

Main manifestations of coercive control

This project received financial support from Women and Gender Equality Canada.



Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

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Blaming

- If she tells him that he is too bossy, he replies that it is because she is immature, ill behaved
- Tells her he can't stay sober while living with a crazy woman like her
- He says that if she leaves him, he'll kill himself and it will be her fault
- Blames her for losing his job and refuses to look for a new one
- Tells her that he wouldn't get angry if she could keep the kids quiet and in control
- Tells her that he wouldn't be with other women if she took better care of him
- Tells her that he would take her out more often if she wasn't so stupid
- Tells her that he gets along well with others and that it is her behaviour that makes him "lose control"

Abuse using technology

- Logs into her account, reads her posts, impersonates her and interacts for her on social media
- Confiscates her phone, removes her SIM card
- Disconnects Wi-Fi, changes passwords, removes routers
- Tracks her with geolocation apps
- Films her or records her voice without her knowledge
- Takes video clips out of context and threatens to use them as evidence against her
- Threatens to post intimate images on the Web

Main manifestations, and examples, of coercive control¹

This is not an exhaustive list. It serves above all to illustrate the variety of manifestations of coercive control as well as the fact that abusers will take advantage of the particular vulnerabilities of some women to establish their hold (e.g. disability, precarious immigration status, etc.).



Threats

- Threatens to leave with the children, to make her lose custody
- Threatens to commit suicide
- Threatens to put her in a mental institution
- Threatens to place her in a CHSLD
- Threatens to kill her or her loved ones
- Threatens to take her to court
- Threatens to harm her, the children, family pets
- Threatens to deprive her of medication, health care or transportation
- Threatens to kill her service dog
- Threatens to call the authorities (child protection, immigration, mental health social services, etc.)
- Drives dangerously to frighten her

Humiliation

- Acts in ways that embarrass or humiliate her in public
- Forces her to stay at the table until she has eaten everything on her plate
- Treats her like a child
- Forces her to wear clothing that hides parts of her body he doesn't like
- Compares her physically to other people
- Belittles her because of her disability

Monitoring and interrogation

- Asks her who she met, when and why
- Asks her to text where she is, texts on arrival and departure, pedometer calculated, report required
- Communicates with loved ones in order to get information about her, her outings and her condition, under the pretext that he is worried about her
- Accompanies her wherever she goes
- For example, drives her and picks her up from work
- Often comes to her workplace «to see if everything is okay»
- Searches through her drawers, her purse and her bank statements
- Times her phone calls, time spent in the bathroom, how long it takes to go shopping, etc.
- Demands to know where she is at all times
- Calls her family and colleagues to check that she is really with them



Isolation

- Prevents contact with loved ones by deleting new communications on her phone, not allowing her to see or talk to them
- Jealous of her relationships and tries to turn her against her loved ones
- Speaks badly about her to those close to her, saying that she is not well physically or mentally, while presenting himself as a kind man who «takes good care of her»
- Manipulates the family and gets close to them to gain their trust, which can go as far as excluding her from family gatherings or meetings with friends
- Prevents her from leaving the house, confiscates car keys and shoes
- Prevents her from going to medical appointments
- Arrives drunk to family gatherings to embarrass her
- Prevents her from having her own phone or car
- Prevents her from going to school or work
- Spreads false rumors at work so that she loses her job
- Refuses to let her learn the language of the host country or refuses to allow their children to learn their native language
- Sulks if she goes out without him. Stops answering her calls and text messages to make her feel guilty
- Discharges the battery of her wheelchair

Gaslighting

- Behaves cruelly and then says she is too sensitive or has no sense of humour
- Promises to do things, does not keep promises, then says he never promised anything like that
- Throws tantrums, insults and assaults her, then when she confronts him about it, accuses her of exaggeration or making up stories
- Keeps telling her that she spends her time imagining problems, that she exaggerates
- Hits her and later asks her how she got hurt
- Makes her cry, then says she's being hysterical, asks her why she gets so sad

¹ These examples are taken from various sources on the Internet and from different tools, the main ones being:
 - guide from the Carrefour familial des personnes handicapées "Femmes handicap violence conjugale" (HVC) [http://www.cfph.org/_guide-hvc-2021/guide-hvc.pdf]
 - Chart produced by the West Island Women's Shelter "Coercive Control Screening Questionnaire and Evaluation Grid" [<https://wiws.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Outils-Complementaires-English-v4.pdf>]
 - PEVC evaluation tool (Protection des enfants en contexte de violence conjugale) [<https://pevc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Outil-evaluation.pdf>].

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Harassment

- Repeatedly sends her text messages, sometimes under the guise of communications about the children
- Stalks her, follows her or has her followed by friends
- Lurks or shows up at her home or place of work to make sure she is there
- Follows her into every room of the house, refuses to let her lock the bathroom or bedroom door



Physical violence

- Pushing, hitting
- Restraining, grabbing
- Pulling her hair, grabbing her by the throat, grabbing and squeezing her face
- Strangulation
- Throwing objects
- Burning her with cigarettes
- Spitting on her



Sexual violence

- Pressures her for sex
- Makes derogatory remarks about her body and sexuality
- Forces unwanted sex acts on her
- Blames her if other men show interest in her
- Prevents her from sleeping if she refuses sex
- Forces her to watch pornography and asks her to do humiliating and degrading things
- Controls her contraception and pregnancies (keeping the baby or abortion)
- Has sex with other women and puts her at risk
- Rapes her to conceive a child

Financial abuse and controlling resources

- Convinces her that he can support her financially and that she doesn't need to work
- Uses children to ensure that she stays at home
- Sabotages her work to get her fired
- Controls access to bank accounts
- Controls the budget
- Appropriates her pay
- Requires her to pay all family expenses, preventing her from saving
- Hides the state of their finances
- Invests or spends the couple's money without telling her
- Uses her money for his personal expenses
- Puts all the couple's purchases in her name or in his name
- Threatens to deprive her of money and other essential items
- Forces her to beg for essential items
- Uses her fear of going without essential goods to control her behaviour
- Demands that she account for her spending
- Hides bank cards in an inaccessible spot
- Makes access to a credit card conditional on compliance with specific rules he has set
- Takes control of the finances under the pretext that she is not able to manage them, given her disability
- Refuses to purchase a technical aid, such as an orthotic or walker
- Demands money in exchange for transportation
- Controls what she eats
- Prevents her from having access to the shower, bath, toilet
- Prevents her from eating, forcing her to come up with ways to eat in hiding
- Confiscates or puts out of reach the phone, keys, medication or a technical aid such as a wheelchair
- Controls her transportation
- Controls access to health care
- Controls when she sleeps

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Monitoring and interrogation

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- > Asks her to text him where she is, text on arrival and departure, pedometer calculated, report required
- > Accompanies her wherever she goes

Threats

- > Threatens to leave with the children, to make her lose custody
- > Threatens to kill her or her loved ones
- > Threatens to take her to court or to alert social or immigration services

Sexual violence

- > Pressures her for sex
- > Forces her to watch pornography, asks her to do humiliating and degrading things
- > Controls her contraception and pregnancies (keeping the baby or abortion)

Gaslighting

- > Throws tantrums, insults and assaults her, then when she confronts him about it, accuses her of exaggeration or making up stories
- > Keeps telling her that she spends her time imagining problems, that she exaggerates
- > Hits her and later asks her how she got hurt

Financial abuse

- > Controls budget and access to bank and credit cards
- > Threatens to deprive her of money and other essential items
- > Prevents her from having access to the shower, bath, toilet, meals and the marital bed
- > Controls her transportation

Isolation

- > Prevents contact with loved ones by erasing new communications on her phone, forbidding her to see or talk to them
- > Prevents her from leaving the house, confiscating car keys and shoes
- > Prevents her from going to school or work

Physical violence

- > Pushing, hitting
- > Strangulation
- > Spitting on her

Blaming

- > Tells her he can't stay sober while living with a crazy woman like her
- > He says that if she leaves him, he'll kill himself and it will be her fault
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- > Tracks her with geolocation apps

Humiliation

- > Acts in ways that embarrass or humiliate her in public
- > Compares her physically to other people

Harassment

- > Stalks her, follows her or has her followed by friends
- > Lurks or shows up at her home or place of work to make sure she is there
- > Repeatedly sends her text messages, sometimes under the guise of child-related communications



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