

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 are exploring the Power and Control Wheel* and the ways that Emotional Abuse is used.

Emotional abuse is arguably the most common type of abuse, and it takes many forms. Examples of emotional abuse include: playing mind games, using insults and put-downs to diminish the other person, making them feel guilty, and objectification.

While many people may say mean things to their partners, the main indicators of emotional abuse are: 1) you don't feel right with what was said and 2) the other person doesn't acknowledge that they hurt your feelings, quite often minimizing or blaming you for how you feel.

Emotional abuse is used to break down self-esteem. It is what makes abusive relationships so draining.

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

Facts on the basis of a healthy relationship:

Many people don't recognize controlling behavior as abusive – 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 EMOTIONAL ABUSE



**What does it look like to
have cooperation in
relationships?**



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Melanie is 18 years old. She met Richie, also 18, at a pow wow. At first, he was very flattering, and they exchanged phone numbers. After two days, Richie's texts became more sexually suggestive and he asked for nude pictures of her. Melanie brushed it off as flirting.

Objectifying a person means making them less than human. If they are less than human, they are easier to hurt or use sexually.

Richie lives in another town 30 miles away. Melanie and Richie didn't see each other often and at first were texting constantly. In the beginning, Richie would respond right away, but as time went on, it would be hours before he would reply. When Melanie commented about how long it took him to reply, Richie told her that she was crazy, obsessive, or controlling, but never answered her questions as to why he was acting differently.

Playing mind games is a control tactic. It puts the other person on the defensive in order to deflect attention from the issue and steer the discussion in another direction.

Richie met one of Melanie's ex-boyfriends and found out that she had "cheated" on him. Although she says she wasn't serious about him, she admits she should have ended it before going on a date with someone new. Every time she says she's busy Richie brings this up.

Abusers use guilt as a means of control. It's a way to get the other person to do what they want.

Richie knows Melanie is afraid when he drives fast and he does it to taunt her – particularly when he's mad at her.

Coercion is another power and control tactic: abusers use and exploit any secret or fear to establish or maintain control.

Once, when Melanie and Richie were hanging out with a group of friends, Melanie mentioned needing a new dress for next Pow Wow Season. Richie cut in with comments about Melanie's weight. He says she's been eating too much fry bread and greasy foods, and that's why she needs a new dress – she doesn't fit her old one. Melanie got mad and Richie responds that she has a problem because she can't take a joke.

Abusers use insults to gradually break someone down and gain control. They often follow insults with another control tactic like minimizing, denying and blaming.

USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Putting her down • making her feel bad about herself • calling her names • making her think she's crazy • playing mind games • humiliating her • making her feel guilty.

USING ISOLATION

Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes • limiting her outside involvement • using jealousy to justify actions.

USING CHILDREN

Making her feel guilty about the children • using

MINIMIZING, DENYING AND BLAMING