

When people talk about Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), or domestic violence, they are referring to coercive and controlling actions used by one person to gain power and maintain control over the other in a relationship. In this brochure we explore the Power and Control Wheel* and the ways that male privilege can be used as a tactic of power and control.

First, it's important to define "privilege." Most people think of money when they hear privilege, but in an anti-oppression context it refers to advantages that people benefit from based solely on their social status. It is a status that benefits certain groups over other groups be it race, religion, class, or in this case, gender.

For the privileged person it's about how society accommodates you. It's about advantages you have that you think are normal. It's about you being normal, and others being the deviation from normal. For men who are using it for coercive control they take social values and beliefs about how each gender is supposed to act and behave and uses those the their advantage.

* The Power and Control Wheel was developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project Duluth, MN

FACTS ABOUT ABUSIVE AND CONTROLLING RELATIONSHIPS:

Many people don't recognize controlling and abusive behavior – because of socialization, we might think it's normal. It also can be difficult to recognize because it escalates over time, making it hard to see how bad things have become.

It's a pattern of behaviors that makes you feel crazy or trapped. Many people state that they walk on egg shells, or sense trouble coming, or have changed their whole way of being in reaction to their abusive partner.

Conflict in relationships is normal, but when the belief is that someone has to win, be in charge, or wear the pants then it may be an abusive relationship.

For more information or help call:

[Insert your local contact info]

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USING MALE PRIVILEGE



What does it look like in abusive and controlling relationships?



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Arvella, 19 years old, has been with the same man since she was 16. He is now 26.

It's socially acceptable for men to date younger women. For high school girls there is social status and mystique in dating older men. Exerting male privilege, he took advantage of her age - no one held him accountable for dating a minor.

He expects her to have sex with him when he wants: he often pressures her for sex and has forced her to have sex.

Men are socialized to believe that sex = love and women should take care of men's sexual needs. This leads to pressure to have sex, as well as coercion and forced sex.

He has a 5-yr-old child that visits every other weekend. He and Arvella have a 2-yr-old and newborn together. He doesn't do any of the caregiving - from meals to clothing or changing diapers - but he brags about being a father.

Socially, the pressures of parenting are less for men - women are expected to be the primary care-givers and nurturers, especially if he is a financial provider.

It's a very busy household. Arvella works part-time; he works full-time and often over-time, but when he gets home he is all about relaxing and his hobbies.

Male and female gender roles largely fall into the following: men work and women care for the home, even when they also work. An example of male privilege is that a man's work ends when he punches the time clock.

He always drives her car when they go out and decides what they do.

In controlling relationships what starts out as the man taking you out for a date can turn into the man making all the decisions. Even subtle things like needing to drive all the time are signs of control.

