

Tactics of Power and Control used by Men against Intimate Female Partners

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www.speakoutloud.net

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SpeakOutLoud about psychological abuse

See the power and control, free your mind, open your heart, live fully

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The aim of the website ***SpeakOutLoud about psychological abuse*** is to provide information and awareness and to promote action against non-physical forms of power and control

The tactics of power and control

The tactics – used by those men who abuse and control their female partner – as set out in this document are numbered and categorised to reflect the power and control wheel Clare Murphy devised in response to her Masters research with women who experienced psychological abuse and control, but did not experience physical violence. Clare's thesis is titled *Women Coping with Psychological Abuse: Surviving in the secret world of male partner power and control*.

This list of tactics reflects the experiences of women who live in western societies.

Clare is continually updating this list of tactics to reflect information received from victims and perpetrators via face-to-face conversations, interviews and research, and from research reported by many others. This version is dated 28 January 2009.

The purpose of providing this list of tactics, used by some men, is to help make sense of women's experience.

This list is for: human service and legal professionals, those who teach about the topic, family, friends and colleagues wishing to support women, those who wish to challenge men who perpetrate these tactics, and the women themselves.

May this list be used for the wellbeing of all concerned.

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1	One-sided power games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He determines how, when and what gets communicated • If one tactic does not work, he changes to a new tactic • What matters to him is not what he does, but what he gains • She is not allowed to contradict him • He makes the rules and all the big decisions • Monopolises her time and energy • His wants are most important • He does most of the receiving • He has his own way at her expense • He claims to be always right • He has the last word
2	Mind games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says that if she loved him she'd do what he wants • Brainwashing - guilt trips, confusion, crazymaking • Blocks her from clarifying mixed messages • If she withdraws he punishes her, if she reaches out he rejects her • Charming in public and abusive in private • His actions don't match his words • Questions all her judgments • Manipulates with lies
3	Inappropriate restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuses to let her work • Makes her late for appointments • Acts as if she can do what she wants, then becomes upset when she does • He expects her to ask permission • Discourages her from her own interests • Intrudes and interrupts her activities • Deprives her of privacy • Monitors her whereabouts • Demands she account for her time • Prevents her spiritual practices
4	Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourages her from seeing family and friends • Moves from town to town • Calls her names if she spends time with friends • Tells her that her friends or family don't care about her • Rude to visitors, refuses to go to joint social events • Requires relationship issues be kept secret • Tells her that she cares more for her friends and family than for him • Tells her he's the only one who understands and loves her • He attempts to divide and conquer by provoking jealousies and rivalries • Controls incoming information such as what she reads • Leaves a small amount of petrol in the tank, or takes her car keys • Says what she does makes him jealous so insists she not do it
5	Over-protection and 'caring'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He frequently phones or unexpectedly goes to her work to check up on her • Tells her she never has to work because he wants to take care of her • Tries to keep her at home by saying he worries when she's away • Takes her to and from work so the co-workers will not get 'ideas' • When she is out, he is extremely jealous • Harasses her about imagined affairs • Begs her not to go out alone or she might get raped

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6	Emotional unkindness & violation of trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He withholds care, respect, approval, affection and support • Acts like she doesn't matter • Ignores her when they begin a conversation • He promises to help and then 'forgets' or helps with conditions attached • Complains about or dismisses her if she's upset or asks for emotional support • He lacks empathy • Threatens to abandon her if he doesn't get his way • Exploits her intimate disclosures and uses them as ammunition • Acts cruelly, then says she is too sensitive and cannot take a joke • Ignores her need for assistance when she's tired, overworked
7	Degradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criticises her strengths and achievements • Puts her down, calls her names, uses abusive language • Corrects things she says or does • Deprives her of sleep, food and health care • Humiliates and embarrasses her in public
8	Separation abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stalking campaigns: driving by her house, leaving notes on car windshield, taking photos without consent, warning her that bad things might happen, performing favours without her permission, leaving unwanted gifts and making unwanted phone calls • Visitation of children is accompanied by harassment • Endless legal hearings aimed at diminishing her financial and emotional resources • 'Custody blackmail' • Negotiation for custody and property occurs in a climate of fear including blackmail
9	Using social institutions & social prejudices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatens to tell social services that she is an unfit parent • Uses battles for child custody to get at partner • Tries to convince her she needs a psychiatrist • Uses social prejudices to reinforce his power. Tells her she deserves abuse because she's just a woman (gender); she's just a Maori/Black/Indian/Aborigine/Hispanic (race); she wasn't born here (immigrants); she's just a kid (age); she doesn't have a real job (volunteers/housework); she's only a mother (non-breadwinner); she'd be nowhere without him (wealth); she can't even walk out the door (disabled); she's a fat slob (body image), she's dumb (education); • Uses religion as a threat. Tells her she has to obey him because the Bible says so. Says God does not allow divorce. • Misinterprets her culture to prove male superiority and entitlement. • Uses stopping abuse programmes as a tactic: by telling her how lucky she is coz his actions are nothing compared with other men's; misinterprets the training and tells her that her behaviours are psychologically abusive; learns how to use a wider range of tactics • Drawn-out, frequent court battles

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10	Denial, minimising, blaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimises – says abuse was not that bad• Tells her their relationship is the best she can hope for• Uses rationality and reasoning such as reminding her of times he was right and she was wrong• Denies responsibility for his behaviours• Blames her. Twists things around so that it appears she is responsible• Blames the abuse on his stress, drugs, alcohol, etc.• When she gives him feedback about his behaviours he picks her personality apart• Warns her that if she leaves, he will commit suicide and she will be responsible• Obstructs change
11	Using the children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Punishes or deprives the children when he is angry with her• Makes her feel guilty about the children• He says he wouldn't lose his temper if she kept the children quieter• Threatens to kidnap the children if she leaves him• Once separated he uses the children to relay messages to her and harasses her during visitation• Tells her she's a bad parent/person• Changes or cancels visits to get at her
12	Economic abuse	<p><i>He controls the money . . .</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevents her from getting a job• Denies her access to bank accounts, makes her ask permission to have, or spend money, monitors how much and what she spends money on, or takes the money away• Gives her everything she wants, but constantly reminds her she couldn't have such a lifestyle without him• Excludes her from important financial decisions, refuses access to information about their financial situation <p><i>He puts her in charge of the money . . .</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes her responsible for running the accounts, then demands she give him money for anything he wants, when he wants, over and above the budget• Blames her if there is not enough money• Inappropriately uses family funds, forces her to bail him out of self-inflicted financial difficulties• Refuses to work creating extreme financial hardship• Takes money out of her wallet or steals her possessions and sells them

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13	Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expects/demands sex when she doesn't desire it • Pressures her to have sex when she's sick or it endangers her health • Insists on unwanted and uncomfortable touching • Begs her to strip when she doesn't want to • Insists she dress in a more sexual way than she wants • Manipulates her into having sex in return for a gift or a back rub • Will not do what excites her sexually, minimises the importance of her feelings about sex and withholds affection • Makes sexual jokes about her in front of the children and other people • Makes fun of her body • Compares her unfavourably to pornographic images and to previous lovers • Humiliates and criticises her sexuality, calls her frigid, a whore or gigolo • Has affairs with other people after agreeing to a monogamous relationship • Tries to seduce her friends and family • Makes demeaning remarks about women and tells anti-women jokes • Makes her perform degrading sexual acts in public • Forces her to have sex with others while he watches • Psychologically coerced rape
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14	Symbolic aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He keeps a weapon on view or within reach • Direct or indirect verbal threats to hurt/murder her or her family • Blocks door so she can't leave, or he refuses to leave • Drives recklessly with her in the car • Uses looks and actions to make her afraid (these work easily due to ongoing power and control tactics which seem innocent to an outsider) • Uses the threat that he'll abuse her again as blackmail making her drop legal charges • He damages property • He abuses pets • Throws something, but not her
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15	Domestic slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is obliged to carry out her responsibilities, he is not obliged to carry out his • Treats her like a servant by overburdening her with responsibility • Refuses to take responsibility for finances, household duties and for own children • Acts like the 'King of the castle' • Enforces rigid gender role expectations
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16	Physical violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slap, Punch, Push, Pinch, Kick, Pull Hair, Bite, Drag along the floor/ground, Strangle, Murder
