

COERCIVE CONTROL AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF IT



Refuge

pour les femmes de l'Ouest de l'île

West Island Women's

Shelter

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THE NOTION OF COERCIVE CONTROL



The impact of conjugal violence on children is well documented in the literature. It is estimated that more than 25% of Quebec children have been exposed to at least one form of conjugal violence.¹ Several articles also identify not only the consequences, but also its destructive impact on the child: severe psychosocial consequences, interpersonal difficulties in their future relationships, increased physical consequences related to health, increased risk of mental health disorders, increased chance of dropping out or having problems at school, increased involvement in criminal activities, increased risk of being victims of bullying or bullying others, and increased probabilities of being vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploitation. In addition, more recent research suggests that these children may suffer long-term neurological impacts.²

Identifying these children as co-victims of violence is important because they are never passive witnesses to the abuse. On the contrary, the consequences mentioned above are proof of this. Moreover, the pervasive tension and abuse in a conjugal violence relationship have severe implications for family dynamics. Thus, family interactions should be characterized as a "triangulation" in which all interaction is fraught with conflict and distress. As a result, children are frequently forced to take a position, alternating between intergenerational coalition and alliance with siblings or a parent.³ Children are compelled to negotiate, retreat, create alliances, resist, flee, or distance themselves, all the while having to choose between their safety and well-being or that of their family members.⁴ They must therefore interpret, anticipate and recognize their responsibility in conflicts, fear the consequences, seek solutions and develop ways to protect themselves psychologically, physically, and from those around them.⁵

Incidents of violence and intimidation are at times directed towards the victimized parent and at other times towards the child victim. Indeed, abusers frequently use violence against the child to intimidate and control the partner. Ignoring the violence experienced by children can significantly reduce the ability to protect the child and assessing the risk of filicide, especially in a post-separation custody context. Although the child is as much a victim as the victimized parent, children are still perceived and defined as witnesses and not victims.⁶

Coercive control occurs within a family context where children may be actively engaged in coercive behaviour and used to exert control. It could also be the intended target of the parent's violent and coercive act. Thus, the child may be drawn into the abuser's coercive practices, such as isolation, blackmail, monitoring of activities, stalking, or joining the abuser to minimize, legitimize and justify the abusive behaviour.^{7,8,9}

¹ INSPQ, 2018.

² Callaghan et al. (2015) Beyond "Witnessing": Children's Experiences of Coercive Control in Domestic Violence and Abuse.

³ Idem

⁴ Stark et Hester (2018). Coercive control: Update and Review.

⁵ London Family Court Clinic (2017). Helping Children Exposed to Violence at Home: An Essential Guide.

⁶ Callaghan et al. (2015). Beyond "Witnessing": Children's Experiences of Coercive Control in Domestic Violence and Abuse.

⁷ Stark (2007). Interpersonal violence. Coercive control: How men entrap women in personal life.

⁸ Johnson (2009) Redefining Harm, Reimagining Remedies, and Reclaiming Domestic Violence Law.

⁹ Callaghan et al. (2015). Beyond "Witnessing": Children's Experiences of Coercive Control in Domestic Violence and Abuse

THE NOTION OF COERCIVE CONTROL



*"Children are good observers, but they can be poor interpreters. They listen and see, but they don't understand situations as adults do."*¹⁰

When abused as a child, the individual may come to the following conclusions: violence and threats are used to get what one wants; a person has two choices: either be the abuser or be the victim; victims are responsible for the violence experienced, and there are no consequences for the abuser; women are weak, helpless, incompetent, stupid or violent; anger and alcohol cause people to be violent; people we love can also hurt us; anger should be avoided as it causes loss of control; unhealthy relationships are normal; men are in control of women's lives; women are not entitled to be treated with respect.¹¹

Children can thus be victimized through the coercive control exercised by the abuser towards their mother, just as they can be used as bait or instrumentalized by the abusive spouse to reach the female victim.¹² Abusive fathers and father figures are known to undermine children's well-being, mental health and development. These men tend to be authoritarian, rigid, neglectful, uninvolved or overly permissive, and are at greater risk of physically and emotionally abusing their children.¹³

The same factors that lead a man to use violence against his wife, such as his sense of "entitlement" and egocentricity, his self-righteousness, can also influence his parenting. Like their mothers, children can both love and hate their fathers, causing them significant distress and inflicting on them a general sense of confusion.¹⁴

One of the tools we suggest can be used to explore the experience of coercive control lived by children experiencing conjugal violence. It is divided into two

distinct parts: coercion and control. As mentioned, coercion involves the use of force, threats and humiliation to force a reaction in a person such as to hurt, scare or punish them. It is tangible and, therefore, easier to recognize. Control, on the other hand, is used to force one's partner and children to obey and submit, and this is done indirectly through various strategies. These imposed rules must be respected whether he is present or not. These tactics do not constitute violence or criminal acts, but their cumulative impact allows him to increase his control gradually. You will notice that each type of control is, in turn, separated into two categories: first, directed directly at the child and second aimed at the mother.



¹⁰ London Family Court Clinic (2017). Helping Children Exposed to Violence at Home: An Essential Guide, p.17.

¹¹ Idem.

¹² Stark et Hester (2018). Coercive control: Update and Review.

¹³ Bancroft L, Silverman JG, Ritchie D. 2012. The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamic.

¹⁴ Katz (2020). When Coercive Control Continues to Harm Children: Post-Separation Fathering, Stalking and Domestic Violence.

USING THE TOOLS



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

WHO SHOULD USE THESE TOOLS?

The first tool, the screening questionnaire, is two 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 children who are victims of conjugal violence in their clientele and are not necessarily well versed on the topic. We are particularly thinking of social workers in youth protection or CLSCs / hospital professionals, school personnel, police services, psychologists, etc. This tool will facilitate gathering 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 violent situation, the evaluation grid can help a counselor with relevant experience and knowledge of the topic intervene further. 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 deeper look into the strategies and behaviour patterns a violent father uses to control most aspects of the child's life and that of the mother. It addresses both coercion and different types of control. This second tool tends to be preferred by counselors working in shelters, second-stage homes, and outpatient services, as it examines specific actions in greater detail. Filling in this second grid requires more time, but it allows for a more comprehensive look at the victim's experience. Of course, the use of this tool is not exclusive to conjugal violence specialists.



WHY ARE THE TOOLS USEFUL?

Using one of these tools allows professionals to identify behaviours that may seem "ordinary" or even "normal", and to determine the impact of these tactics on the victim's (mother and child) agency and freedom. It allows them to tease out a pattern of behaviour from the abusive man's continuous and repeated attacks against his victim and to better understand how the abuser establishes and maintains his control. In addition, the tool allows the child to take a fresh look at their parent's relationship and their relationship and to identify the "bars" of an invisible cage set up by the violent parent. Moreover, they are more likely to perceive the impact that such strategies, some of which are still considered non-criminal, have had on their self-esteem, autonomy, confidence and the questioning of their self-worth and decision-making capacity. In short, these analytical tools can help victims put into words what they have experienced and identify things they could not recognize until now.



SUGGESTED USES AND IMPORTANT THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Although the tools highlight the issue of coercive control as experienced by the child victim of conjugal violence, their usage differs from those developed specifically for female victims.

A child who is a victim of conjugal violence may experience a loyalty conflict with both parents; it can be extremely upsetting to have all the violent behaviours of the father or father figure listed. Thus, it is critical to use these tools carefully to avoid further burdening a vulnerable child.

Furthermore, given the comprehensive nature of these tools, the professional must assess whether the child has the required level of concentration and maturity to use them. Finally, they can be used "as is" or inspire youth practitioners to develop more age-appropriate tools for their clientele (i.e. selecting a few examples from the list and asking the child to identify whether this type of control was present in their relationship). Currently, The West Island Women's Shelter is developing various tools on this topic, and they will be available to professionals working with children who are victims of conjugal violence.

It is essential that the professional using these tools always verify their relevance, their effectiveness, and their impact on the child.

SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

SIGNS OF COERCIVE CONTROL



N.B. before filling in this form, it is preferable to review "Using the Tools" and, more specifically, the section "Suggested uses and IMPORTANT things to keep in mind", provided on the pages immediately preceding this questionnaire.

IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU, YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

- Are you afraid of his reactions?
- Do his emotions influence the atmosphere of the household?
- Do feel like you are "walking on eggs" because you never know what will trigger his anger?
- Does he drive dangerously when is angry with you, your mother or your brothers and sisters?
- Have you often been awakened at night when there were conflicts with your mother?
- Does he prevent your mother from talking with you or taking care of you?
- Does he frighten you by standing next to you with his fists clenched?
- Does he frequently phone you or show up when you are at school, out or at friends' houses?
- When you are out, does he constantly keep in touch with you and make you feel like you have to answer him immediately?
- When he is supposed to be responsible for taking care of your brothers, sisters and you, does he refuse to do so by going to bed or leaving?
- Does he ask you to be a witness to the conflicts with your mother?
- Does he ask you to take sides during these conflicts?
- Does he refuse to let you, your brothers and sisters learn your mother's native language?
- Does he ask your siblings and you to report back to him everything your mother does?
- Does he ask you to keep secrets and not tell your mother?
- Does he often talk against your mother?
- Does he create conflict situations between your mother, your brothers and your sisters and you?
- Does he seem to prefer one of his children over the others?

IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MOTHER

- Does he yell?
- Does he insult her or use bad words?
- Does he threaten to take away her kids?
- Does he threaten your mother by warning that he will call the police, youth protection, etc.?
- Does he deliberately break things?
- Is your mother scared of him?
- Does he refuse to talk to her for a long time when upset?
- Does he accuse her of cheating on him?
- Does he prevent your mother from leaving the room or end the discussion when they are arguing?
- When upset, does he leave the house with you and your siblings?
- Does he threaten you with objects?
- Does he physically attack your mother? Or intimidate her by pretending that he will hit her?
- Have you ever seen your mother hurt or bruised as a result of their conflicts?
- Does he prevent your mother from working or leaving the house?
- Does he constantly call or text your mother when she is away from the house?
- Does he threaten to hurt himself or hurt you and your siblings if she decides to leave him?

IN YOUR RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Are you afraid of his reaction if you have not done your homework or if your chores are not completed?
- Do you feel like whatever you do, is never good enough (i.e., your grades, the way you talk or dress, the way you eat, etc.)?
- Do you feel he has such unrealistic expectations of your mother that he never seems satisfied?
- Does he refuse to do anything around the house and leave all the chores to your mother, siblings and you?
- Does he do all the errands so that your mother never has to go out?

IN MANAGING THE FINANCES

- Does he insist on being the only one to control all the finances (money coming in and spending)?
- Does he refuse to let your mother have a bank account, bank cards or cash?
- When your mother spends money, does she have to justify every penny she spends?
- Does he get angry when she buys something or goes out for errands?
- Does he accuse you and your siblings of costing too much?
- Does he ask you to borrow money from members of your family or your friends?
- Does he steal money or sell items that belong to all of you?
- Does he refuse to allow you to participate in school and extracurricular activities and justifies this by saying it is too expensive?
- Does he buy expensive things for himself but never for the rest of the family?
- Does he refuse to buy food or necessities for the family?
- Does he buy you expensive gifts and say that your mother would never be able to buy you such lovely things?
- Does he pay for everything and constantly remind you that you could not have such a good life without him?

IN THE COMINGS AND GOINGS AND THE CONTACT WITH OTHERS

- Are you scared of his reaction when you are late?
- Does he strongly react when you stay out longer than he likes?
- Does he react harshly when your mother goes out?
- Does he start a fight just as you are about to leave?
- Does he prevent your mother from communicating with her family and friends?
- Does he insist that your mother bring you and your siblings wherever she goes?
- Does he insist that the GPS on your electronic devices be activated at all times (i.e., cell phone, tablet, computer)?
- When you return home, does he question you about everything that happened?

WITH RESPECT TO APPEARANCES

- Does he choose your clothes because he wants you to be perfect?
- Does he force you to change your clothes because he finds them inappropriate?
- Does he openly criticize your mother's body?
- Does he mock your appearance or that of your mother or siblings?

EVALUATION GRID

SIGNS OF COERCIVE CONTROL EXPERIENCED BY THE CHILD



N.B. before filling in this form, it is preferable to review "Using the Tools" and more specifically the section "Suggested uses and IMPORTANT things to keep in mind", provided on page....

COERCION

Coercion involves using force, threats and humiliation to provoke a reaction coming from a person whose ultimate goal is to hurt, scare or punish. Coercion is tangible and, therefore, easier to recognize.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE TOWARDS MY BROTHERS, MY SISTERS AND ME

- He pushes and shoves me/us.
- He spits on me/us.
- He forces me/us to stand in a corner or face a wall.
- He forces me/us to hold objects which are too heavy for me/us.
- He throws things at me/us.
- He forces me/us to do strenuous physical exercises (i.e., push-ups, chin-ups, kneeling, etc.)

VIOLENCE TOWARDS MY MOHER

- He pushes and shoves her.
- He hits or slaps her.
- We may not always see physical violence, but my mother often has bruises or visible wounds.
- We do not always see physical violence, but we often hear arguments from another room in the house or during the night.
- He throws things at my mother.

INTIMIDATION AND THREATS AIMED AT MY BROTHERS, SISTERS AND ME

- I am scared of my father's reaction if I don't obey him.
- I am scared of his reaction if I have not finished my homework or chores.
- When he is upset, he tells me he will take it out on my mother, sisters or brothers.
- He throws and smashes things around the house or bangs something close to me.
- When upset, he disappears for a few hours, days, or even weeks.
- He gives me the "silent treatment" which can last for hours and even days.
- He doesn't need to say anything. A look or a frown is enough to let me know he's not happy.
- When angry, he scares me by standing very close to me with his fists clenched.
- When he scolds me, I am often scared of what he might do, so I stop arguing.
- He drives dangerously when angry with me, which terrifies me.
- He destroys my clothes and my favourite things.
- He refuses to leave when I ask him to.
- When upset, he threatens to hurt my mother, my brothers and sisters, and our family pet.

INTIMIDATION AND THREATS TOWARDS MY MOTHER

- I am afraid of his reaction if my mother does not obey him.
- I am scared of his reaction if my mother has not finished her chores.
- When he gets upset, he threatens my mother that he will take us away, put her in a mental hospital or kill her.
- He threatens to disappear forever or die and then tells my mother it will be her fault.

BY THE WAYS HE HARASSES MY BROTHERS, MY SISTERS AND ME

- He times my telephone calls, the time I spend in the bathroom, the time it takes me to come back from school, etc.
- He searches through my drawers, my school bag, and my cell phone.
- He wants to know where I am at all times.
- He uses the information from my photos, phone or GPS to track where I've been.
- He will either follow me himself or ask others to do so.
- He calls my friends and their parents to get news about me.
- He calls my friends and their parents to ensure I am with them.

BY THE WAYS HE HARASSES MY MOTHER

- He times her telephone calls, the time she spends in the bathroom, the time it takes her to do errands, etc.
- He looks through her things, purse, cell phone, etc.
- He insists on knowing where my mother is at all times, even if he is not there.
- He insists that my brothers, sisters and I report back to him what my mother has done during her day.
- He asks us to take pictures of her text messages, papers, the inside of her purse, etc.

BY THE WAYS HE HUMILIATES MY BROTHERS, MY SISTERS AND ME

- He behaves in ways which embarrass us when we are with friends or in public.
- He prevents us from using personal hygiene items such as toilet paper, tissues, sanitary napkins and tampons.
- He prevents us from sleeping in our beds.
- He logs into my social media account, pretends to be me and interacts on my behalf.
- He belittles my looks and controls everything I eat.
- He does not allow me to take a shower, bathe or go to the toilet.
- He prevents me from eating, so I need to find ways to eat in secret.
- To punish us, he cuts off the water or the electricity.

BY THE WAYS HE HUMILIATES MY MOTHER

- He insists that my mother remains at the table until I have finished eating or until he does.
- He insists that we ignore and not talk to our mother.
- He says that our mother is not intelligent enough to understand our discussions.
- When he argues with my mother, he demands that we listen to the conversation and then tells us to look at our "crazy mother."
- He refuses to include my mother in activities or meals, saying she is not welcome to join us.
- He makes fun of my mother's physical appearance and compares her to other women.

CONTROL

Control is indirectly forcing one's partner and children to be submissive and obedient through various strategies. These imposed rules must be followed whether he is present or not. These tactics do not constitute violence or criminal acts, but their accumulation allows him to increase his control gradually.

BY RESTRICTING MY CONTACT WITH OTHERS (ISOLATION)

- He prevents me from going out with my friends.
- He allows me to go out but then makes me feel guilty.
- He belittles people who are important to me (a trusted teacher, friend, aunt, etc.) and tells me to distrust them.
- He made me lose contact with many of my friends.
- He refuses to let me speak to my friends by telephone, Messenger, Instagram, etc.
- He prevents me from leaving the house.
- He confines me to my room and prevents me from leaving it for many hours or even days.
- He refuses to let me attend school or work.
- He always keeps in contact with me when I go out by calling me and giving me the impression that I must answer him immediately.
- He tells me that I never spend enough time with him and that I pay more attention to my mother and my friends.
- I fear his reactions if I don't immediately answer his calls or texts.
- Even if he doesn't openly say it, I think he wants me to ask his permission before going anywhere.
- Any new activity about me on social media triggers an interrogation from him (i.e., new friends, comments, likes, posts, etc.). He asks me for my passwords.
- When I return from an activity, he interrogates me to find out everything that happened.
- He accuses me of having a lover.
- He accuses me of flirting with any boy I meet.
- He makes sure that I am often late for school.
- To avoid conflict with him, I sometimes limit contact with my friends.

BY ISOLATING MY FAMILY AND MOTHER

- He refuses to let my mother go out with friends, colleagues, family, etc.
- He prevents her from leaving the house.
- He does not want my mother to have a cell phone or a car.
- He refuses to allow my mother to work or go to school.
- When we are supposed to leave, he starts a fight with me, my mother or my siblings.
- He refuses to allow us to learn our mother's native language.
- He constantly accuses my mother of cheating on him.

BY CRITICISM

- He makes me feel like I'm always doing everything wrong. Nothing is ever good enough for him.
- He makes me feel that I don't sufficiently support him and that I don't love him enough.
- He micro-manages everything in the house: the programs I listen to, the time I spend on my phone, and how I dress or choose my clothes.
- He never encourages me. Even his compliments have a double meaning: "This is the first time I'm so proud of you!"
- He insults and calls me names, like imbecile, idiot, stupid, ugly, etc.
- When I confide my insecurities to him, he calls me a baby and tells me it's time that I grow up and act like an adult.
- He constantly corrects what I say or do; according to him, he is the only one who knows how to do things properly.
- Whenever I'm with my friends, I feel like I'm walking on eggshells because I expect to be publicly ridiculed at any moment.
- He treats me like a child and sets rules that I have to follow to the letter.

BY CRITICIZING MY MOTHER

- He constantly criticizes my mother. According to him, everything she does is never good enough.
- He "micromanages" everything in the house: how my mother cooks, dresses, and looks after me and my brothers and sisters.
- He insults my mother and calls her names, like imbecile, idiot, stupid, ugly, etc.
- He treats my mother as if she was a child.

THROUGH MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MOTHER AND SIBLINGS

- He wants to dictate how I interact with my brothers and sisters.
- He constantly belittles me in front of my siblings.
- He forces me to punish my brothers and sisters.
- He forbids me to comfort my siblings if they are not feeling well.
- When he gets angry, he takes my brothers and sisters away and stops me from seeing them.
- He manipulates my brothers and sisters to act as informants and to report my every move back to him.
- When he has to take care of my brothers and sisters, I always end up being responsible.
- He uses inappropriate parenting tactics that make me worry about the safety of my brothers and sisters.
- He doesn't want me to have a job or go to school because he thinks I should look after my brothers and sisters.
- He accuses me of not having my priorities in the proper order.
- He often talks about my mother when she is not around.
- He causes conflicts between my mother, my brothers, my sisters and me.
- He seems to favor one of his children over the others.

THROUGH MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MOTHER

- He wants to control how my mother and I communicate and interact.
- He has made it clear that my mother cannot come to me or my brothers and sisters when we are not feeling well.
- He prevents me from comforting my mother when she is crying.
- He prevents my mother from consoling me when I am sad.
- He refuses to let my mother, brothers and sisters, and me to see our extended family.
- He never gets involved with us, but he constantly criticizes my mother when she looks after my brothers, sisters and me.
- He blames my mother or me if I am sick.
- He prevents my mother from speaking to us when he gets angry at her.
- He asks me to record the argument when he fights with my mother.
- He accuses my mother of breaking up or wanting to leave the family in front of my brothers, sisters and me.
- When my mother disciplines us, he intervenes and tells us not to listen to her or gives us permission to do the opposite of what she has forbidden.
- He demands that we report back to him all that my mother does.
- He keeps telling my mother that I have problems at school because of her poor genes.
- When he is supposed to take care of us, he either leaves the house, falls asleep or doesn't talk to us.
- When my brothers, sisters and I are sick, he refuses to give us the necessary medication.
- He always tells my mother she must take care of us because we are her responsibility.
- He never agrees with my mother in front of us. He always says the complete opposite of what she says.
- When he is responsible for us, he does not set any rules for us, and we can do anything and stay up as late as we want.
- He invites me to drink alcohol, smoke or do drugs with him.
- He says that my mother is a lousy mother.
- He refuses to give my mother any money and says we cost him too much.
- He refuses to let my mother work because she has to care for us.
- He refuses to allow my brothers, sisters and me receive any help at school (i.e., psycho-educator, social worker, psychologist, etc.)
- He never comes to our sports activities, school meetings or special events.

THROUGH HIS MOODINESS, ANGER AND THREATS TOWARD MY BROTHERS, SISTERS AND ME

- If I am five minutes late, I am scared he will get angry.
- He expects me to guess what he wants and is angry when I fail or refuse to do so.
- It is very stressful to live with him because we never know what will trigger his anger.
- His moods always dominate the general ambiance, which in turn influences the emotions of others.
- When I do anything "wrong", he goes off the deep end and refuses to speak to me.
- He threatens me with all sorts of things if I don't do what he wants.
- He gives me the silent treatment, and I must figure out what I did wrong and apologize.

THROUGH HIS MOODINESS, ANGER AND THREATS TOWARD MY MOTHER

- He throws a fit if my mother is even five minutes late.
- He seems to expect my mother to fulfill all his needs immediately.
- He would never accept that we leave.
- It seems my mother always has to apologize to him for everything and nothing.
- He becomes despondent, and my mother has to do everything she can to cheer him up.
- I am afraid of what might happen to me, my siblings, my mother or my relatives if she decides to leave him.

BY USING THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED BY MY SIBLINGS AND ME

- He refuses to allow me to have a bank account, a bank card or a credit card.
- I need to account for every penny I spend and to justify my purchases.
- He gives us everything we ask for, but constantly reminds us that we would never have it so good without him.
- He pushes us to ask for money from family and friends.
- He refuses to buy us new clothes, even when they are too small or have holes.
- He refuses to pay for school activities or other outings.
- He refuses to pay for our school supplies or for any basic necessities.

BY USING THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED BY MY MOTHER

- He throws a fit whenever my mother goes shopping and asks her to account for every penny she spends.
- He says my mother spends too much, and we are costing him too much.
- He takes my mother's money and refuses to give it back.
- He spends the family's money, and then my mother has to work twice as hard to find a way to feed us or pay the rent.
- He refuses to pay child support to her.

BY BEING "PROTECTIVE" AND "ATTENTIVE" TOWARD MY SIBLINGS AND ME

- He buys expensive gifts for us and says he has to do this because my mother would never be able to offer us anything as lovely.
- He does not like it when I go out because he says that he worries about me.
- He gets angry when a boy/girl talks to me. He says he doesn't trust them because he thinks they only have one thing on their mind.
- He often phones or texts me when I'm at school or shows up unannounced to see "if everything is okay."
- He monitors my social media activity by pretending he wants to talk to me or makes me feel guilty for logging on and not talking to him.
- He insists I tell him where I am at all times so that he can come and help me if anything happens to me.
- He always comes with me on all my outings or texts me.
- He chooses my clothes because he likes me to look perfect.
- He forces me to change my clothes because he finds them too revealing or ugly.
- He urges me to take drugs with him so we can share the same "trip".

BY BEING "PROTECTIVE" AND "ATTENTIVE" TOWARD MY MOTHER

- He doesn't like it when my mother leaves the house because he says he is worried that something will happen to her.
- He tells my mother that she doesn't have to work because he wants her to take care of us.
- He calls and texts my mother constantly to ensure nothing terrible has happened to her.
- He drives and takes my mother to and from work or school to make sure no one gets the wrong idea about her.

BY DISCOUNTING MY PERCEPTIONS ("GASLIGHTING")

- He behaves cruelly and then says I am too sensitive or have no sense of humor.
- He promises to do things, doesn't keep his word and then says he never promised anything like that.
- He throws a fit, insults and criticizes me, and when I confront him about it, he accuses me of exaggerating or making up stories.
- He is highly interested in my emotional well-being and tries to convince me that I need to see a professional.
- He tells me that I spend my time imagining problems and that I am always overreacting.
- He hits me and later asks me how I hurt myself.
- He makes me cry and then tells me I'm hysterical. Then he asks why I become sad so quickly.
- He tells me that he can help me fix my shortcomings. He urges me to make a list of everything that is wrong with me.
- When I try to have a serious conversation with him, he says, "There you go again. Just calm down!" He treats me like I'm getting worked up when I'm not.
- Sometimes he denies obvious things.
- He makes up stories and then makes me doubt my recollection.

BY DISCOUNTING MY MOTHER'S PERCEPTIONS

- He starts fighting with my mother, and when she cries, he tells her she exaggerates or is dramatic.
- He attacks my mother, and when she reacts, he accuses her of being the violent one.

BY NOT RESPECTING MY RIGHTS, NEEDS AND OPINIONS

- I must always be available to meet his needs, whatever they may be, no matter how busy I am.
- He expects me to drop what I'm doing whenever he wants attention, but he never does the same for me.
- He makes me feel like I am his slave.
- He has such high expectations of my schoolwork and chores that I never have time to do anything else.
- His expectations are so unrealistic that I struggle to balance everything between school, my activities and my friends.
- He immediately changes the subject when I talk about a problem.
- When I try to express my opinion on any subject, he either doesn't answer, leaves the room or laughs at me.
- He limits my use of the bathroom for extended periods of time.
- He shuts off the hot water and electricity for long hours to punish us.
- He forbids us from going into certain rooms in the house.

BY NOT RESPECTING MY MOTHER'S RIGHTS, NEEDS AND OPINIONS

- When my mother talks or voices an opinion, he laughs at her.
- He never wants my mother to take care of herself.
- My mother must always be available to meet his needs, even if she is busy doing something else.

