligature, or other means). This can cause a hypoxic-ischemic brain injury from reduced oxygen or blood supply to the brain. Serious or permanent injury—and death—can occur within minutes, often without visible external marks.

# **Trauma Brain Issues**

(More in *Trauma Issues* course)

# Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV)

## What is IPSV?

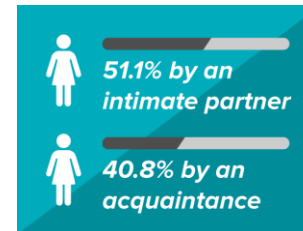
- a component of “Intimate Partner Violence” (IPV) that is often overlooked
- an “umbrella term” to encompass all forms of sexual violence by an “intimate partner” (IP)
- can range from “**rape and sexual assault**” to “**more complex and subtle behaviors**” including use of **coercion, threats, or blackmail to obtain sexual acts; forced consumption of pornography; and reproductive abuse**

**IPSV course:** <https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/intimate-partner-sexual-violence/>

**IPSV Power & Control Wheel:** [https://www.gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased\\_newsletters/issue-17/IPSV\\_Newsletter\\_Issue17\\_ONLINE\\_0.pdf](https://www.gbvlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/issuebased_newsletters/issue-17/IPSV_Newsletter_Issue17_ONLINE_0.pdf)



1 in 5 women (19.6% or 24.5 million) in the US reported any contact sexual violence by an IP in their lifetime.



About half of female victims of rape reported being raped by an IP.

(Leemis R.W. et al., 2022; The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017 Report)

# IPSV: Psychological & Physical Impacts

**Consequences of IPSV are real and often severe...**

Compared to survivors of non-partner sexual violence, survivors of IPSV experience:

- longer lasting trauma
- higher levels of physical injury
- higher incidences of multiple sexual assaults
- increased likelihood of violence resulting in pregnancy and deliberate exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- more likely to be killed by their intimate partner

(Logan et al., 2015)

# IPSV: Impacts on Faith

Many victims of sexual abuse find it hard to disclose being a victim, especially if someone close, that the victim loves and trusts, is the perpetrator of the abuse. For the victim who has a religious faith, besides the psychological consequences suffered, the **victim's faith may also become traumatized.**

## Lamentations 3:21-23

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope.  
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.



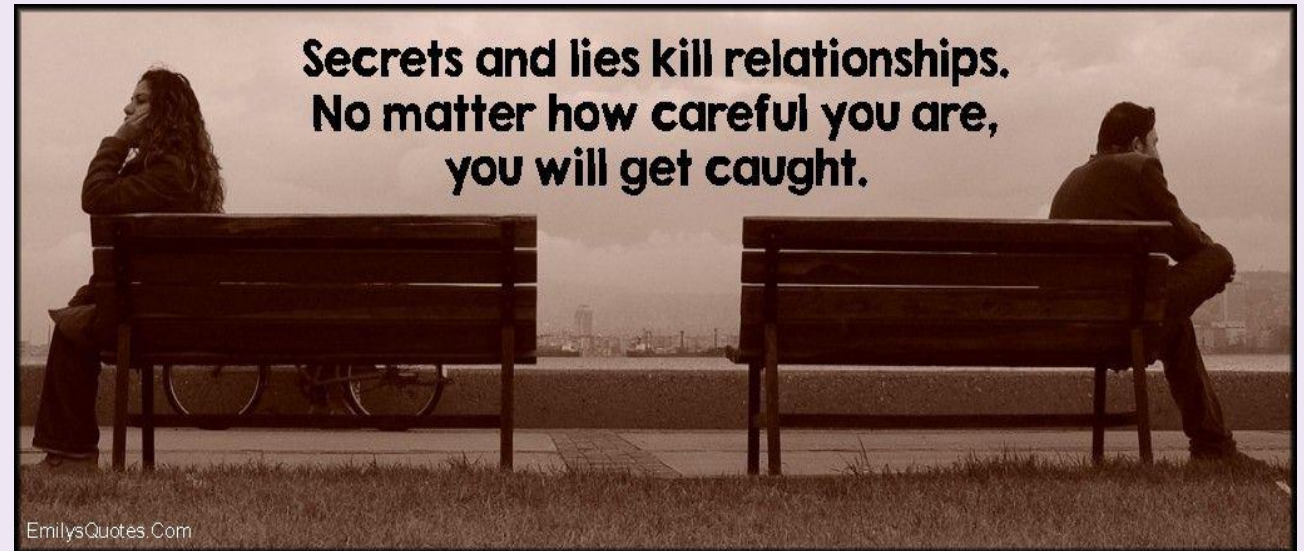
# Porn Addiction as Victimization

Wives often feel unattractive or sexually inadequate and may **become severely depressed** when they discover their husbands view pornography.

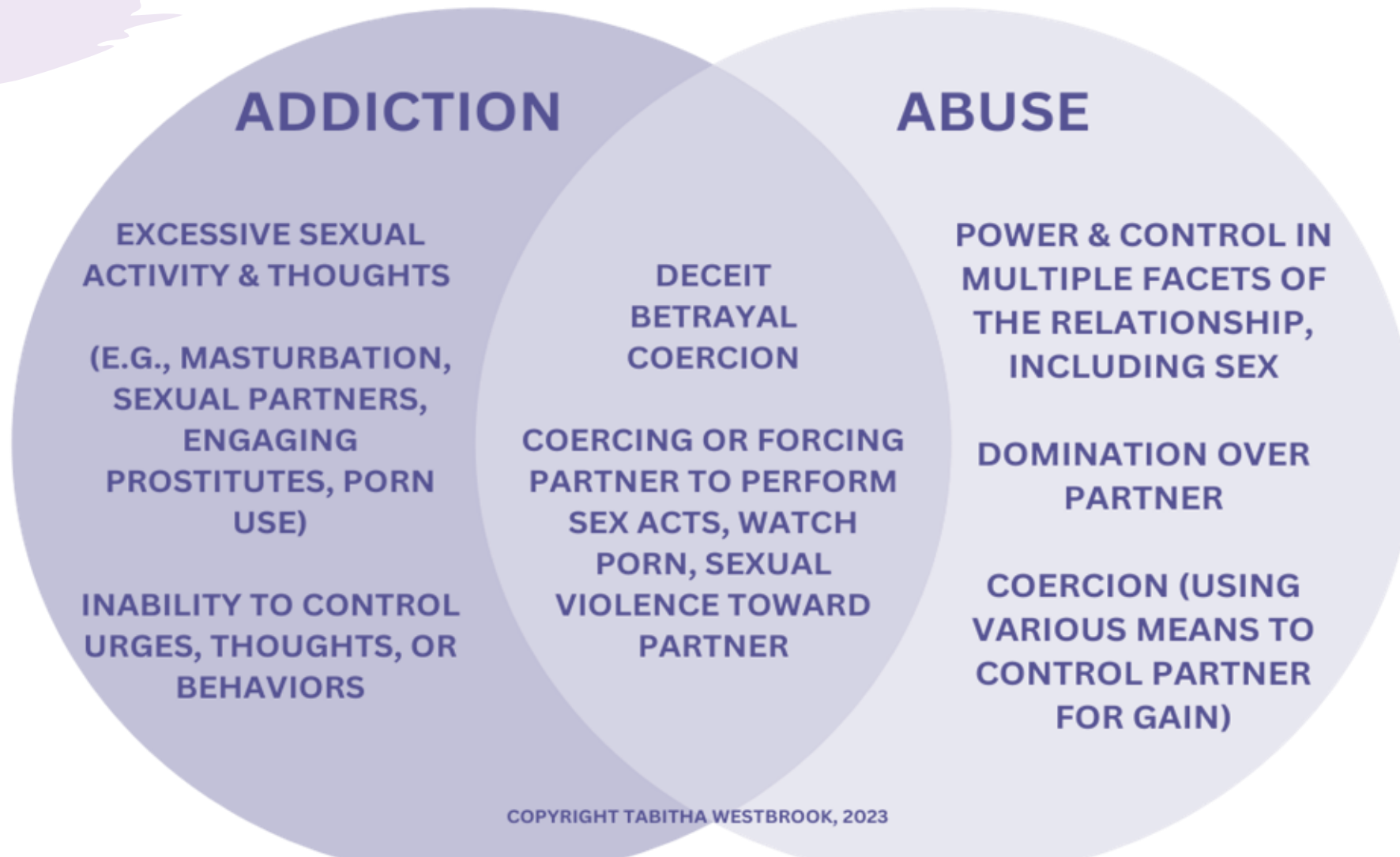
Often, the person looking at porn doesn't want their partner to know. The **secrecy, shame, isolation, and lies** this kind of sneaking around introduces into a relationship often snowballs into all kinds of problems.

## Luke 8:17

For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.



# Sex Addiction vs. Abuse



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***ADDICTION DOES NOT CAUSE ABUSE, BUT ADDICTION DOES LEAD TO MORE FREQUENT AND A FASTER ESCALATION OF ABUSE***



# Alcohol Abuse and Coercive Control

Many studies show a high rate of alcohol abuse among men who abuse their female partners. **Yet is there really a link between alcohol abuse and coercive control?**

- No evidence supports a **cause-and-effect relationship** between the two problems. The relatively high incidence of alcohol abuse among men who abuse must be viewed as the overlap of two widespread social problems.
- Alcohol *does* lower inhibitions- removing inhibitions makes perpetrating overt abuse more likely (however, coercive control almost certainly was already there).

# Alcohol Abuse and Coercive Control

**Coercive control is a socially learned behavior, and is not the result of substance abuse or mental illness.**

- Men who abuse frequently use alcohol abuse as an **excuse** for their violence.
- Many men who abuse do not drink heavily and many alcoholics do not abuse their partners.
- In one program for abusers, 80% of the men had abused alcohol at the time of the latest battering incident. The vast majority of men, however, also reportedly battered their partners when not under the influence of alcohol.
- Data on the concurrence of coercive control and alcohol abuse vary widely, from as low as 25% to as high as 80% of cases.

DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## MYTH #1

ABUSE TAKES PLACE BECAUSE OF  
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DOES NOT CAUSE DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE. IT MAY INCREASE THE LEVEL OF  
VIOLENCE OR IT MAY BE USED AS AN EXCUSE FOR  
THE VIOLENCE, BUT IT IS NOT THE CAUSE.

# Alcohol Abuse and Coercive Control

Alcoholism and coercive control do share some similar characteristics, including:

- Multigenerational cycle
- Involve denial or minimization of the problem
- Involve isolation of the family

Coercive control that is coupled with alcohol abuse may be more severe and result in greater injury.

Substance abuse treatment for alcohol does not "cure" coercive control behavior; both problems must be addressed separately. However, provisions for the woman's safety **must** take precedence.



Sighing has become my daily food;  
my groans pour out like water. What I  
feared has come upon me; what I  
dreaded has happened to me. I have  
no peace, no quietness; I have no rest,  
but only turmoil.

**Job 3:25–26**

# ***Red Flags (for the 4 C's) that...***

- Victims often struggle to see
- Advocates can help them recognize

## **Psalm 10:2,7**

In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised...His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

# Cunning Red Flags



---

## Advocates can help survivors recognize these red flags:

---

Convincing me to let him and his friends monitor my social media "for my protection" when we were engaged

---

Trying to isolate me from my family; he would take care of me and keep me safe

---

Telling me I just don't understand (*what he wants me to do or how he wants me to do it*)

---

Dominating my evenings via phone

---

Fixing everything that broke

---

Checking out in garage/cellar doing what he likes rather than spending time with me

---





# Conning Red Flags



- He rescued me (better lifestyle).
- Asking me to marry him again after having broken up with me; he didn't really love me (or prematurely asking me to marry him)
- Saying "I'm going to be a [professional with a high level of income] and will provide," then changed his education, became a stay-at-home husband, and took my paychecks
- When we were dating, he threatened the guy who was being sexually inappropriate with me. I felt like he was my protector. Twenty-four years into marriage, I realized he had been gaslighting me and deceiving me the entire marriage for sexual addiction plus hidden sin.
- He wanted me to save him/be his one and only.
- Sob story (relatable struggles/trauma); pity for past abuse
- His former wife was a "bitch" (she ended up being nice).





# Convincing Red Flags

- ❖ “We have so much in common.”
- ❖ I was special; I was so different than other women
- ❖ Presented himself as exactly who he knew I wanted, based on my dating profile (mirroring/shape-shifting)
- ❖ Convincing me I was not capable of taking care of myself
- ❖ I discovered my husband had taken thousands of dollars out of my account and convinced me that he invested it. Three years later, after polygraph disclosure, I learned he was gaslighting me. There were zero dollars left.
- ❖ Using my love of God to convince me to stay

## Psalm 10:13-14

Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, "you will not call to account?" But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the help of the fatherless.



# Convincing Red Flags



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Minimizing drinking and mental/emotional problems

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Admitting to being abused as a child/had anger issues as a child but "I make him better" (prior abuse from father – bad childhood).

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"Your family is horrible. I'll never be like them. I'll protect you."

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"People have always been mean to me. You need to take care of me."

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Always spent time with me and or invited me to do things with him.  
Always together!

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"You're young and inexperienced. I'm older and wiser. You are safe with me."





# Charming Red Flags

- ✓ He told me after one day that he knew his purpose in life was to make me happy (quick involvement).
- ✓ After dating two months, he proposed because “you're the most amazing woman I've met, and I don't want you to get away.”
- ✓ Gifts, money, flattering letters (King of grand gestures)- too good to be true
- ✓ "I'm overwhelmed. You are so beautiful. I love your smile.”
- ✓ He went to church with me (not his own desire, but to create the appearance of a godly man. He only went if I went).
- ✓ He “rescued” me after a failed engagement with another man and then took all of my money. He made me feel special when I came out of that neglectful relationship.





# Charming Red Flags

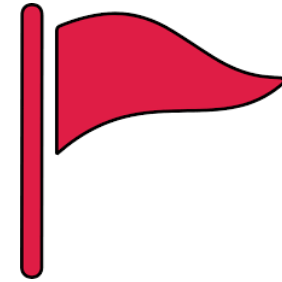


- ❖ Wrote me songs
- ❖ Bought gifts I did not ask for - not things I really wanted
- ❖ Placed on pedestal
- ❖ Talked about how “perfect” I was for him

- ❖ Convincing my parents with charm
- ❖ Used his cute 11-year-old son
- ❖ On holidays/special occasions, he would buy extravagant gifts, jewelry, trips for thousands of dollars and it ended when we married. Then when we would fight, he loved bombed again.



# Some Red Flags Your Partner May Turn Out To Be An Abuser



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**Coercive control and abuse during the courtship period:** This a guarantee of further abuse that will become more frequent and severe. Don't marry with the belief that "I can change him." You won't.

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**Morbid jealousy:** This may feel a bit flattering at first, but will be a curse later on. You will never convince him that you are innocent of his accusations.

<https://www.domesticviolenceinfo.ca/12-signs-to-tell-if-your-partner-may-turn-into-an-abuser/>



# Red Flags Your Partner May Turn Out To Be An Abuser

**Past child abuse and/or experiencing coercive control/domestic abuse of a parent:** This happens in some cases. Children learn what they live. Boys tend to copy their fathers. Abused children often discipline their own children as they were taught.

**Inability to handle frustration:** If he blows up and explodes at small things, and reacts with a tantrum over minor things, he may act out frustration with violence in a marriage. How he deals with anger is the key.

## Psalm 55:20-22

20 My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant. 21 His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords. 22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

# Red Flags Your Partner May Turn Out To Be An Abuser

- **A violent temper:** This speaks for itself. If you feel fear when he acts out his anger, that fear is a warning signal. Listen to it! Cruelty to animals, abuse and mistreatment of pets, great enjoyment of hunting for the sake of killing animals could help you to face this question: What makes you know he will treat you any differently?
- **Preoccupation with weapons:** They are an extension of self. A person is what she/he lives. If he ever “playfully” points a gun at you or ever gestures at you with another weapon, what could happen if he became very angry with you?



**Poor self-image:** Insecurity about his own masculinity. If he feels compulsive about always being “one up” and dominating and he lives out a “macho role” at all times, you will be subject to his control and possibly treated like one of his possessions. He may feel he has the right to treat you like his property, to do with as he pleases.

**Pattern of blaming others:** Particularly his wife, for his problems. If he never accepts his faults and responsibilities when things go wrong, be ready to be blamed for everything.

**Acceptance of violence** as an appropriate problem-solving method. Do you want a partner who talks or acts out his anger?



## **Red Flags Your Partner May Turn Out To Be An Abuser**

# Red Flags Your Partner May Turn Out To Be An Abuser

Accuse

Accuse her of flirting or having affairs with a neighbor, friend, or even a service person.

Take

Take her cellphone or calling her every hour to monitor her whereabouts.

Threaten

Threaten to hit her or did hit her one time when she returned home from outings with women friends.

## Psalm 55:2-5, 11-14, 16-18

Hear me and answer me. **My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked;** for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. **Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.**

Destructive forces are at work in the city; **threats and lies** never leave its streets. If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide. But it is you... my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers.

As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. (emphasis added)



**Breathing** is a powerful tool to control anxiety and calm body and mind

### **1 Peter 5:7**

Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.



## *Grounding Break*

# Problems of Rural Abused Women

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Abused women living in rural areas have many of the same experiences as abused women everywhere. But rural abused women have certain experiences and face certain barriers which are unique to rural settings.

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Abused women everywhere experience some form of isolation as controlled by their partners, and for rural abused women the **isolation becomes magnified** by geographical isolation.



Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women  
at <http://www.mcbw.org/pdf/rural.pdf>.

# Problems of Rural Abused Women

Rural areas have fewer resources for women--jobs, childcare, housing and health care, or easy access to them is limited by distance.

Extreme weather often exaggerates isolation--cold, snow, and mud regularly affect life in rural areas and may extend periods of isolation with an abuser.

Police and medical response to a call for help may take a long time.

A rural abused woman may not have phone service or reliable internet.

Usually no public transportation exists, so if she leaves, she must take a family vehicle.

She may have been prevented from getting a driver's license.

He may ridicule her in front of friends and family or keep her bruised so she is ashamed to be seen in public.



# Problems of Rural Abused Women



Poor roads thwart transportation. Seasonal work may mean months of unemployment on a regular basis and result in women being trapped with an abuser for long periods.



Hunting weapons are common to rural homes and everyday tools like axes, chains, pitchforks, and mauls are potential weapons.



Alcohol use, which often increases in winter months when rural people are unemployed and isolated in their homes, can affect the frequency and severity of abuse.



Traveling to a "big city" (perhaps 20,000) can be intimidating to rural abused women and "city attitudes" may seem strange and unaccepting.

A woman's bruises may fade or heal before she sees neighbors, and working with farm tools and equipment can provide an easy explanation for injuries.

Farm families are often one-income families, and a woman frequently has no money of her own to support herself and her children.

A family's finances are often tied up in land and equipment, so a woman thinking of ending a relationship faces an agonizing reality that she and her partner may lose the family farm or be left with no means of income.

Strong emotional ties to land & farm animals; fears they may be harmed or neglected. She's often an integral part of the farm business, so it may fail if she leaves.

Court orders restraining an abuser from having contact with a woman are less viable for rural women because their partners cannot be kept away from the farm if it is their only source of income.



## **Problems of Rural Abused Women**

# Problems of Rural Abused Women

Other rural factors can greatly impact a rural abused woman's isolation and chances of reaching safe shelter.

Consider that:

- Rural abused women have some unique problems, **but alternatives to living with abuse do exist.**
- An abused women's program can provide personal support, safety planning for her and her children, information about options available to her, transportation, legal information, safe shelter, and referrals to financial assistance, job training, and education options.





**SAFETY**  
**is Primary for**  
**Coercive Control/**  
**Domestic Abuse**  
**Victims**

# Safety Planning



A “**safety plan**” is a personalized, practical set of steps to improve safety while experiencing abuse, preparing to leave an abusive situation, or after you leave. The hotline.org offers an [Interactive Guide to Safety Planning](#) where you can build one online.

## See course webpage for:

- Safety Plan outline (National Center on Domestic & Sexual Violence)
- Domestic Violence Safety Plan for Stalking
- [Technology Safety](#) (Peter Escue)

## Safety Planning

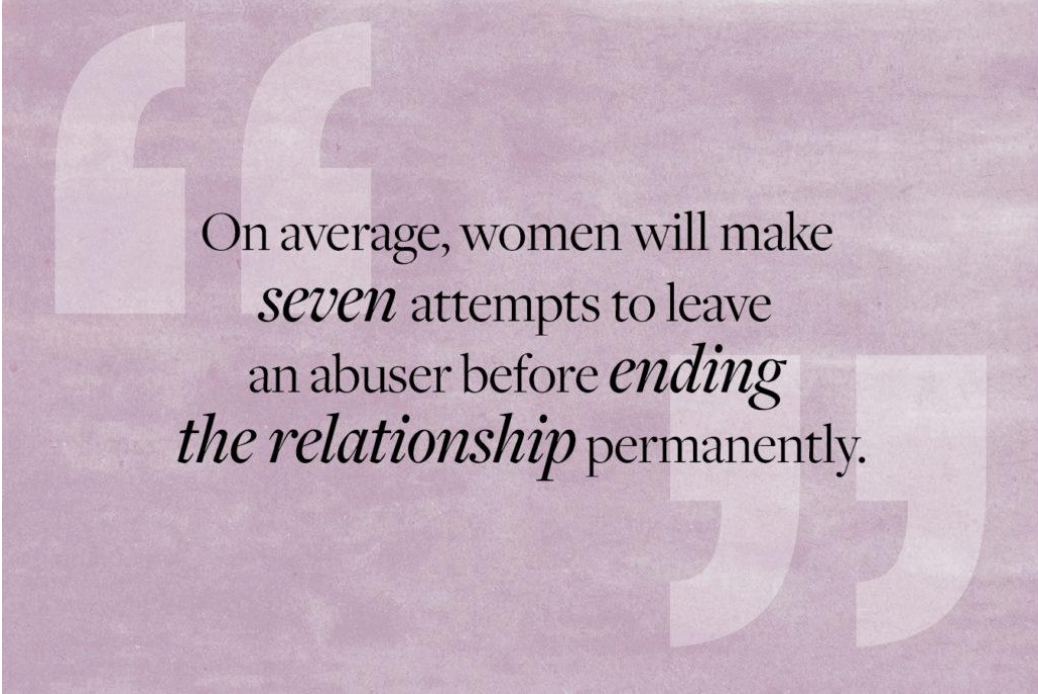
# General Guidelines for Leaving an Abusive Relationship

- ✓ You may request a police stand-by or escort while you leave.
- ✓ If you need to sneak away, be prepared. Make a plan for how and where you will escape.
- ✓ Plan for a quick escape.
- ✓ Put aside emergency money as you can.
- ✓ Hide an extra set of car keys.
- ✓ Pack an extra set of clothes for yourself and your children and store them at a trusted friend or neighbor's house. Try to avoid using the homes of next-door neighbors, close family members, and mutual friends.
- ✓ Take with you important phone numbers of friends, relatives, doctors, schools, etc., as well as other important items, including:
  - Driver's license, regularly needed medication, credit cards or a list of credit cards you hold yourself or jointly, pay stubs, checkbooks and info about bank accounts and other assets, essentials like underwear and toothbrush

# General Guidelines for Leaving an Abusive Relationship

If time is available, also take:

- Citizenship documents (such as your passport, green card, etc.); titles, deeds, and other property information; medical records; children's school and immunization records; insurance information; copy of marriage license, birth certificates, will, and other legal documents; verification of social security numbers; welfare identification; valued pictures, jewelry, or personal possessions
- You may also create a misdirection when you flee for safety. Call motels, real estate agencies, and schools in a town at least six hours away from where you plan to relocate. Ask questions that require a call back to your house in order to leave phone numbers on record.



On average, women will make *seven* attempts to leave an abuser before *ending the relationship* permanently.

# Getting Ready to Leave

Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as pictures.

Know where you can go to get help; tell someone what is happening to you.

If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask that they document your visit.

Plan with your children and identify a safe place for them, like a room with a lock or a friend's house where they can go for help. Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.

# Getting Ready to Leave

Contact your local women's shelter and find out about laws and other resources available to you before you have to use them during a crisis.

Keep a journal of all abusive patterns, noting dates, events and threats made, as well as impacts, if possible.  
(Timeline document)

Acquire job skills or take courses at a community college as you can.

Try to set money aside or ask friends or family members to hold money for you.

# How the Church Often Approaches Safety

## Approaches that can cause harm:

- Pastor says she must tell him before she leaves
- Pastor tells him she is leaving
- Pastor reveals where she is staying
- Pastor convinces her to stay to help protect the children
- Pastor and elders remove her from the church and support the abuser
- Abuser aligns himself with church leaders and pastor
- Submission- stay, pray, and give more sex
- Legitimate fear



# The Church & Abuse Case Dynamics



# Biblical Teachings Are Misused to Support Staying

- Stigma in the church
- Studies show that women in Christian marriages stay in abuse longer than those who do not define themselves as Christian.
- Twisted Scriptures- misunderstanding Bible and divorce
- Misunderstanding of forgiveness vs. reconciliation
- Submission vs. subjugation
- Pastors may allow for divorce but deny the victim to remarry
- Various views on divorce and marriage can impact the victim

## Malachi 2:16

For the man who **does not love his wife but divorces her**, says the LORD, the God of Israel, **covers his garment with violence**, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.

“  
GOD DOES NOT HATE  
DIVORCE, HE HATES  
THE ABUSE AND  
VIOLENCE THAT  
OFTEN LEADS TO  
DIVORCE.

#thrivingforward

# “Staying Well” & In-home Separations

Respecting choices about when or why to stay or leave

- We don't tell survivors to divorce, separate, or stay.

In-home separations- possibility, but cautions

- Safety
- Unrealistic expectations
- Timelines
- Can't change the “dance steps”

“Therapeutic separation” (where reconciliation is goal) is contraindicated with abuse

- Not playing with same “playbook”
- Goal shouldn't be saving marriage, but saving people

Most often, takes consequences for abusers to make changes

- Separation can be helpful in that way
- Pros and cons of G5



## Psalm 10:17-18

# *Grounding Break*

O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted;  
you will strengthen their heart; you will  
incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless  
and the oppressed, so that man who is of the  
earth may strike terror no more.





# Emergency Checklist for Leaving

- Identification for yourself
- Driver's license and registration
- Children's birth certificates
- Your birth certificate
- Social security cards for yourself and children, (SSN# for spouse)
- Money
- Cell phone
- Lease, rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment records
- Bank and savings records/books
- ATM card
- Checkbooks
- Insurance papers and cards
- Medical records for all family members
- Keys - house, car, office, safety deposit box



# Emergency Checklist for Leaving

- Medications
- Underwear & toothbrush
- Thumb drives containing essential information
- Court or divorce documents
- Order for protection/harassment restraining order
- Small saleable objects
- Address book
- Items of special sentimental value
- Pictures
- Jewelry
- Children's small toys
- School and vaccination records
- Work permits
- Green card
- Passport

# After Leaving the Abusive Relationship

## If you leave:

- Consider renting a post office box or using the address of a friend for your mail.
- Be aware that addresses are on protection/restraining orders and police reports.
- Be careful to whom you give your new address and phone number.
- Change your work hours, if possible.
- Alert school authorities of the situation.
- Consider changing your children's schools.\*
- Reschedule appointments of which the abuser is aware.

## Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and **not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.** (emphasis added)



Change of  
Address

# After Leaving the Abusive Relationship

- Use different stores and frequent different social spots. Use online ordering and grocery pickup.
- Alert neighbors and request that they call the police if they feel you may be in danger.
- Talk to trusted people about the coercive control/abuse.
- Replace wooden doors with steel or metal doors. Install security systems if possible.
- Install a motion sensitive lighting system.
- Tell people you work with about the situation and have your calls screened by a receptionist, if possible.





# After Leaving the Abusive Relationship

- ❑ Tell people who take care of your children who can pick up your children. Explain your situation to them and provide them with a copy of the protection/restraining order.
- ❑ Consider opening an email account unknown to the abuser and/or use a parenting communication app like Talking Parents or Our Family Wizard (OFW)

## Proverbs 2:7-8

He stores up sound wisdom for the upright, he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.

# After Leaving the Abusive Relationship

## **If getting a protection/restraining order and the abuser is leaving:**

- Change to a new, unlisted phone number (block the new number when you make calls to anyone) .
- Change your house or apartment locks.
- Change your work hours and route taken to work.
- Change the route taken to transport children to school.
- Keep a certified copy of your protection/restraining order with you at all times.
- Inform friends, neighbors and employers that you have a protection/restraining order in effect.
- Give copies of the protection/restraining order to employers, neighbors, and schools along with a picture of the abuser.
- Call law enforcement to enforce the order.

# Eight Stage Progression to Homicide / Femicide

<b>Stage 1</b>	Pre-relationship-history of controlling patterns, domestic abuse, or stalking
<b>Stage 2</b>	Early Relationship-relationship started was different from what it would become; started with the perpetrator being attentive and progressed to possessiveness and control
<b>Stage 3</b>	Relationship-giving of commitment seemed to coincide with rights to control
<b>Stage 4</b>	Trigger/s-withdrawal of commitment, or separation; real or imagined, or just threatened
<b>Stage 5</b>	Escalation-increase in frequency, severity, or variety of abuse, control, or stalking; attempt to reestablish control or status
<b>Stage 6</b>	A change in thinking/Decision-perceived irretrievable loss of control and/or status; idea that homicide may be a possibility
<b>Stage 7</b>	Planning-indicators showed written plans around how the killing would happen; evidence of creating opportunities for the killing to happen
<b>Stage 8</b>	Homicide (Intimate Partner Femicide-IPF)-may involve extreme levels of violence (even in previously nonviolent people) where the level of violence used appears to have no direct relation to the level of violence evidenced in the relationship (Monckton-Smith, 2020)

# Isaiah 41:13

**For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand;  
it is I who say to you, “Fear not, I am the one who helps you.”**

**Will you... Hold my hand for a little while?**

**I don't need you to save me, no need for you to fix anything, no need for you to hold  
my pain but will you simply hold my hand?**

**I do not need your words, or thoughts, or even your shoulders to carry me but will you  
sit here for a while with me?**

**While my tears stream, while my heart is shattering, while my mind plays tricks on me?  
Will you with your presence let me know that I am not alone, while I wander into my  
inner unknown?**

**For my darkness is mine to face, my pain is mine to feel and my wounds are mine to  
heal but will you sit with me here, while I courageously show up for it all? When I  
sometimes journey into the dark?**

**I don't ask for you to take my darkness away.**

**I don't expect for you to brighten my day, and I don't believe that you can mend my  
pain but I would surely love it if you could sit for a while and hold my hand, until I find  
my way out of my shadowland!**

**So will you... Hold my hand until I return again?**

**- Chantel (survivor)**

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- <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
- <https://www.domesticviolenceinfo.ca/12-signs-to-tell-if-your-partner-may-turn-into-an-abuser/>
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