

Behavioral Tactics Used by Perpetrators

Perpetrators come from many different backgrounds and have different life experiences, but the tactics they use to control their partners are very similar. The following are tactics that many perpetrators use:

Jealousy

- Equates jealousy with love
- Questions partner about people spoken to or associating with
- Accuses partner of flirting, having affairs
- Becomes jealous of time partner spends with others, including family

Controlling Behavior

- Attributes controlling behavior to concern for the partner
- May assume all control of finances
- Inhibits partner from making decisions or coming and going at will

Lying

- Alters or withholds the truth

Quick Involvement

- Pressures partner to make a quick commitment to a relationship
- Pressures a partner to live together, be engaged, or get married very quickly after meeting

Unrealistic Expectations

- Expects partner to meet all of perpetrator's needs, to take care of everything, both emotionally and domestically.

Isolation

- Isolates partner by severing outside ties, support and resources
- Accuse others, such as partner's family and friends, of being "trouble-makers"
- Blocks partner's access to use of vehicles, work or telephone service in home
- Blames Others for Problems
- Blames others for own shortcomings
- Blames partner for anything that goes wrong

Blames Others for Feelings

- May use feelings to manipulate a partner
- May say, "You're hurting me by not doing as a want." Or "You control how I feel."

Use of Children

- May expect children to perform beyond their capability
- May punish child for not performing up to perpetrator's expectations

Cruelty to Animals

- May kick, throw, or hurt pets or neighborhood animals

“Playful” Use of Force in Sex

- Restrains partner against his or her will during sexual activity
- Acts out fantasies in which the partner is helpless
- Forces sex when the partner is asleep, ill or tired.
- May show little concern for partner’s desire to be touched
- May use sulking or anger to manipulate sexual compliance

Verbal Abuse

- May say things that are intended to be cruel and hurtful
- Curses at or degrades partner
- Puts down partner’s accomplishments

Rigid Gender Roles

- Expects partner to serve perpetrators needs
- Views partner’s gender as inferior or subordinated, responsible for menial tasks and/or unable to be a whole person without a partner

Attitude/Consciousness Shifts

- Abusive behavior and moodiness that shifts quickly to congeniality in order to regain control

Past Abuse

- Abusive to previous partners

Threats of Violence

- Threatens to use physical force in order to control the partner
- May try to make excuses for threats of violence
- Threatens to harm partner if partner leaves
- Uses history of abuse to intimidate partner

Breaking or Striking Objects

- May break household items, punch holes in walls and/or kick doors in to frighten the partner
- May destroy and/or discard partner’s belongings

Use of Force During an Argument

- May hold down the partner
- May physically restrain partner to prevent the person from leaving
- Pushes or shoves

If you or someone you know has experienced an unhealthy relationship, contact:
PLU Voices Against Violence Program
A project of the Women's Center
Jennifer Warwick, Victim Advocate
(253) 538-6303
www.plu.edu/~voices



Adapted from material provided by the YWCA of Pierce County