



Healthy Relationships, Happy Families:

Understanding Domestic Abuse and Finding Help

Presented by the Main Line Indian Association in partnership with Laurel House of Montgomery County, the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County, and the Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County





About Domestic Violence

Defining Abuse, the Power & Control Wheel, and the Cycle of Abuse





Understanding Domestic Violence

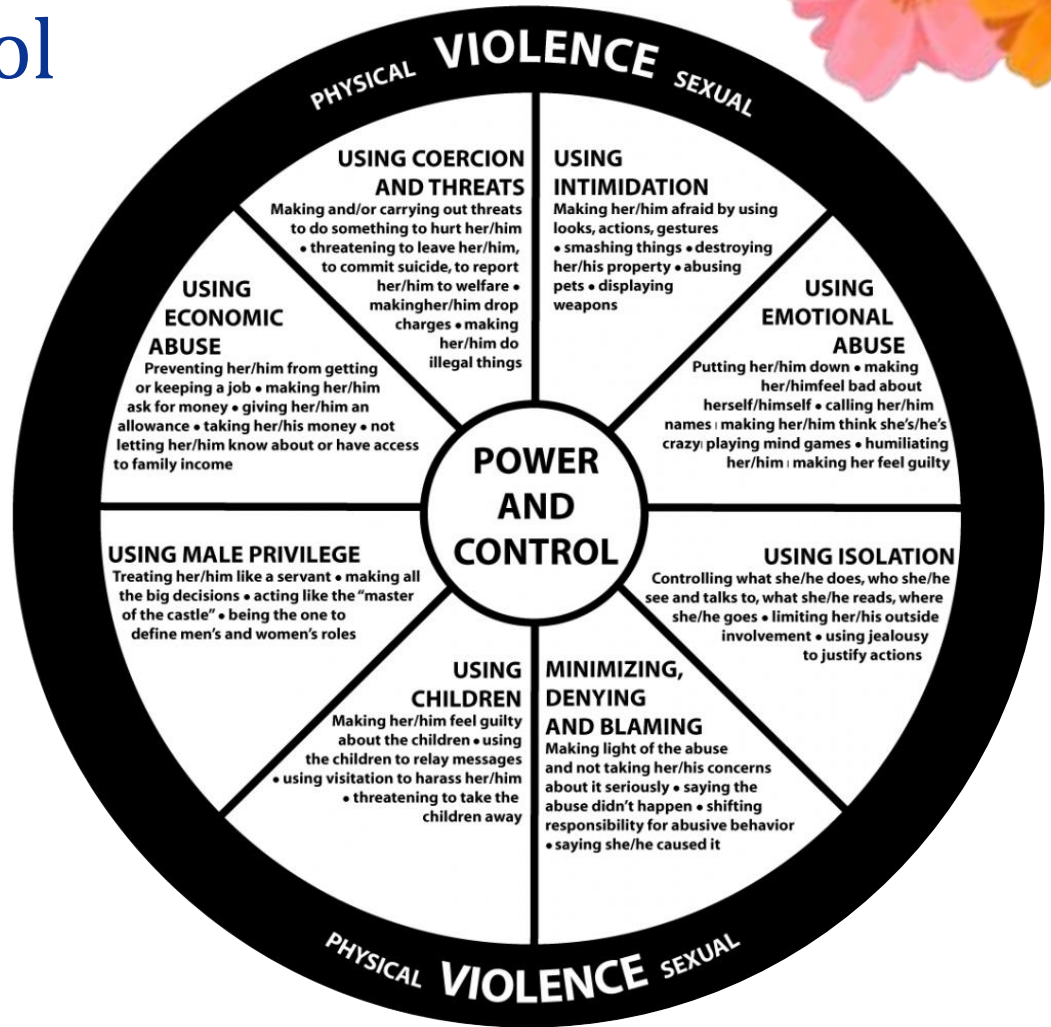
- Definition: A pattern of coercive behavior used by one person to gain power and control over another in an intimate or familial relationship.
 - Also known as:
 - Abuse
 - Battery
 - Intimate Partner Violence
 - Family/spousal/relationship/dating violence



Power and Control

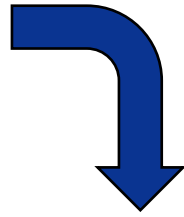
• Common tactics to gain and maintain power and control include:

- Emotional abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Physical violence
- Stalking
- Sexual/reproductive coercion
- Financial abuse
- Verbal abuse





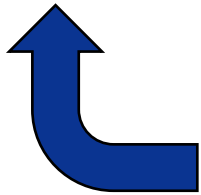
Honeymoon
Loving, Romantic, Best Foot Forward



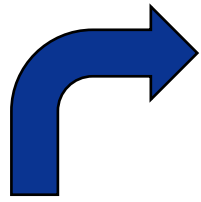
Red Flag/Status Quo
Subtle, "Small" Behaviors
Rationalization/
Normalization



Abusive Incident
Can be Physical, Verbal,
Emotional, etc.



**Apology/
Reconciliation**
Apologies, Gifts, Crying,
Promises Change





Red Flags & Cultivating Healthier Relationships

What are Red Flags? How do we address them?

Understanding the Relationship Spectrum

Healthy Communication & Setting Boundaries





What are the Red Flags?

How do people miss the signs?

- How do we miss Red Flags?
- Normalization
 - Common = Acceptable
 - Socialization (Culture & Media Influence)
- Rationalization
 - We look for other logical reasons!





Reminders When Reviewing the Red Flags:

- Just because it is not listed on the Red Flags Tool, does not mean it is not a Red Flag:
 - *Red Flags are unique to every person: YOU define your Red Flags & Boundaries – if it makes you uncomfortable, it might be a Red Flag!*
- Red Flags don't always play out in the most dramatic or obvious ways.
 - *Consider the subtler ways that Red Flags might play out*
- It is okay if you have engaged in Red Flag behaviors: what is the follow—up?
 - *How can I seek a healthier alternative for that behavior?*
- Just because Red Flags occur does not mean your relationship is "abusive"
 - *Pay attention to the context, patterns, and accountability/follow-through.*



Red Flag Guide



• Emotional Red Flags

- Double Standards
- Gaslighting/Victim-Blaming
- **Devaluation**
 - *“You just sit on your phone all day”*

• Verbal Red Flags

- Making Fun/Name-calling
- Put downs/Criticisms
 - *“This dinner tastes horrible!”*

• Controlling Red Flags

- Stonewalling
- **Makes all Family/Relationship Decisions without your input.**
 - *Takes advantage of – or creates - educational and employment barriers.*

• Threatening Red Flags

- Uses voice/gestures to scare
- Threatens to Leave You
 - *“You will be deported if I left you.”*
- Threatens to Hurt You/Self/Others

• Isolating Red Flags

- Discourages/Makes Seeing Friends/Family difficult
- Poor Relationship with Your Friends/Family
 - *“Our family issues are no one else’s business – not even your sister’s.”*

• Digital/Technological Red Flags

- Constant Calls/Texts to Check-in
- Opinion/Control over Social Media Presence
- Reads/Checks through Call Log/Messages

• Physical Red Flags

- **Explosive Temper**
- Acts Out Physically
 - *Using Hitting or Slapping as a punishment*
- Destroys Property/Belongings

• Sexual Red Flags

- Pressures/Manipulates/Guilts/Forces Partner for Sex
- Violates Sexual Boundaries – **No Consent** with Sexual Relations





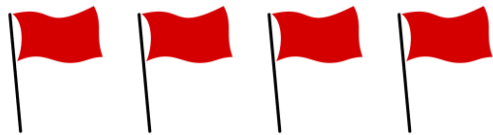
Abusive

Unhealthy

Healthy

The Relationship Spectrum





Abusive

Unhealthy

Healthy

The Relationship Spectrum

- Red Flags are UNHEALTHY behaviors – things that make us uncomfortable or cross boundaries.
- Red Flags can occur in healthy relationships – and should be addressed!
- The more Red Flags that occur, and the less accountability, the more we shift toward abuse.





Abusive

Unhealthy

Healthy

The Relationship Spectrum

- ▶ Through setting healthy expectations and communicating boundaries, we can move toward the healthier end of the relationship spectrum!



Establishing Boundaries & Expectations



- **Explicit conversations communicating these are absolutely necessary.**
- **Boundaries vs. Expectations**
 - *Boundaries are typically all about personal comfort levels—they are where we personally draw the line between what is and is not okay with us.* Boundaries serve as guidelines for our relationships, and help us understand how to act in order to make our partner feel most respected and supported.
 - Boundaries can be physical, sexual, emotional – even digital!
 - It can feel awkward, maybe even selfish, to talk with your partner about your limits, especially if a relationship is just beginning and you're trying to keep things cool and casual. However, this is actually a really important and healthy step!
 - Revisiting boundaries in a mutual, respectful way can be a really healthy behavior for partners to engage in, and that's where open, honest communication comes in again.
 - With expectations, *we make assumptions about how a situation should go, how people should act, even adjust our behavior to fall in line with what we think others expect of us.*
 - The problem is that expectations are usually based on assumptions, and anytime we assume we know what our partner is thinking (or assume they know what we're thinking), we get into dangerous territory.
 - A lot of the time, having an unmet expectation doesn't mean you were wrong, it just means that it's time to check in with your partner.
 - Some expectations though, like wanting your partner to put you before everything else in their life, can be unrealistic and may need to be adjusted.
- **Sometimes people just aren't on the same page** when it comes to what they want and need from a partner, and that's a valid and healthy reason to end a relationship.
 - What's never okay is pressuring, coercing, or forcing someone to adjust a boundary they aren't ready to change. Disrespecting boundaries or forcing a partner to do things they aren't comfortable with is definitely unhealthy and can even be abusive.





“It’s normal to disagree in relationships”

Resolving Conflict: Key Reminders

Unhealthy Disagreements/Arguments

- Based in power & control
- Fight to win
- Fight to hurt
- Bring up the past

Healthy Disagreements/Arguments

- Based in equality & respect
- You & Me vs. the issue
 - Where were we both coming from?
 - Where did the breakdown in communication happen?
- Communicate:
 - How you feel
 - What you need moving forward (i.e. your boundary/expectation)





Helping a Friend or Loved One

Best Approaches to Support Someone in an Unhealthy or Abusive Relationship

Behaviors & Phrases to Avoid When Helping a Loved One

Safety Planning & Seeking Local, Professional Guidance





How to Help a Friend or Loved One

- **BELIEVE THEM** – tell them they are not alone
- Abuse is NEVER the victim's fault.
- **Offer support:** to listen, help with childcare, keep copies of important documents, help with transportation
- Share resources, phone numbers, and information
- **Remain supportive** – even if s/he stays with or returns to the abuser
- Take care of yourself!





How to Talk: Words that Help

- "What is this like for you?"
- "You don't deserve to be hurt."
- "What happened to you is a crime."
- "You are not alone in figuring this out. There may be some options for you."

- Focus on your loved one, not the abusive partner.





How to Help: Safety Planning

- Best done with a domestic abuse advocate
- Recognize that a person experiencing domestic abuse needs to think through options
- Offer to hold a spare key, belongings, documents, medications
- Establish code word/text when friend or family member is in danger
- Reach out and check on your loved one





How to Talk: Avoid These Phrases

- "If I were you..."
- "You should just..."
- "I can't understand why you won't..."
- "If it is really that bad, why haven't you left?"



DO

- **T** Take time to listen
- **R** Respect the individual's values and choices.
- **U** Understand how difficult it is.
 - Offer compassion and hope.
- **S** Support the individual's decisions.
- **T** Tell the individual help is available.
 - Refer individual for support and assistance.

DON'T

- Talk about the abuse in front of the abuser or others.
- Call and leave messages that may make the abuser angry or suspicious.
- Leave written information on abuse where the abuser can find it.
- Gossip or tell others about the abuse unless the individual requests or gives permission, or you are required by law or employment to report the abuse.
- Judge the individual.
- Tell the individual what to do.



** Excerpted with permission from Building a Coalition to Address Domestic Abuse in Later Life, by Ada Albright, Bonnie Brandl, Julie Rozwadowski, and Mary K. Wall. Madison, WI: National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life and AARP Foundation National Legal Training Project, 2004.*



How to Find Help



- Call a Domestic Abuse hotline in your area
 - Each County has a Domestic Abuse program, you can find information for your county online or by checking on the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence website - [Find Your Local Domestic Violence Program | PCADV](#)
 - Many local Domestic Abuse programs offer free advocacy and domestic abuse counseling
- Reach out to a trusted person for support
 - Identify a person in your life that is non-judgmental and emotionally safe
 - Sibling, friend, religious leader, etc.
 - Share what you are experiencing and ask for help finding a Domestic Abuse program



Is what you are experiencing impacting your physical and/or emotional health?



- Contact your medical doctor to address the physical and emotional impact of the unhealthy relationship.
 - Ask for additional support and referral resources
 - Healthcare appointments are confidential and provide a safe space to explore options and discuss safety
- Reach out to your medical insurance, if available, and ask about coverage for mental health resources
 - Some common mental health issues that develop as a result of domestic abuse include, but are not limited to anxiety, depression, and PTSD



Basic Safety Planning



- If an argument seems inevitable, try to have it in a room with access to an exit.
- Carry your cell phone in your pocket at all times.
- Practice how to quickly leave your home.
- During an incident, try to avoid rooms with weapons (kitchen, garage, basement).
- Call 911 if you need help or are in immediate danger.
- If you are preparing to leave, determine the safest time to do so. Rehearse an escape plan.
- Try to keep money tucked away that you can use if you need to leave.
- Plan with a friend – establish a code word, prepare them for when you need help.
- Leave a bag with your important items (Social Security card, insurance card, birth certificates, immigration documentation, etc.) somewhere safe to access after you've left





Break Out Session: 10 minutes

Please discuss as a small group:

- ❖ What are some cultural obstacles that exist within the Indian community, that prevent individuals from reaching out to a local domestic abuse agency?
- ❖ What else regarding domestic abuse would the Indian community want/need to know?





Services are available locally for you:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline
 - 800.799.SAFE (7233)
- Montgomery County: Laurel House
 - www.laurel-house.org
 - 1-800-642-3150
 - Textline – Text HOPE to 85511
- Chester County: DVCCC
 - www.dvcccpa.org
 - 1-888-711-6270
- Delaware County: DAP
 - www.dapdc.org
 - (610) 565 – 4590





Domestic Abuse Services

- Emergency Safe Haven Shelter and Housing Resources
- 24/7 Hotline
- Legal Advocacy and Court Accompaniment
- Counseling and Support Groups
- Children's Programming
- Community Education
- Medical Advocacy
- Immediate Response Program
- Immigration Support (DVCCC)





How to Volunteer

- Laurel House – Montgomery County
 - Volunteer Coordinator: Sam Koellhoffer
 - skoellhoffer@laurel-house.org
 - Phone: 610-277-1860, Ext 105
- Domestic Abuse Project – Delaware County
 - Volunteer Coordinator: Shannon Marriott
 - Smarriott@dapdc.org
- Domestic Violence Center of Chester County
 - Volunteer Coordinator: Marisa Grady
 - mgrady@dvcccpcpa.org
 - <https://www.dvcccpcpa.org/become-a-volunteer>





Q & A

