The Duluth Power and Control Model^a

Lucille Pope and Kathleen Ferraro

The extent to which domestic violence theory matches the realities of women's lives leads to practice that re-victimizes or empowers, increases risk or the potential for safety. The *Power and Control Model* developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) of Duluth, Minnesota, is an explanation of violence against women that is (inter)nationally used in domestic violence programs.

In the DAIP batterers' education group curriculum, two primary teaching tools are used to frame their explanation of how battering works: The *Power and Control Wheel* to describe battering behaviors and the *Control Log* to challenge the belief systems that support those behaviors. (Attachments A and B) The Power and Control Wheel is commonly used to explain battering, but standing alone it can not represent a comprehensive theory of violence against women in intimate relationships. It is only when the curriculum is taken as a whole that one can understand the paradigm shift that re-frames battering as diverse, interacting, and interwoven behaviors, the intent and effect of which are the production of power.

The Power and Control Wheel

From a violence against women perspective an explanation of battering must include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; accurately represent women's everyday experience; and be rooted in an analysis of power and gendered relations. In the professionalized field of domestic violence, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse are often separated from each other for legal practicality, political convenience, and methodological clarity in research. The Wheel, however, frames these three types of abuse as interlocking dynamics of power that flow through and around an intimate relationship.

The Wheel shows eight tactics, or groups of behaviors, identified by battered women in Duluth as ongoing components of their battering experience: coercion and threats; intimidation; emotional abuse; isolation; using children; male privilege; economic abuse; and minimizing, denying and blaming. (See Attachment C for a definition of each tactic.) Acts of physical and sexual violence as the rim of the Wheel provide support and give strength to this broad range of tactics.

Battering not only consists of seemingly isolated acts of individual abusers. It encompasses a much larger system of actions of abusers and of the community institutions that support woman abuse. Although physical violence may occur only occasionally in a battering relationship, batterers daily use the abusive tactics that make up this larger system.¹

The intent and effect of using these behaviors rest at the hub of the Wheel – the creation of power and the creation of control.

In this conceptual framework, battering is a complex interweaving of tactics that creates the batterer's power and control over a partner. The use of these tactics is intentional, although perhaps more automatic than conscious.² Using this description of battering, the act (or threat) of physical violence reinforces other types of coercive behaviors. However, it is the interaction of multiple tactics in multiple ways that accomplishes the batterer's purpose.

At one time or another, many people engage in behaviors found on the Wheel. In isolation these behaviors may be unpleasant, abusive, or illegal, but they *are not* battering. They become battering

when one person is using it as a way of controlling another or frightening her or destroying her self-concept; ... when [it's] a pattern that characterizes the relationship and gives one person almost all the power; ... when one person becomes so uncertain of herself she can't trust her judgment and thinks she doesn't have the right to make judgments.³

Battering is a dynamic pattern, an intention, and an effect that jeopardizes the safety of others if not the existence of the relationship itself.

From this perspective, to stop battering requires more than stopping physical acts of violence; all behaviors intended to control a partner must stop. Since use of these behaviors is seen as a choice, responsibility for examining and altering that choice rests solely with the batterer and does not require involvement of the partner.

The Control Log: Intent and Effect

The straightforward listing of battering behaviors, however, does not help us understand the intent and effect of the choice to use those behaviors. It is through the Control Log that it becomes apparent that it is the totality of behaviors that is abusive and there is an intention to using these behaviors.

Battering behaviors happen because of a belief system that men learn in their culture. "The abuser bases his actions on two beliefs: first, that he has the right to control his partner's activities, feelings, or thoughts, and second, that violence is a legitimate method of achieving that control." The DAIP curriculum lays out a number of beliefs held by batterers. ⁵

- ✓ Batterers often believe women are manipulators who lie, cheat, steal, exploit them economically, or say no when they mean yes.
- ✓ Batterers can blame women for violence by believing them to be provocateurs, equally violent, or looking to be dominated.
- ✓ Batterers believe that there is no alternative to violence; violence is an appropriate response when they feel hurt; or is caused by external factors such as alcohol use or a breakdown in communication.
- ✓ In relationships, batterers believe that one person needs to be in control; jealousy is an expression of love; and as a male he is entitled to certain rights.

This belief system allows the batterer to divert responsibility and provides justification for the continued use of battering behaviors.

A batterer's belief that male privilege is natural validates his sense of entitlement to certain rights in his relationships with women. In the family hierarchy "these include the right to be in charge, to control what his partner does, thinks and feels, and to be the center of things." "He feels entitled to establish and maintain his position through any means, including the use of violence."

Throughout their writing, the message from the DAIP is consistent – that the use of violence is not due to mental illness, substance abuse, or uncontrolled anger. "This program in all its aspects rejects the notion of men as victims of sexism." Violence against women is a choice that is socially and institutionally sanctioned, compatible with gender and familial roles, and legitimized by belief systems.

The consciousness of both men and women in this society is shaped by their experiences of this system and all of the forces that work within it. Yet not all men batter women even though all men have been socialized in a society that grants them certain gender privileges.⁹

In the DAIP Power and Control Model, it is clear that if the batterer is viewed only as a victim of cultural influences and socialization, then there is no place for individual responsibility. It is accepting responsibility that makes behavioral change possible.¹⁰

<u>Definitions of Violence</u>, Abuse, and Battering

Violence, abuse, and battering are often used interchangeably in the political negotiations and philosophic conflicts within the domestic violence community. They are also used to represent differences between academic disciplines and professional terminology; between practice, theory, and science; between educational tools and definitions of research variables. These definitions of violence, abuse, and battering follow from the DAIP analyses of power and women's oppression.

"When I talk about *violence* I'm always talking about putting someone in fear of their physical safety or physically harming them." In our culture, violence is legitimate and justified when used in particular roles, relationships, or life-threatening situations. Both men and women use violence, but the batterer's "use of violence provides a foundation on which he can systematically use behaviors that control almost every segment of [her] life." Traditions of non-interference and the failure to punish the use of physical violence in private relationships reinforce a cultural acceptance of violence as normal.

Actions become *abuse* when done with the intention and for the purpose of establishing or reinforcing power-over. A series or pattern of abusive acts serves to accomplish the end goal – which is control. A connection between abusive acts and physical violence (or the threat of physical violence) is critical to this definition of battering. Physical violence gives power to abusive actions, and abusive acts strengthen the effectiveness of physical violence.

Battering, however, encompasses "a much larger system of actions of abusers and of the community institutions that support woman abuse." ¹³ Institutions and social systems hold cultural values and beliefs that accommodate battering.^b

So it's not just a thing that an individual does to another, it's a thing that men to do to women because of their sense of entitlement, but also because it works for them. It works for them because of the context in which they do it, the institutions that back them up, the culture that backs them up, the value system that backs them up, and the value system in which she is devalued in this society. 14

From this perspective, there are several conditions necessary for battering.

- ✓ Battering must occur within a cultural context and a belief system that gives an individual permission to use specific behaviors.
- ✓ Battering does not require physical violence; physical violence may be used only as necessary reinforce the use of other abusive acts.
- ✓ The choice of tactics and ways in which they are structured is unique to each relationship, but the end results are about power and control.

The man who uses that power and is backing that up with his belief that I am entitled to this power because of my marriage or because of my gender,

that's where the explosiveness of domestic violence starts to occur. That's where battering happens. ¹⁵

In a patriarchy, it is difficult for women to be batterers in intimate relationships because it is difficult for them to use a wide variety of tactics that are reinforced by institutions and inscribed in cultural norms. "While women do use many forms of violence, it is rare that women establish a pattern of violent behaviors that puts the man in a chronic state of fear." The social conditions and practices of this culture do not support or reinforce the ability of women to successfully batter.

Other Considerations

Analysis of the DAIP written materials offers at least four additional insights into the Power and Control Model that may be overlooked or lost when the Wheel is separated from the body of the curricula.

(1) Not all batterers or all violence is the same. The effectiveness of specific tactics may vary from relationship to relationship, yet each batterer determines the level and severity needed to gain and maintain control.¹⁷

Men who batter their partners shift tactics according to what they believe will work in a given situation, the mood they're in, the response they're looking for from their partner or the environment in which they are attempting to exercise control. For example, an abuser may use violence in private, but in public may use a certain glare, a threatening gesture, or a humiliating remark. The abuser employs tactics not only to gain his partner's submission to a specific demand, but also to establish a relationship that he can rely upon in the future. These tactics appear to be random and unexplainable, but in the context of attempting to establish power in a relationship, random acts of violence are fully explainable.¹⁸

- (2) Patterns in individual relationships can also be adapted to meet changing conditions. In interviews with women using the court system "forty-eight percent reported increases in other controlling tactics as the physical violence decreased." Each woman's experience can only be understood by exploring the distinct patterns occurring in the specific context of her relationship.
- (3) Tactics identified on the Power and Control Wheel do not include all possible abusive behaviors intended to control.²⁰ They do represent those behaviors most commonly experienced by women's group participants in Duluth, Minnesota. Understanding that battering takes many forms demands the design of services that are diverse and flexible enough to respond to the uniqueness of each relationship.
- (4) When power and control are placed at the center of a domestic violence analysis, several fundamental questions are refocused. Moving from an examination of the individual or the relationship to examining controlling behaviors, the focus emphasis shifts from 'why she stays' to 'how does he batter'.

Impact on Women

The Power and Control Model focuses on the behaviors of the batterer. Recognizing that the impact on women varies, the DAIP usually avoids universal statements about women and refers only generally to women's reactions to battering: humiliation, terror, dampened "ability to act autonomously", ²¹ fear, self-doubt, or "severe physical, psychological, or spiritual trauma." ²²

Throughout the writings from the DAIP, it is clear that this program does not promote pathology, dysfunction, or a personal deficit to describe women who are battered. On the contrary, "labeling the victim's behavior as pathological rather than adaptive is a form of collusion with the abuser."²³

The battered women's movement has, since its earliest days, identified battering not as an individual woman's problem, but as a societal problem linked to the oppression of all women in our society. ... We understood from the earliest days of the movement that women were trapped in violent relationships not because they had poor self-images or were in some way defective, but because of an economic system and a community that over and over again reinforced batterers' power over women.²⁴

The DAIP response to women who are battered focuses on clarifying the connections between personal, institutional, and cultural aspects of the battering experience and organizing women around social change.

Visions of Social Change

For Men.

The DAIP men's educational groups are designed to encourage batterers to examine their understanding of the world, belief systems, and the cultural supports that impact the choices they make in relationships.

At the core of the [men's] curriculum is the attempt to structure a process by which each man can examine his actions in light of his concept of himself as a man. That examination demands a reflective process that distinguishes between what is in his nature and what is socially constructed. The things that are socially constructed can be changed.²⁵

The batterers' education curriculum leads participants to examine their personal use of abusive tactics and explore non-violent alternatives.

The process challenges men to think on a far deeper level than they are used to in their daily interactions with the world. They are asked to become actors rather than reactors -- to step back from their lives, to examine the basis of their behavior, and to understand how it acts against their own human desires to have a trusting, intimate relationship.²⁶

The curriculum emphasizes connections between belief systems of the batterer and the tactics used to control: Change in behaviors is directly linked to changes in one's belief systems and world view. Change occurs when batterers are able to internalize a process for analyzing and challenging the belief systems they use to justify and minimize their behavior. The DAIP educational curriculum is designed to "lead to true empowerment in men. It challenges men to take the risk to stop controlling, stop having all the power." It asks men to challenge their privilege in society and "to consider joining in an act of non-cooperation with the system that has caused so much pain." 28

For Women.

The DAIP promotes liberation and freedom with women who are oppressed in their culture and controlled in their relationships.^c Teaching critical thinking supports women who have been battered to analyze, identify, and expose the closed system through which the batterer

monopolizes her perception. This method involves stepping back to expand her vision of her life; and as she steps back from the relationship, the conditions, definitions, structure, and mythologies that limit her freedom are exposed. The process is designed for women to

build culture or reclaim a more natural process for culture. Women's groups can build and shape our environment. Therefore, its form and process is part of our changing consciousness. It is an integral part of our work to make that group a reflection of our vision for a non-violent world.²⁹

In group, women design and conduct actions that challenge the conditions underlying their oppression on personal, institutional, and cultural levels. When participants are given the opportunity to consciously interpret and challenge the world, they can unite as actors in a struggle for transformation and social change.^d

For Relationships.

In the 1986 men's group curriculum, battering behaviors and tactics of control provided a framework for weekly topics. In 1990, the curriculum content was redesigned around topics represented on the *Equality Wheel*. (Attachment D) This shift clarifies that the goals for relationships are: negotiation and fairness; non-threatening behaviors; honesty and accountability; responsible parenting; shared responsibility; economic partnership; and respect, trust, and support. Adaptations of the Equality Wheel offer expanded visions of what change in battering relationships could look like. As individuals change, institutions, social systems, cultural values, and beliefs that support battering are simultaneously challenged.

Conclusion

Despite the recent flood of information about domestic violence, there is a breach between the academic literature, the work of community activists, and women who have been battered. The explanation of violence against women as an issue of power and control is not new. The explanations of violence against women presented in the Duluth Power and Control Model represent a conceptual clarification and re-framing of how power and control work in battering relationships. The framework created by the DAIP translates, refines, and organizes concepts of power and control in ways that bind individual, group, and cultural strategies for change. It is a compelling working model and text for practice.

Endnotes

- ^a This paper is based on a content analysis of six written manuals produced by the DAIP (Pence, 1985, 1987, and 1996; Pence & Paymar, 1986, 1990, and 1993) and interviews with DAIP staff and consultants. www.duluth-model.org
- ^b The DAIP interpretation of cultural values and beliefs that accommodate battering are summarized in Pope and Ferraro (2006b).
- ^c See Pence (1987) for women's group curriculum. Pope and Ferraro (2006a) discuss the DAIP women's liberation group model on pages 3-5.
- ^d See Pope and Ferraro (2006a) for discussion of creating opportunities for survivor participation and transformative action. (pp. 5-8)

Citations

- Pence, 1987, p. 31.
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 Pence & Paymar, 1990, p. 36; 1993, p. 95.
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 Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 19.
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 Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 4.
 See Pence & Paymar, 1990, p. 187; 1993, p. 180.
 Ellen Pence Interview, 1998.
 Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 90.
- ¹⁵ Michael Paymar Interview, 1998.
- ¹⁶ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 226.
- ¹⁷ Shepard, 1991.
- ¹⁸ Pence, 1985, p. 31.
- ¹⁹ Pence, 1996, p. 37.
- ²⁰ Asmus, Ritmeester, & Pence, 1991.
- ²¹ Pence, 1987, p. 2.
- ²² Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 6.
- ²³ Pence 1996, p. 41.
- ²⁴ Pence, 1987, p. 5.
- ²⁵ Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 15.
- ²⁶ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 16.
- ²⁷ Ibid, p. 243; 1993, p. 181.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Pence, 1987, p. 27.

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¹³ Pence, 1987, p. 31

¹⁴ Ellen Pence Interview, 1998.

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Lucille Pope, Collaborative Consulting, Bozeman, MT Kathleen Ferraro, Department of Sociology, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona

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Correspondence should be addressed to: Collaborative.Consulting at yahoo.com

Appendix A: Power and Control Wheel



Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 202 East Superior, Duluth, MN. http://www.duluth-model.org/documents/PhyVio.pdf

Appendix B: Control Log

Men's Educational Groups

	Name
	Date
1. ACTIONS: Briefly describe the situation and the action you used to control (statements, gestures, tone of voice, physical contact, facial expressions)	
2. INTENT: What did you want to happen in this situation	?
3. FEELINGS: What feelings were you having?	
4. MINIMIZATION, DENIAL AND BLAME: In what wa actions or blame her?	ays did you minimize or deny your
5. EFFECTS: What was the impact of your action? Include (On You)(On Her)(On others)	de results of blaming or minimizing.
6. PAST VIOLENCE: How did your past use of violence a	affect this situation?
7. NON-CONTROLLING BEHAVIORS: What could you	ı have done differently?

Found in:

- Pence, E. & Paymar, M. (1993). <u>Education groups for men who batter: The Duluth model.</u> New York: Springer.
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Attachment C: Tactics of Control

The development of the Power and Control Wheel grew out of extensive conversations with women who had been battered. The tactics used in the Wheel were identified by survivors of battering, but can also be found in feminist domestic violence literature.

Using children.

"Any attempt to manipulate your partner's behavior through the children." Any attempt to control your partner by threatening or damaging her relationship with her children". The *Abuse of Children Wheel*, created by the DAIP, demonstrates how the same tactics used to create power and control in adult relationships interact in abusive adult-child relationships (www.duluth-model.org).

Using coercion and threats.

"Making threats and using coercion is saying or doing something to make your partner afraid that something bad will happen to her if she does not do what you want." This tactic involves "stating one's intention to do something that will cause emotional or financial damage or will humiliate or psychologically damage the victim."

Using economic abuse.

"Using economics as a form of control is making your partner dependent on you for money or resources." 5,c

<u>Using emotional abuse.</u>

Emotional abuse includes "actions, statements, or gestures that are attacks on a woman's self-esteem and sense of self-worth, as well as acts intended to humiliate a partner." Emotional abuse and psychological abuse serve as broad generic categories for a variety of non-physical behaviors. While often co-existing with other forms of abusive behaviors, emotional abuse can exist independent of physical violence and may continue to serve as an effort to control her even after the physical violence or relationship ends.

Using intimidation.

"Intimidation is the use of actions, words, and looks that are meant to frighten, scare, or bully your partner. (Past use of physical violence increases the impact of intimidation on her)."^{7,e}

Using isolation.

"Isolation is not a behavior, but the result of many kinds of abusive behaviors. Isolating your partner involves any attempt to control whom she sees, what she does, what she wants for herself, what she thinks or what she feels." 8,f

Using male privilege.

"Male privilege is a belief system that contends that men are entitled to certain privileges simply because they are men." As a tactic of control, male privilege "is a refusal to recognize [a] partner as an equal and as an adult. Assuming certain privileges because of being male." 10,g

Minimizing, denying, and blaming.

"Minimizing: Making light of an assault or abusive behavior. Denial: stating or indicating that what happened didn't happen. Blame: shifting responsibility for an abusive behavior onto something or someone else." Minimizing, denying, and blaming are both subtle and powerful 'mind games' that "distort the truth, twist the facts to the point of absurdity, [and] shift focus from himself to her." 12,h

Physical violence.

"Physical abuse is the use of any physical force against your partner intended to make her afraid of you or to hurt her." Physical acts of violence have been the major focus of the domestic violence field – they bound definitions, research questions, and public policy responses.

Rather than placing acts of physical violence on a continuum indicating a range of severity, the Power and Control Wheel uses physical acts of violence as a frame that bolsters all other tactics of control.

The purpose of using physical abuse in relationships is to control the thoughts, feelings and/or actions of the victim. Physical abuse is not merely an unhealthy way of dealing with anger or stress or a means of venting frustration. It is, with few exceptions, a deliberate attempt to control the victim or to use the victim.¹⁴

Whether or not physical violence is the primary method of control, the batterer purposely chooses the most effective type, level, severity, time, or place to establish power over his partner. Violent physical acts do not have to be used with any regularity or frequency to contribute to an environment of coercion and control. Threats of violence, observing violence toward others, or experiencing violence directly create fear and change behavior. The potential for physical violence is the foundation for the success of all other tactics. "Once a man has physically assaulted a woman, all his subsequent behavior carries with it that act."

Sexual violence.

"Sexual violation of the victim by coercing, manipulating or forcing her to engage in sexual activity at a time or in a way she does not desire or to attack her sexual integrity by sexualizing verbal or emotional attacks on her." ^{16,j}

Other.

The original batterers' educational curriculum of 1986 includes three additional tactics not represented on the Power and Control Wheel: Withholding thoughts and feelings; winning, losing, and being right; expecting another to suppress their anger. 19

Endnotes

^a See also Adams, 1988; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis, 1993; Ganley & Schechter, 1996; Hoffman, 1984; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence & Paymar, 1990, 1993.

^b See also Asmus, Ritmeester, & Pence, 1991; Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Ganley, 1981; NiCarthy, 1986; Russell, 1982.

- ^c See also Browne & Bassuk, 1997; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence & Paymar, 1990, 1993; Walker, 1979.
- ^d See also Follingstad *et al.*, 1990; Ganley, 1981; Hoffman, 1984; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence and Paymar, 1990, 1993; Shepard & Campbell, 1992; Tolman, 1989; Walker, 1979.
- ^e See also Adams, 1988; Dobash et al., 1993; Ganley, 1981; NiCarthy, 1986.
- f See also Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Graham, Rawlings, & Rimini, 1988; Martin, 1976; Moore, 1979; NiCarthy, 1986; Okun, 1986; Pence & Paymar, 1986; Russell, 1982; Walker, 1979.
- ^g See also Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 1998; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Martin, 1979; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence & Paymar, 1990, 1993; Ptacek, 1988; Schechter, 1982; Walker, 1979.
- h See also Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Dobash *et al.*, 1993; Ferraro, 1979; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence, 1996; Pence & Paymar, 1986; Ptacek, 1988; Schechter, 1982; Tolman & Saunders, 1988.
- ¹ See Pence, 1985; Shepard, 1991.
- ^j See also Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Fortune, 1983; Frieze, 1983; Hoffman, 1984; Kelly, 1988; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence & Paymar, 1990, 1993; Russell, 1990; Walker, 1979.

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- ² Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 151.
- ³ Pence & Paymar, 1990, p. 142; 1993, p. 158.
- ⁴ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 120.
- ⁵ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 191. See also 1993, p. 152.
- ⁶ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 134.
- ⁷ Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 107. See also Pence & Paymar, 1990, p. 56.
- ⁸ Pence & Paymar, 1990, p. 80; 1993, p. 116.
- ⁹ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 144.
- ¹⁰ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 148.

- ¹¹ Pence & Paymar, 1990, p. 80. See also 1993, p. 126.
- ¹² Pence, 1987, p. 85.
- ¹³ Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 98. See also 1990, p. 44.
- ¹⁴ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 16; 1990, p. 17.
- ¹⁵ Pence & Paymar, 1990, p. 48.
- ¹⁶ Asmus, Ritmeester, & Pence, 1991, p. 159.
- ¹⁷ Pence & Paymar, 1986, p. 209.
- ¹⁸ Ibid, p. 181.
- ¹⁹ Ibid, p. 197; 1993, p. 62.

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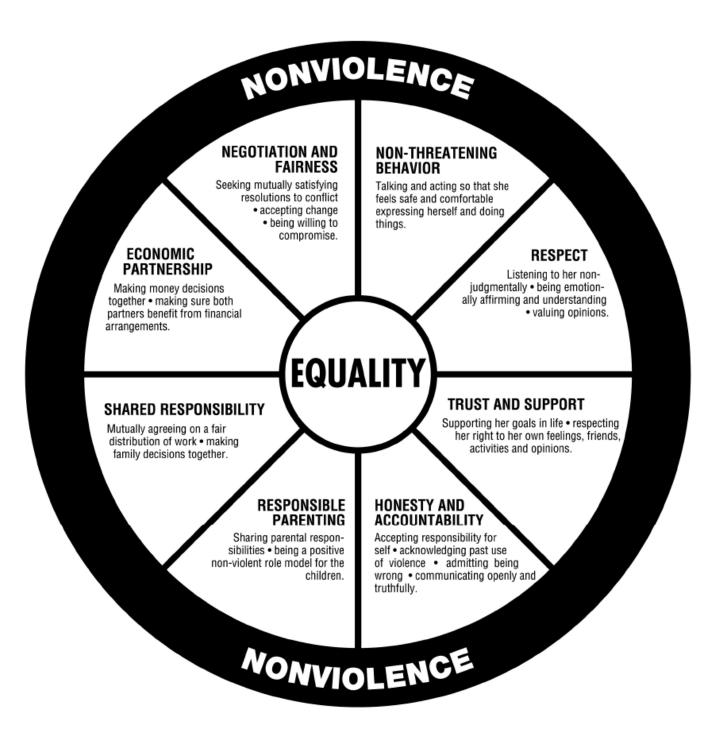
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Attachment D: Equality Wheel



Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 202 East Superior, Duluth, MN. http://www.duluth-model.org/documents/NonVio.pdf