

Types of Violence

Myth—battery is about couples getting into a brawl on Saturday night, beating each other up and totally disrupting the neighborhood.

Fact—in domestic violence, one partner is beating, intimidating, and terrorizing the other. It is not mutual combat. It is one person dominating and controlling the other.

Violent behavior may progress; although, the type of violence inflicted on the victim may never change from one type to the other. Despite varying circumstances, one fact about domestic violence remains constant: **without intervention, the violent behavior targeted and focuses toward the victim will escalate.** Remember, violence is a choice made by the perpetrator to control their partner, and is never the fault of the victim.

It is useful for victims, perpetrators and witnesses of domestic violence to be aware of the types of violence used: psychological, physical, sexual, and social/environmental. Though they have varying consequences, each form of abuse stems from the desire to dominate the partner or other household members.

Emotional

- Joking and insults
- Ignoring or minimizing feelings
- Withholding approval and emotional support as punishment
- Yelling and name-calling
- Repeated insults, degrading
- Targeting insults or labeling
- Belittling and private humiliation
- Public humiliation
- Blaming and accusing
- Demanding all attention
- Resenting children or marriage
- Threatening against children or marriage
- Degrading role as mate, lover or partner
- Aggressiveness shifting to kindness to gain control
- Lack of cause and effect

Physical

- Refusal to meet physical needs of dependents
- Pushing, shoving
- Choking, beating, jerking, slapping, biting, pinching, shaking, bruising, hitting, punching, kicking
- Withholding sex and affection
- Targeted hitting
- Repeated hitting
- Spitting

- Using objects as weapons
- Throwing victim
- Restraining while hitting or punching
- Abusing during pregnancy
- Sleep deprivation
- Inflicting lacerations, broken bones, internal injuries
- Using weapons
- Disabling or disfiguring
- Murder

Sexual

- Sexual jokes or demeaning gender remarks
- Jealously, assuming partner is sexual with others
- Unwanted touching
- Criticism of sexuality
- Name calling with sexual epithets
- Forcing partner to look at/engage in pornography
- Demanding monogamy from victim despite promiscuous behavior by perpetrator
- Coercion/demanding sex (use of threats)]
- Forceful sex (rape)
- Coercive/demanding sex after pregnancy or surgery
- Rape resulting in permanent injury
- Rape with imprisonment
- Rape with murder

Social/Environmental

- Using gender “myths” and roles
- Degrading culture, religion, nationality, profession, or gender
- Destroying or damaging victim’s property
- Demonstrations of strength
- Controlling major decisions
- Forced economic dependence by controlling money/finances
- Denying partner’s access to work/getting partner fired
- Threatening to hurt partner’s extended family
- Eliminating support system
- Alienating partner’s family and friends
- Telling partner they are always in control
- Complete isolation
- Child abuse or incest
- Destroying or maiming family pet
- Depriving partner of food, sleep, medicine
- Convincing partner that partner is hysterical, paranoid, psychotic, mentally ill, suicidal/homicidal
- Threatens suicide

- Threats of reporting immigrant status/deportation

If you or someone you know has experienced an unhealthy relationship, contact:

PLU Voices Against Violence Program

A project of the Women's Center

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Adapted from material provided by the YWCA of Pierce County