

Forms of Domestic Violence:

Physical Abuse: Can take the form of slapping, pushing, hitting, punching, choking, physically holding you to keep you from leaving, twisting limbs, throwing objects at you, using weapons. Can be actual or attempted with the intent to injure, control or make the victim fearful. This type of abuse can result in serious injury or even death.

Sexual Abuse: Any forced or unwanted sexual activity including rape. Unwanted kissing or touching, or forcing someone to do something they don't want to do (e.g. looking at pornography) is also sexual abuse. Humiliation can often play a part in sexual abuse.

Reproductive Control: This has links with sexual abuse, but is uniquely related to women's (particularly young women's) ability to control their own reproductive health. For example, use or non use of contraception/contraceptive method, forced decisions around pregnancy and/or termination and little say in the number and timing of children.

Also, pregnancy is a time when women are more vulnerable to abuse, but conversely are less likely to leave due to practical and economic reliance on their partner. In the 2005 Personal Safety Survey, 59 per cent (667 900) of women who experienced violence by a previous partner were pregnant at some time during the relationship; of these, 36 per cent (239 800) reported that violence occurred during a pregnancy and 17 per cent (112 000) experienced violence for the first time when they were pregnant.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse: This is where the perpetrator does or says things that make their partner feel scared, intimidated, insane, stupid or worthless. For example, threatening to harm or kill, constant criticism, threats to abduct or harm children, hurting or killing pets, threatening with guns or other weapons, denying or minimising the abuse and blaming the victim for the abuse. Prolonged silence, doing things to confuse the person, withholding important information or exclusion from decision making are all forms of psychological abuse.

Verbal Abuse: Usually consists of derogatory comments, insults, constant put-downs, name calling and yelling. For instance lack of physical attractiveness, inferiority, incompetency, inability to cope and/or succeed on her own and being told that she is not a good mother / wife / housekeeper are all examples of verbal abuse. Is linked to emotional abuse and often precedes physical abuse.

Social Abuse: Any form of behaviour which isolates a victim from family or friends. Examples include criticising or being suspicious of the victim's family/friends, controlling the use of the telephone or family car, deliberate geographic isolation, demanding a constant account of the victim's whereabouts and public shaming/belittling/humiliating.

Financial Abuse: Controlling money by denying access to bank accounts, forcing the surrender of bankcards to gain control of partner's income, preventing a partner from seeking or maintaining employment, and denying input into financial decisions are all forms of financial abuse. Making women ask for money, and wanting receipts for money provided.

Spiritual/Cultural Abuse: Spiritual abuse undermines your self-identity by behaviours such as criticising your spiritual beliefs; the quoting of religious texts to justify abusive behaviour; abusing in ways that involve symbols of religion or spirituality; denying the victim the freedom to speak their own language or practice their own culture.

Damage to Property: Damage to property occurs when the house, household furniture, or anything else that the victim owns or uses is damaged or broken. Examples includes breaking a plate, kicking a hole in the wall, or damaging the car. The aim of the abuse is to intimidate the victim

Stalking: Aside from continuously following someone, a common example of stalking in a domestic situation is obsessive behaviour like constant telephone calls or sending disturbing, unsolicited gifts or messages. Stalking is also interconnected with the risk of being murdered by an intimate; in one review of women killed by intimate partners, 76% of the murders were preceded by one or more incidents of stalking (McFarlane, et al., 1999)

Technological abuse: Is an emerging form of abuse that is linked to stalking, psychological abuse and other forms of violence. This forms uses technology to directly or indirectly intimidate, harass, monitor or stalk victims. Victims may not even know that this form of abuse has been occurring for some time (e.g. Personal information posted on websites, tracking devices in cars). Some examples are: use of telephone, email, GPS, spyware, listening devices, hidden cameras, keystroke logging hardware, websites & social networking sites.

The threat to engage in any of the above forms of abuse is also an act of abuse in and of itself.