

Defining Violence and Abuse

Violence and other forms of abuse are most commonly understood as a pattern of behaviour intended to establish and maintain control over family, household members, intimate partners, colleagues, individuals or groups. While violent offenders are most often known to their victims (intimate or estranged partners and spouses, family members, relatives, peers, colleagues, etc.), acts of violence and abuse may also be committed by strangers.

Violence and abuse may occur only once, can involve various tactics of subtle manipulation or may occur frequently while escalating over a period of months or years. In any form, violence and abuse profoundly affect individual health and well-being. The roots of all forms of violence are founded in the many types of inequality which continue to exist and grow in society.

Violence and abuse are used to establish and maintain power and control over another person, and often reflect an imbalance of power between the victim and the abuser.

Violence is a choice, and it is preventable.

There are nine distinct forms of violence and abuse:

- 1. **Physical violence:**
- 2. **Sexual violence:**
- 3. **Emotional violence:**
- 4. **Psychological violence:**
- 5. **Spiritual violence:**
- 6. **Cultural violence:**
- 7. **Verbal Abuse:**
- 8. **Financial Abuse: and,**
- 9. **Neglect**

Nine Types of Violence and Abuse		
Physical Violence Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions.	Sexual Violence Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity.	Emotional Violence Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless.
Psychological Violence Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control.	Spiritual Violence Spiritual (or religious) violence occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person.	Cultural Violence Cultural violence occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition.
Verbal Abuse	Financial Abuse	

Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual.	Financial abuse occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources.	Neglect Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not.
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1. Physical Violence

Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions.

Physical violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Using physical force which results in pain, discomfort or injury;
- Hitting, pinching, hair-pulling, arm-twisting, strangling, burning, stabbing, punching, pushing, slapping, beating, shoving, kicking, choking, biting, force-feeding, or any other rough treatment;
- Assault with a weapon or other object;
- Threats with a weapon or object;
- Deliberate exposure to severe weather or inappropriate room temperatures; and,
- Murder.

Medication abuse

- Inappropriate use of medication, including:
 - withholding medication;
 - Not complying with prescription instructions; and,
 - Over- or under-medication.

Restraints abuse

- Forcible confinement;
- Excessive, unwarranted or unnecessary use of physical restraints;
- Forcing a person to remain in bed;
- Unwarranted use of medication to control a person (also called "chemical restraint"); and,
- Tying the person to a bed or chair.

2. Sexual Violence

Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity.

Sexual violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Touching in a sexual manner without consent (i.e., kissing, grabbing, fondling);
- Forced sexual intercourse;
- Forcing a person to perform sexual acts that may be degrading or painful;
- Beating sexual parts of the body;
- Forcing a person to view pornographic material; forcing participation in pornographic filming;
- Using a weapon to force compliance;
- Exhibitionism;
- Making unwelcome sexual comments or jokes; leering behaviour;
- Withholding sexual affection;
- Denial of a person's sexuality or privacy (watching);
- Denial of sexual information and education;
- Humiliating, criticizing or trying to control a person's sexuality;
- Forced prostitution;

- Unfounded allegations of promiscuity and/or infidelity; and,
- Purposefully exposing the person to HIV-AIDS or other sexually transmitted infections.

3. Emotional Violence

Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless.

Emotional violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Name calling;
- Blaming all relationship problems on the person;
- Using silent treatment;
- Not allowing the person to have contact with family and friends;
- Destroying possessions;
- Jealousy;
- Humiliating or making fun of the person;
- Intimidating the person; causing fear to gain control;
- Threatening to hurt oneself if the person does not cooperate;
- Threatening to abandon the person; and,
- Threatening to have the person deported (if they are an immigrant).

4. Psychological Violence

Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in a person to gain control.

Psychological violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Threatening to harm the person or her or his family if she or he leaves;
- Threatening to harm oneself;
- Threats of violence;
- Threats of abandonment;
- Stalking / criminal harassment;
- Destruction of personal property;
- Verbal aggression;
- Socially isolating the person;
- Not allowing access to a telephone;
- Not allowing a competent person to make decisions;
- Inappropriately controlling the person's activities;
- Treating a person like a child or a servant;
- Withholding companionship or affection;
- Use of undue pressure to:
 - Sign legal documents;
 - Not seek legal assistance or advice;
 - Move out of the home;
 - Make or change a legal will or beneficiary;
 - Make or change an advance health care directive;
 - Give money or other possessions to relatives or other caregivers; and,
 - Do things the person doesn't want to do.

5. Spiritual Violence

Spiritual (or religious) violence occurs when someone uses a person's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control the person.

Spiritual violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Not allowing the person to follow her or his preferred spiritual or religious tradition;
- Forcing a spiritual or religious path or practice on another person;
- Belittling or making fun of a person's spiritual or religious tradition, beliefs or practices; and,
- Using one's spiritual or religious position, rituals or practices to manipulate, dominate or control a person.

6. Cultural Violence

Cultural violence occurs when a person is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition.

Cultural violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Committing "honour" or other crimes against women in some parts of the world, where women especially may be physically harmed, shunned, maimed or killed for:
- Falling in love with the "wrong" person;
- Seeking divorce;
- Infidelity; committing adultery;
- Being raped;
- Practicing witchcraft; and,
- Being older.
- Cultural violence may take place in some of the following ways:
- Lynching or stoning;
- Banishment;
- Abandonment of an older person at hospital by family;
- Female circumcision;
- Rape-marriage;
- Sexual slavery; and,
- Murder

7. Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to a person.

Verbal abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Recalling a person's past mistakes;
- Expressing negative expectations;
- Expressing distrust;
- Threatening violence against a person or her or his family members;
- Yelling;
- Lying;
- Name-calling;
- Insulting, swearing;
- Withholding important information;
- Unreasonably ordering around;
- Talking unkindly about death to a person; and,
- Telling a person she or he is worthless or nothing but trouble.

8. Financial Abuse

Financial abuse occurs when someone controls a person's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources.

Financial abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Not allowing the person to participate in educational programs;

- Forcing the person to work outside the home;
- Refusing to let the person work outside the home or attend school;
- Controlling the person's choice of occupation;
- Illegally or improperly using a person's money, assets or property;
- Acts of fraud; pulling off a scam against a person;
- Taking funds from the person without permission for one's own use;
- Misusing funds through lies, trickery, controlling or withholding money;
- Not allowing access to bank accounts, savings, or other income;
- Giving an allowance and then requiring justification for all money spent;
- Persuading the person to buy a product or give away money;
- Selling the house, furnishings or other possessions without permission;
- Forging a signature on pension cheques or legal documents;
- Misusing a power of attorney, an enduring power of attorney or legal guardianship;
- Not paying bills;
- Opening mail without permission;
- Living in a person's home without paying fairly for expenses; and,
- Destroying personal property.

9. Neglect

Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for you but does not.

Neglect includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Failing to meet the needs of a person who is unable to meet those needs alone;
- Abandonment in a public setting; and,
- Not remaining with a person who needs help.

Physical neglect

- Disregarding necessities of daily living, including failing to provide adequate or necessary:
 - Nutrition or fluids;
 - Shelter;
 - Clean clothes and linens;
 - Social companionship; and,
 - Failing to turn a bed-ridden person frequently to prevent stiffness and bed-sores.

Medical neglect

- Ignoring special dietary requirements;
- Not providing needed medications;
- Not calling a physician; not reporting or taking action on a medical condition, injury or problem; and,
- Not being aware of the possible negative effects of medications.

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