

COERCIVE CONTROL

SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE AND EVALUATION GRID



Refuge

pour les femmes de l'Ouest de l'île

West Island Women's

Shelter

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THE NOTION OF COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercive control is a concept that was introduced by the American professor Evan Stark¹, who proposed a shift away from a definition of conjugal violence that is based solely on acts of violence. Although considerable efforts have been made in recent years to recognize different forms of violence other than physical violence (ex.: physical or economic violence), conjugal violence is still understood in terms of acts of violence committed by an individual, of which the seriousness is measured according to the physical and psychological harm suffered². The concept of coercive control proposes instead a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics that allow abusers to establish and maintain control over their families, including their spouses or ex-spouses and children. It also provides a means to better assess situations of conjugal violence and the risks it poses to the safety of women and children.

Professor Simon Lapierre of the University of Ottawa explains³ that coercive control consists of acts of violence, but that we should also consider the various tactics used by abusers to control their spouses, ex-spouses and children as they can deprive them of their freedom and strip them of their self-esteem. These strategies may include isolation, manipulation, denigration, criticism and constant surveillance. When considered independently, these tactics do not constitute acts of violence or criminal acts, but the accumulation of these tactics nevertheless allows aggressors to gradually increase their control over their immediate family members. Over time, women may come to feel completely under the control of the abuser, to the point where the abuser no longer feels the need to use acts of violence to establish his authority. Children, who are all the more vulnerable given their age, are equally if not more impacted by coercive control. A glance, a gesture or a word may sometimes be enough for the aggressor to

reaffirm his power over the victim(s).

Shelters and women's rights groups have been working with this vision of conjugal violence for years, but unfortunately this is not a concept that is shared by other relevant stakeholders, such as members of the judicial system. In our experience, the cycle of violence always occurs as part of a power dynamic where one partner uses various strategies to maintain control over the other, thus having an impact on the entire family. Evan Starks, was the first to use this term in court and stressed the importance of identifying and naming coercive control in order to focus attention on behaviours, dynamics and consequences, that until now have remained invisible⁴.

At the end of 2015, England became the first nation to legislate the term coercive control, highlighting on a new category of acts that may be criminalized promoting an overhaul of the justice system and other resources for victims. Similarly, on April 1, 2019 Scotland passed legislation to introduce coercive control as a new crime under the Criminal Code.

In England, during the early months after the introduction of coercive control as a crime, few charges were laid. There was a short term focus on raising awareness among police officers and others in the judicial system to ensure that they have the necessary skills and resources to adequately assess situations of conjugal violence, taking into account the complex dynamics of coercive control and not just acts of violence or criminal acts already known to them. In Quebec, such awareness could ensure greater protection for women and children who are victims. In the longer term, it would be desirable to review our legislative system in order to recognize the criminal nature of coercive control.

¹Stark, E. (2007). *Coercive Control : How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*, New York, Oxford University Press.

²Stark, E. (2014). Une re-présentation des femmes battues: contrôle coercitif et défense de la liberté in *Violence envers les femmes : Réalités complexes et nouveaux enjeux dans un monde en transformation*, Maryse Rinfret-Raynor and cie, Québec, Presses de l'Université du Québec, p. 33.

³Allocation during the Colloque international Contrôle coercitif : Améliorer les réponses à la violence conjugale organized by FemAnvi at Ottawa University on April 17th and 18th 2019.

⁴See note 8, p.48

A. COERCIVE CONTROL IN BRIEF

Coercive control consists of two strategies. The first is coercion and it involves the use of force or threats in order to coerce or prevent a particular reaction in a person⁵. Acts in this category include violence, intimidation, threats, denigration, harassment and humiliation. These acts of violence are distinguished by their frequency and duration, not their severity.

The second tactic is control, which is “intended to indirectly coerce obedience by depriving victims from having access to essential resources and support networks”. This is accomplished by dictating their choices, by imposing particular behaviours through rules and by exploiting them⁶. In both cases, the use of coercive control serves to eliminate a woman’s fundamental rights, most notably her right to freedom, dignity and security.

B. INDICATORS OF COERCIVE CONTROL

Assessment tools designed to predict dangerousness in situations of conjugal violence take very little into account outside of physical and sexual violence. However, coercive control includes acts that are in fact criminal, for example harassment, while other acts named above cannot be subject to any sort of intervention from the police or the judicial system. Relying on the current screening tools and the limited model of conjugal violence currently used by the judicial system limits interventions, masks the extent of conjugal violence and minimizes its consequences on victims.

For this reason we recommend the proposed indicators to assess if what appears to be a trivial incident is an isolated one rather an integral part of a more serious strategy of violence that may constitute coercive control.

⁵Ibid, p. 40.

⁶Ibid, p. 44.

HOW TO MAKE USE OF THE TOOLS WHICH ACCOMPANY THE COERCIVE CONTROL GUIDE



The West Island Women's Shelter offers tools to identify the presence of coercive control in a marital context. These tools come in two different forms: the screening questionnaire and the evaluation grid.

WHO SHOULD USE THESE TOOLS?

The first tool, the screening questionnaire, is three pages long and summarizes the different strategies used by a partner to dominate, control and curtail the victim's freedom. This initial, more concise list is a quick tool for professionals who may have victims of conjugal violence in their clientele and are not necessarily themselves well versed on the topic. These professionals include lawyers and mediators, police officers, psychologists, social workers from various fields, including youth protection, CLSCs and hospitals etc. The use of this tool will facilitate the collection of information that will help them identify the dynamics of conjugal violence, and possibly differentiate it from other forms of discord, such as severe separation conflict.

While the screening questionnaire enables a professional to identify a situation of violence, the evaluation grid can help a counsellor with the relevant experience and knowledge to intervene in a deeper way. We are particularly thinking of the CAVAC professionals who may do this type of intervention and whose work could be facilitated by this grid. This more exhaustive list, consisting of eight pages, encourages a penetrating into the strategies and behaviour patterns used by a partner to control most aspects of a victim's life. It addresses both coercion and different types of control. This second tool tends to be preferred by counsellors working in shelters, second stage homes, and outpatient services, as it examines very specific actions in greater detail. Filling in this grid requires more time, but it allows for a more in-depth look at the woman's experience. Of course, the use of this tool is not exclusive to conjugal violence specialists.



WHY ARE THE TOOLS USEFUL?

The use of one of these tools allows professionals to identify behaviours that may seem “ordinary” or even “normal”, and to identify the impact of these tactics on the woman’s agency and freedom. It allows them to tease out a pattern of behaviour from the abusive man’s continuous and repeated actions on his victim and to better understand how the abuser establishes and maintains his control. The tool allows the client to take a fresh look at her relationship by identifying the “bars” of an invisible cage set up by the violent partner. Moreover, she is more likely to perceive the impact these strategies have had on her self-esteem, her autonomy, her self-confidence, her sense of self-worth and her ability to make decisions. In short, these analytical tools can help victims put into words what they have experienced and to identify things that they were not able to recognize until now.



RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to explain to the client that the list is made up of very specific examples that may or may not correspond to her experiences in all details. Thus, it is essential to highlight the “general theme” rather than the specific details. As the counsellor accompanies the woman in this process, it is important to offer her the opportunity to add details, to cross out or modify terms so that she can better recognize herself in the examples given. It is essential to remind her that there are no right or wrong answers but rather an opportunity for her to reflect on her relationship, to recognize and to name the forms of control in her life as well as to give her a chance to ventilate.

For safety reasons, when using this tool, it is strongly recommended that the grid is not presented to the man with violent behaviour to avoid giving him examples of new tactics for him to use.



SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

INDICATORS OF COERCIVE CONTROL



IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP

- Is he jealous?
- Does he scream at you?
- Does he insult you?
- Does he threaten you, your children or pets?
- Does he threaten to call the authorities on you (child protection services, immigration, social services for mental health, etc.)?
- Does he damage your belongings?
- Are you afraid of making him angry?
- Do you feel like you're walking on eggshells because you don't know what will trigger his anger?
- When he is unhappy with your behaviour, does he refuse to talk to you or ignore you for a long time?
- Does he blame you for only looking after the children and never him?
- Does he accuse you of having affairs?
- Does he drive dangerously when he is angry with you?
- Does he block your access to doors during arguments?
- Does he keep you awake during arguments?
- When you are having arguments, does he scare you by standing close to you with his fists clenched?
- Does he threaten you with objects?
- Does he physically hurt you and then asks you how you hurt yourself?
- Does he prevent you from having access to your identification papers /other important documents or those of your children?
- Does he prevent you from getting treatment at the clinic or hospital?

IN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

- If he texts you or calls you and you don't answer him, are you afraid of his reaction or what he will say or do?
- Does he call frequently while you are at work?
- If you are out, does he constantly keep contact with you and give you the impression that you need to answer immediately?
- Does he control your social media?
- Do all new activities on your social media trigger lots of questions?
- Does he insist on having passwords for your social media accounts?
- Is he pretending to be you on social media?
- Does he log into your account and interact for you on social media?

IN YOUR RESPECTIVE TASKS

- If the household chores are not done, are you afraid of his reaction or what he will say or do?
- Are the expectations in terms of managing the household are such that you never have time to do anything else?
- Are the expectations in terms of managing the household are so unrealistic that you have a hard time dealing with your job or caring for the children?
- Does he want you to stop working or stop going to school?
- Does he do all the shopping to keep you from having to go out?
- Did you lose your job or have you had your school/academic year affected because of him?

REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF FINANCES

- Does he force you to deposit your salary into his account or into the joint account?
- Does he refuse that you have your own account, or does he demand access to your personal account himself?
- Does he request that family allowances be deposited in his account or in the joint account?
- Do you have to account for the money you spend?
- Does he get angry if you spend more than the budget?
- Does he prevent you from having access to money to spend on yourself?
- Does he prevent you from having access to money to spend on the children?
- Does he get angry when the money he can spend on himself is limited?
- Can you get information on your financial situation or does he seem to keep it a secret from you?
- Does he tell you that you don't have to worry about money because he manages everything?
- Do you have to ask him for money every time you go shopping for the family?
- Have you had to borrow money from your loved ones for your needs or those of your spouse?
- Is he asking you to borrow money on your behalf from the bank?
- Is he stealing money from you or selling property that belongs to you?
- Does he prevent you from having access to your identification papers / other important documents or those of your children?
- Does he keep in his possession your identification papers/other important documents or those of your children?

REGARDING YOUR WHEREABOUTS

- Are you afraid of his reaction when you're late?
- Does he react strongly when you take longer than he anticipated?
- Does he limit the how long you go out for?
- Does he limit the number of times that you go out?
- Does he limit your right to go out?
- Does he make you feel guilty when you go out without him?
- Does he make you feel guilty when you go out without the children?
- Does he tell you he doesn't like you going out without him because he's worried?
- Does he accompany you on all your outings?
- Will he drop you off and pick you up, for example at work, to prevent your colleagues from "having ideas"?
- Does he make you take the kids on all your outings?
- Does he often come to your work to see if everything is going well?
- Does he ask you to activate your GPS when you're out without him?
- Does he track you through your phone or GPS?
- When you get back, does he ask you about everything that happened?

IN TERMS OF YOUR APPEARANCE

- Does he choose your clothes because he wants you to be perfect?
- Does he make you change your clothes because he finds them too provocative?
- Does he force you to wear sexy clothes or something that you feel uncomfortable about?
- Does he demand impossible beauty standards from you or compare you to other women?

IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE AROUND YOU

- Have you lost contact with your family and friends because of your relationship with him?
- Does he make you feel guilty when you see your relatives without him?
- Does he talk to your loved ones for you?
- Does he frequently call your relatives, bosses or colleagues to ask them about you?
- Does he call your loved ones to check that you are indeed with them?
- Does he accuse you of being a lesbian when you spend time with your friends?
- Does he accuse you of flirting with any man around you?
- Does he ask your children to report back to him about who you were with or who you saw?
- Does he try to flirt with the women in your life?

IN SEXUAL RELATIONS

- Does he insist on sexual acts that make you uncomfortable?
- Does he make sexual jokes that diminish you in front of your children or other people?
- Does he insult you or criticize you with regards to your appearance or your sexual performance?
- Does he insist that you send him pictures or videos that make you uncomfortable?
- Does he share intimate pictures or videos of you without your consent?
- Does he make sexual comments about you on social media?
- If you refuse to act according to his sexual desires, does he insult you, threaten you or ignore you?
- Does he insist on performing sexual acts with you in front of other people?
- Does he force you to have sex with other people?

EVALUATION GRID

COERCIVE CONTROL INDICATORS



COERCION

Coercion involves the use of force or threats to force a reaction in a person. It is something that is tangible, therefore it is easier to recognize. This is the first strategy of the coercive control that the abusive partner will establish.

PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- My partner chokes me or tries to strangle me.
- My partner isolates me and ties me up.
- My partner manhandles me, pushes me or shoves me.
- He burns me with cigarettes.
- He spits on me or spits in my face.
- My partner prevents me from getting to the door so that I can't leave during an argument.
- He kicks me.
- He forces me to have sex.
- He threatens me with weapons.
- He hurts me and prevents me from going to the hospital or the doctor.
- He prevents me from taking my shower alone, he must always take it with me.
- He forces me to have sex in front of other people.
- He forces me to have sex with other people.

SEXUAL HUMILIATION

- My partner insists on doing sexual acts with me that make me uncomfortable.
- He makes sexual jokes about me in front of the children or other people.
- He insists that I send him pictures or videos of myself that make me uncomfortable.
- If I refuse to comply with his sexual wishes, he insults me, threatens me, ignores me or makes me feel guilty.
- He harasses me on social media by making sexually degrading comments about me.
- He makes fun of my body.
- He tries to seduce my friends and family members.
- He forces me to wear clothes that he finds sexy but I feel shy doing so.
- He makes comparisons between me and women in pornographic videos.
- He says vulgar jokes that I find degrading to myself and women in general.
- He shares intimate photos or videos of me without my consent.

INTIMIDATION AND THREATS

- I'm afraid of my partner's reaction if I disobey him.
- My partner threatens to have me locked up in a psychiatric hospital.
- If the house chores aren't done, I'm afraid of his reaction.
- My partner tells me that he is going to attack my family, my friends, my children.
- He throws and smashes things around the house or hits an object close to me.
- My partner threatens to hurt himself or kill himself if I leave.
- When upset, he goes away for a few hours, days, weeks.
- He gives me the silent treatment.
- He doesn't need to say anything, a simple look or frown is all it takes for me to know he's not happy.
- When he's angry, he scares me by standing close to me with clenched fists.
- When we argue, I am afraid of what he might say, so I stop talking.
- He drives dangerously when he's mad at me and it really scares me.
- He destroys my clothes and favourite things.
- He refuses to leave when I ask him to.

THROUGH HARASSMENT

- My partner times my phone calls, how long I spend in the bathroom, the route I take to run errands, etc.
- My partner monitors my contacts with my friends and family.
- He goes through my drawers, my purse and my bank statements.
- He wants to know where I am at all times.
- He uses the geolocation of my photos, my phone or my GPS to know my comings and goings.
- He sometimes follows me or has friends follow me.
- He contacts my relatives, my boss, my colleagues to ask them for information about me.
- He contacts my relatives and colleagues to check if I am with them.

THROUGH HUMILIATION

- My partner acts in a way that embarrasses or humiliates me in public.
- He asks me to get a tattoo of his name to "mark his property".
- He forces me to get tested for sexually transmitted infections or diseases.
- My partner prevents me from using personal hygiene products such as toilet paper, kleenex, sanitary napkins and tampons.
- He prevents me from sleeping in my bed.
- To punish me, he cuts off the hot water or the electricity.
- He forbids me to use the dishwasher, the fridge, the washer and dryer.
- He controls what I eat.
- He forces me to workout to maintain a certain physical appearance.
- He gets angry when I don't follow his dietary recommendations.
- He prevents my access to the shower, the bath and the toilet.
- He prevents me from eating and I have to find ways to eat in secret.

CONTROL

Control allows the spouse to indirectly force their partner to obey through various strategies. These rules imposed by the violent partner must be respected whether he is present or not (Stark, 2014). These tactics do not constitute acts of violence or criminal acts, but allows the aggressor to gradually increase his hold. This is the second strategy of coercive control that the abusive partner will establish.

BY RESTRICTING YOUR CONTACT WITH OTHERS

- My partner prevents me from going out with my friends, colleagues and family.
- My partner doesn't stop me from going out, but he makes me feel guilty when I do.
- He made me lose contact with several of my friends.
- He refuses to let me talk to them by phone, Skype, Messenger, etc.
- He prevents me from leaving the house.
- He prevents me from travelling to visit family.
- He arrives drunk at family gatherings to embarrass me.
- My partner doesn't want me to have my own phone or vehicle.
- He refuses that I go to school or work.
- He refuses that I learn the language of my host country or refuses that my children learn my mother tongue.
- When I want to go out, my partner starts an argument with me.
- If I go out without him, he sulks by not responding to my calls and texts in an attempt to make me feel guilty.
- If I go out without him, he keeps in touch with me by calling me constantly. He gives me the impression that I absolutely must answer him.
- He tells me that I never devote enough time to him or that I never have enough energy for him, that I care more about my friends and family.
- I'm afraid of his reaction if he texts me or calls me and I don't answer him.
- Even if he doesn't say it openly, I think he wants me to ask his permission before I go anywhere,
- Any new activity concerning my social media (new friends, comments, likes, messages, etc.) leads to an interrogation from my partner. He asks me for my passwords, but keeps his secret.
- When I come back from an outing, he wants me to know everything that happened.
- He accuses me of having lovers.
- He accuses me of flirting with any man in my entourage.
- He made me late for work so often that I lost my job or stopped going to school.
- When I spend time with my friends, he accuses me of being a lesbian.
- I've had to limit my contacts with my family and friends to avoid conflict with my partner.
- He monitors the car odometer or level of gas in order to prevent me from going out or to justify my activities.
- He forced us to move to another city, far from my family and friends, my work and from any forms of transportation.
- He refuses that I have a cell phone or that I have access to a computer or internet.

THROUGH CRITICISM

- My partner gives me the impression that I always do everything wrong. Nothing is ever good enough in his eyes.
- He makes me feel like I don't support him enough and love him enough.
- He "micromanages" everything in the house: the temperature of my bath, the way I cook, clean or discipline the children.
- He never encourages me. Even his compliments are double-sided: "This is the first GOOD meal you've cooked in months."
- He insults me and calls me names like fool, whore, bitch, etc.
- When I tell him about my insecurities, he calls me a baby and tells me it's time I grow up and stand on my own two feet.
- He continually comes back on what I say or do. According to him, he is the only one that does things correctly.
- Whenever we're with my family and friends, I feel like I'm walking on eggshells because I expect to be publicly criticized at any moment.
- He treats me like a child and imposes rules that I must follow closely.

THROUGH MOTHERHOOD

- He forces me to abort a wanted pregnancy.
- He sabotages my birth control or forces me to keep an unwanted pregnancy.
- He wants to decide how the delivery will go. He wants to decide the breastfeeding, until what age is acceptable, or he imposes the bottle.
- He demands that the baby should be allowed to cry and I cannot interfere with his decision.
- He prevents me from going to see the children when they cry or when they need comfort.
- He refuses that my children see my parents or my family.
- He is never involved with the children, yet he criticizes everything that I do with them (the way I feed them, educate them, comfort them, etc.)
- If the children behave badly, are sick, or are fussy, he puts the responsibility on me and says it's my fault.
- When he gets angry, he takes the children with him and prevents me from seeing them.
- When we argue, he asks the children to witness our conversations and tells them to look at their "crazy mother".
- He accuses me of having broken or of wanting to break up the family, in front of the children.
- When I try to discipline the children, he steps in and tells them not to listen to me or he gives them permission to do the opposite of what I have disallowed.
- He manipulates the children so that they act as informers and report information from home and my actions to him.
- He accuses me of being responsible for the children's difficulties at school. He says it's because of my bad genes.
- When it comes to looking after the children, my partner does not take care of them. He either falls asleep or leaves the house, which forces me to cancel my plans.
- When the children are sick, he refuses to give them the necessary medication.
- He always says that the children are "mine", that I am responsible for them and he refuses to get involved or pay anything for them.
- He never demonstrates any parenting unity in front of the children. He takes a stand against me, destroying my parental authority.
- When he is responsible for the children, he doesn't place any limits or rules for the children. He allows them to go out and go to bed at any time, buys them extravagant gifts.
- He gives alcohol or drugs to the children.
- He uses inappropriate educational techniques with the children that make me worry for their safety.

- He accuses me of being a bad mother; everything I do never lives up to his expectations.
- He refuses to pay me alimony or lies about his income to reduce the amount.
- He refuses that I have a job because according to him, I have to take care of the children full time.
- He blames me for working and tells me that I don't have the right priorities.
- He does not want to collaborate with youth protection or with any professional who can help the children (ex.: he refuses involvement of a psychologist or social worker for the child).
- When the children are sick, I am the one who must cancel my plans or take time off from work in order to take care of them.
- He forces me to wear clothes which hide parts of my body that he does not like.
- He makes physical comparisons between me and other people.

THROUGH MOOD, ANGER, AND THREATS

- If I'm five minutes late, I'm scared he'll get angry.
- My partner expects me to guess his wishes and he is furious when I refuse or cannot guess.
- Living with my partner is very stressful because I never know what will trigger his anger.
- My partner's emotions always sets the mood and influences the emotions of others.
- When I do anything "wrong", he loses his temper and then refuses to speak to me.
- He refuses to talk and I have to figure out what I did wrong and apologize.
- He's getting depressed, and I have to work really hard to cheer him up.
- If I don't do what he wants, he threatens me with different things. For example, reporting me to welfare or my employer, calling social services, etc.
- He says he will never accept that I leave him.
- If I leave, I am afraid of what will happen to my kids, myself or my family and friends.

BY MEANS OF MONEY

- He steals my money.
- He forbids me to have a bank card, credit card or personal bank account.
- I can't get any information about our financial situation. He tells me that I already have enough to do without having to worry about money matters.
- I have to account for every penny I spend and I have to justify all my purchases.
- He spends our money on his personal needs and I have to manage to make ends meet.
- He spends his money on whatever he pleases but then he gets angry and blames me when he needs money and there is none left.
- He refuses to give me an allowance for household expenses and I have to keep asking him for money.
- He gives me everything I want but constantly reminds that I could never live so well without him.
- He insists on getting my passwords and PIN to access my accounts and all my banking transactions.
- He does not work. He takes money from my wallet or steals things from me and sells them without my consent.
- He tells me that with everything he does for me, I should be happy to be alive.
- Even though I am responsible for the expenses related to the children, he refuses to have the child benefits deposited into my account.
- I have no financial freedom and I have no access to any money for my personal expenses or those of the children.
- He puts the bills in my name, accumulates debts under my name and destroys my credit.
- He pushes me to ask my family and friends for money.
- He forces me to take out bank loans in my name.

THROUGH PROTECTION AND "SURVEILLANCE"

- My partner doesn't like me to leave the house because he says he's worried about me.
- He is furious when a man talks to me. He says he doesn't trust them because according to him, all men think about one thing only.
- He often phones me at work or school, or he shows up unexpectedly to see "if all is well".
- He monitors me when I connect to my social media with the pretext of wanting to talk to me or making me feel guilty for logging in without having talked to him.
- He insists that I share my location with him at all times, in order to help me if anything happens to me.
- He accompanies me on all my outings or he texts me all the time, because he says he cannot go a minute without me.
- He does the shopping to keep me from going out.
- He tells me that I will never need to work because he decided to take care of me.
- He chooses my clothes because he likes my appearance to be perfect.
- He forces me to change my clothes because he finds them too provocative or ugly.
- He drives me to work and comes back to pick me up so that my coworkers don't get any ideas about me.
- He encourages me to take drugs with him so that we have the same "trip".

BY NEGATING YOUR PERCEPTIONS

- My partner behaves very cruelly and then says that I am too sensitive or that I don't have a sense of humor.
- He promises me to do things, breaks his promises, and then says he never promised anything like that.
- He freaks out, insults and attacks me, then when I confront him about it, he accuses me of exaggerating or making up stories from scratch.
- He is extremely interested in my emotional life and tries to convince me that I need to see a psychiatrist. He, on the contrary, says he's perfectly normal.
- He tells me that I spend my time imagining problems, that I exaggerate.
- He hits me and later asks me how I hurt myself.
- He makes me cry and then says I am hysterical. He asks me why I get sad so easily.
- He tells me he can help me correct my shortcomings. He pushes me to make a list of everything that's wrong with me.
- When I try to strike up a serious conversation with him, he says to me "Okay, you're starting again. Calm down already!". He treats me like I'm getting carried away when I'm not.
- I have received anonymous threats.
- It has happened to me that pieces of clothing or personal momentos disappear from the house.
- My mail was "stolen" or mysteriously "disappeared".
- Things in my house are misplaced or disappear in "inexplicable" ways.
- I was convinced that I was losing my mind.
- My partner has sometimes denied obvious things.
- My partner makes up stories and then makes me doubt my memory.

BY NOT RESPECTING YOUR RIGHTS, YOUR NEEDS AND YOUR OPINION

- I must always be available to meet his needs, whatever they may be, and no matter how busy I am.
- He expects me to put my activities aside when he wants attention, but he never returns the favor (exploitation).
- He makes me feel like his slave.
- His expectations of running the household are so high that I never have time to do anything else.
- His expectations of running the household are so unrealistic that I have a hard time balancing everything (work, taking care of the children, etc.)
- My partner never helps me when the children are sick or when I am sick. Or he promises to do it, then forgets.
- If I discuss with my partner an aspect of his behaviour that bothers me, he eventually convinces me that it is I who needs to change, or if he agrees with me, he doesn't change his behaviour.
- When I try to speak, he constantly interrupts me, distorts my words, or forgets what I just said.
- When I try to discuss a problem, he immediately changes the subject.
- He arrives at my house unexpectedly, whenever he feels like it, or he never keeps our appointments, which prevents me from making other plans.
- He does not hesitate to go out when he feels like it, but I am not allowed to because I am responsible for the children.
- When I try to express my opinion on any topic, either he does not respond, leaves the room, or laughs at me.
- My partner prevents me from having access to my important documents or those of my children (ex.: cards, identification, immigration, passport, certificates, etc.)

THROUGH UNILATERAL DECISION-MAKING

- My partner always has to have the last word.
- He always tells me it's up to me to make the decision, but at the end of the day, if the decision doesn't suit him, I suffer consequences. He gives me the impression that I have control or the right to my opinion. However, in the end, he has the right to "veto" all decisions.
- As soon as I believe we've finally come to an agreement on a topic, he goes and does the exact opposite.
- If I mention a decision he made without consulting me, he asks me why I insist on returning to a question that has already been decided and that ends the discussion.
- He tells me that some issues are just not negotiable.
- He says it's up to the man to make the decisions for the family.

BY PUSHING HIS RESPONSIBILITIES ON YOU

- If I tell my partner that he is too bossy and too critical, he tells me it is because I am immature. The discussion always ends up revolving around my personality.
- He makes me responsible for his personal hygiene. For example, if I upset him, he refuses to shower for days or even weeks.
- He says he can't stay sober while he's living with a crazy person like me.
- He says if I ever leave him he will kill himself and it will be my fault.
- He blames me for losing his job and now he refuses to look for a new job.
- He told me he wouldn't get angry if I could control the children and keep them quiet.
- He says he wouldn't date so many other women if I took better care of him.
- He says he would invite me out more often if I weren't so stupid.
- He says he gets along well with others and that it is my behaviour that makes him "lose control".

