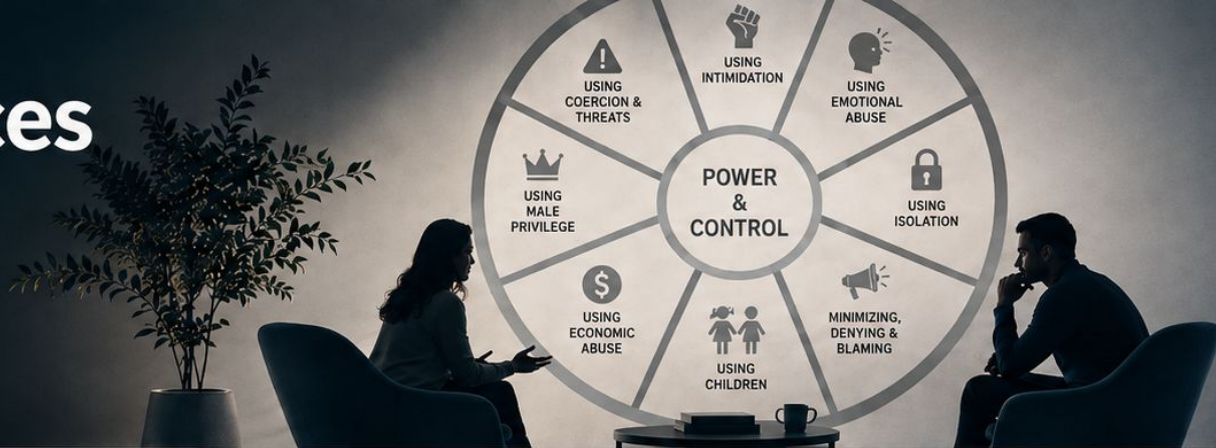


The Many Faces of Control

Understanding the Power & Control Wheel



WHAT IS THE WHEEL?

The Power and Control Wheel was created in the 1980s by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs to illustrate the many ways one partner may seek to gain power over another.

Abuse is not always physical. These behaviors can gradually erode a person's independence, confidence, and sense of safety.

No single behavior automatically indicates abuse. The Wheel helps us see patterns of control that deserve attention and support.



USING INTIMIDATION

Creating fear through looks, actions, gestures, destruction of property, harming pets, displaying weapons, or other intimidating behavior.



USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Undermining confidence through insults, humiliation, criticism, gaslighting, ridiculing, or making the other person feel guilty or worthless.



USING ISOLATION

Controlling where a partner goes, who they see, who they talk to, or limiting access to friends, family, work, or social activities.



MINIMIZING, DENYING & BLAMING

Refusing to acknowledge harmful behavior, minimizing its impact, shifting responsibility to the victim, or saying the victim caused the abuse.



USING CHILDREN

Manipulating children to control the other parent, making threats involving custody, undermining parenting, or using children to relay messages.



USING MALE PRIVILEGE

Relying on traditional gender roles to maintain power, making all the important decisions, or treating a partner as subordinate.



USING ECONOMIC ABUSE

Controlling money, preventing employment, withholding financial support, or creating dependence to limit independence.



USING COERCION & THREATS

Making threats to harm the partner, children, pets, self, or others; threatening to report immigration status, reveal personal information, or leave.



LOOKING FOR PATTERNS

Healthy relationships occasionally involve conflict. The Power and Control Wheel is not intended to label every disagreement as abusive. Instead, it encourages us to recognize recurring patterns that consistently diminish another person's freedom, independence, or sense of security.



Healthy relationships are built on mutual respect, trust, communication, and shared decision-making.