

Power and Control Wheel

Intimate Partner Violence

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The power and control wheel is a tool to be used with people who have experienced some type of domestic violence. The power and control wheel helps show the person the different tactics that the offender may use to gain power and control in the relationship. I chose to do my reaction paper on this since this wheel is what helped me realize I was a victim to this kind of violence in my previous relationship. As a victim myself, I thought I was not being abused because my partner was not physical hurting me. The wheel explains different aspects of abuse from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.

The wheel has broken the violence into 8 different categories. By separating the violence into different factors, it allows for the victim to identify with one or more of the factors. The first factor is using intimidation. According to the power and control wheel, using intimidation includes making the partner afraid by using looks, actions, gestures. This can include smashing things, destroying property, abusing pets, or displaying weapons. Next is using emotional abuse. This is explained as putting the partner down, making them feel bad about themselves, calling them bad names, making the partner think that she is crazy, playing mind games, humiliating them, or making the partner feel guilty. Using isolation is the third factor to the wheel. Using isolation includes controlling what the other person does, who they see or talk to, where they go, not letting the other person go outside. In this factor the offender using jealousy to justify actions. The next factor is minimizing, denying, and blaming. This involves making light of the abuse and not taking the concerns of the other partner seriously. Examples for this is saying the abuse never happened, shifting responsibility for abusive behavior, or blaming the other partner for the cause of the abuse. The next factor is using children in the abuse. This is where the offender uses the children to make the partner feel guilty, using the children to relay information and threatening to take the children away from the other partner. The next factor is described as

“using male privilege.” This definition has changed over the years because its not only just males as offenders anymore. This includes treating the partner like a servant or being the one to define the roles in the relationship, without the person agreeing. The next factor is using economic abuse. This is when the offender does not allow the other partner to keep a job, controls all the financial, keeps the money from the other person, makes the other person ask for money. The last factor is using coercion and threats as abuse. This is when the offender uses threats to the other person to scare them, whether they carry it out or not. This can be threatening to leave, threatening to commit suicide if the other person leaves, threatening to report the person to welfare, or making the other partner do illegal things for them.

The wheel is used as the number one batterers intervention for domestic violence victims. My understanding of the power and control wheel is it is an attempt to bring a victim back from denial and minimization of the abuse they have experienced. With the eight different factors of the wheel it allows the non-offender to identify with more types of abuse. By identifying the types of abuse, the fog of denial may be lifted, and the non-offender can seek better help.