



Understanding Power & Control Tactics

Consider the following definition of abuse: **“Abuse is any attempt to gain power or control over another person using physical, emotional, sexual or financial tactics.”** The ‘Wheel’ you see on this page shows that Power and Control are at the center of an abusive relationship. In other words, abuse is when there is a pattern of one person trying to gain power and control over the other. One of the most obvious or blatant ways to control another person is by using violence – such as hitting a person, holding someone down or sexually assaulting someone. However there are other ways of controlling a person that do not include physical violence and are not so easy to spot. Instead of using physical or sexual violence, many abusers may use verbal, emotional, psychological or financial tactics to control the other person. Some examples of these forms of abuse are shown in between the ‘spokes’ of the wheel. They are more subtle so often people do not recognize them as abuse. But they are abuse, and they often lead to physical violence.

