

The Hidden Crime Domestic Violence

One out of every four women in this country will suffer some kind of violence at the hands of her husband or boyfriend.

Very few will tell anyone- not a friend, a relative, a neighbor, or the police.

Victims of domestic violence come from all walks of life- all cultures, all income groups, all ages, all religions. They share feelings of helplessness, isolation, guilt, fear, and shame.

All hope it won't happen again, but often it does.

ARE YOU ABUSED? DOES THE PERSON YOU LOVE...

- ◆ "Track" all of your time?
Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- ◆ Discourage your relationships with family and friends?
- ◆ Prevent you from working or attending school?
- ◆ Criticize you for little things?
Anger easily when drinking or on drugs?
- ◆ Control all finances and force you to account in detail for what you spend?
Humiliate you in front of others?
- ◆ Destroy personal property or sentimental items?
- ◆ Hit, punch, slap, kick, or bite you and/or the children?
- ◆ Use or threaten to use a weapon against you?
- ◆ Threaten to hurt you or the children?
Force you to have sex against your will?

If you find yourself saying yes, it's time to get help.

IF YOU ARE HURT, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There are no easy answers, but there are things you can do to protect yourself:

- ◆ Call the police or sheriff. Assault, even by family members is a crime. The police often have information about shelters and other agencies that

help victims of domestic violence.

- ◆ Leave, or have someone come and stay with you. Go to a battered women's shelter, call a crisis hotline in your community or a health center to locate a shelter. If you believe that you and your children are in danger, leave immediately.
- ◆ Get medical attention from your doctor or a hospital emergency room. Ask the staff to photograph your injuries and keep detailed records in case you decide to take legal action.
- ◆ Contact your family court for information about a civil protection order that does not involve criminal charges or penalties.

DON'T IGNORE THE PROBLEM!

- ◆ Talk to someone. Part of the abuser's power comes from secrecy. Victims are often ashamed to let anyone know about intimate family problems. Go to a friend or neighbor, or call a domestic violence hotline to talk to a counselor.
- ◆ Plan ahead and know what you will do if you are attacked again. If you decide to leave, choose a place to go and set aside some money. Put important papers such as other marriage license, birth certificates, check books together in a place where you can get them quickly.
- ◆ Learn to think independently. Try to plan for the future and set goals for yourself.

HAVE YOU HURT SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY?

- ◆ Accept the fact that your violent behavior will destroy your family. Be aware that you break the law when you physically hurt someone.
- ◆ Take responsibility for your actions and get help.
- ◆ When you feel tension building, get away. Work off the angry energy through a walk, a project, a sport, etc.
- ◆ Call a domestic violence hotline or health center and ask about counseling and support groups for people who batter.

THE HIGH COSTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ◆ Men and women who follow their parents' example and use violence to solve conflicts are teaching the same destructive behavior to their children.
- ◆ Jobs can be lost or careers stalled because of injuries, arrests, or harassments.
- ◆ Lives are lost when violence results in death.

TAKE A STAND!

- ◆ Reach out to someone you believe is a victim of family violence, or to someone you think is being abusive.
- ◆ Don't give up easily, change takes time. Ending the family's isolation is a critical first step.
- ◆ Urge organizations and businesses to raise community awareness by hosting speakers on domestic violence, launching public education campaigns, and raising funds for shelters and hotlines.
- ◆ Ask the local newspaper, radio station, or television station to examine the problem and publicize resources in the community through special features and forums.
- ◆ Form coalitions or "watchdog" groups to monitor the response of local law enforcement agencies and courts. Offer praise where appropriate and demand reform when necessary.
- ◆ Most communities offer resources for victims of family violence. Check your telephone directory or ask a law enforcement agency.

**Crime Prevention Tips From
National Crime Prevention Council**
1700 K Street NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
and
**Alliance Against Family Violence &
Sexual Assault**
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Domestic Violence is a CRIME! Know your RIGHTS!

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

(661) 327-1091

www.stopdvkern.org

1-800-273-7713

Four million children a year witness domestic violence.

Children who witness battering or other abuse between their parents may experience feelings that include:

- Fear for their own and/or other parent(s)' safety
- Confusion about what and why it happened
- Sense of betrayal
- Anxiety about the future
- Anger with one or both parents
- Sense of loss
- Emotional injuries; example: low self-esteem
- Depression
- Guilt over not being able to protect their parent(s)
- Using denial as a coping style
- Fear of abandonment
- Stress related ailments
- Shame and isolation regarding the abuse
- Sad, withdrawn and moody
- Constant anxiety

Children who have witnessed battering or other abuse between their parents may experience behavior problems that include:

- Demanding excessive attention and being very clingy.
- Aggressive behavior that acts out violence
- Danger and/or violence seen as "normal"
- Cognitive/language/speech problems
- Stress-related physical and/or psychological illnesses; headaches, ulcers, rashes
- Testing limits of parent(s); talk back, yelling, disobedience
- Nightmares - become more fearful when parent(s) leave them
- Wetting bed. Having accidents during the day, especially if a younger child
- Don't want to play with other children in cooperative way
- Taking excessive and/or inappropriate amount of responsibility
- Thoughts and/or attempts of suicide
- Delinquency and/or poor school attendance due to illness
- Poor school adjustment. Inability to focus or concentrate
- Run away from home or being sent to live with another relative
- Substance abuse to relieve emotional pain
- Early marriages or pregnancies
- Inability to experience a "normal" childhood or adolescence
- High risk of abusing/neglecting their own children
- Repeating the violence in their own relationships/marriages



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is a CRIME!
Know your RIGHTS!**

Signs of an Abusive Relationship

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Early Warning Signs

The following are some behavioral signs that domestic abuse is beginning:

- Your partner has difficulty controlling anger and/or has a temper
- Your partner insists on making all the decisions
- Your partner does not take responsibility for his/her own behavior
- Your partner questions your faithfulness
- Your partner has a problem with drugs and/or alcohol
- Your partner does not respect your limits or boundaries
- Your partner does not value your opinions
- Your partner has taken steps to keep you isolated from family and friends

Acute Warning Signs

The following abusive behaviors are signs that domestic abuse has already begun:

- Checking up on you – listening to phone calls; asking where you were; calling you at work all day; checking mileage on car
- Putting you down – calling you names; criticizing you; humiliating you in public or in private
- Acting jealous or possessive and saying, “It’s a sign of love.”
- Destroying or threatening to destroy your belongings
- Threatening to hurt you, your friends, family members, or pets
- Touching you in a way that hurts or scares you

Recognizing early warning signs can help us prevent victimization of friends, families, and ourselves.

Understanding Anger

Understanding Anger

The emotion of anger is neither good nor bad. It's perfectly healthy and normal to feel angry when you've been mistreated or wronged. The feeling isn't the problem—it's what you do with it that makes a difference. Anger becomes a problem when it harms you or others.

If you have a hot temper, you may feel like it's out of your hands and there's little you can do to tame the beast. But you have more control over your anger than you think. You *can* learn to express your emotions without hurting others—and when you do, you'll not only feel better, you'll also be more likely to get your needs met. Mastering the art of anger management takes work, but the more you practice, the easier it will get. And the payoff can be huge. Learning to control your anger and express it appropriately can help you build better relationships, achieve your goals, and lead a healthier, more satisfying life.

Why learning to control your anger is important

You might think that venting your anger is healthy, that the people around you are too sensitive, that your anger is justified, or that you need to show your fury to get respect. But the truth is that anger is much more likely to damage your relationships, impair your judgment, get in the way of success, and have a negative impact on the way people see you.

- **Out-of-control anger hurts your physical health.** Constantly operating at high levels of stress and tension is bad for your health. Chronic anger makes you more susceptible to heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol levels, a weakened immune system, insomnia, and high blood pressure.
- **Out-of-control anger hurts your mental health.** Chronic anger consumes huge amounts of mental energy and clouds your thinking, making it harder to concentrate, see the bigger picture, and enjoy life. It can also lead to stress, depression, and other mental health problems.
- **Out-of-control anger hurts your career.** Constructive criticism, creative differences, and heated debate can be healthy. But lashing out only alienates your colleagues, supervisors, or clients and erodes their respect. What's more, a bad reputation can follow you wherever you go, making it harder and harder to get ahead.
- **Out-of-control anger hurts your relationships with others.** It causes lasting scars in the people you love most and gets in the way of your friendships and work relationships. Chronic, intense anger makes it hard for others to trust you, speak

honestly, or feel comfortable—they never know what is going to set you off or what you will do. Explosive anger is especially damaging to children.

Quick tips for cooling down

- **Focus on the physical sensations of anger.** While it may seem counterintuitive, tuning into the way your body feels when you're angry often lessens the emotional intensity of your anger.
- **Take some deep breaths.** Deep, slow breathing helps counteract rising tension. The key is to breathe deeply from the abdomen, getting as much fresh air as possible into your lungs.
- **Exercise.** A brisk walk around the block is a great idea. It releases pent-up energy so you can approach the situation with a cooler head.
- **Use your senses.** Take advantage of the relaxing power of your sense of sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. You might try listening to music or picturing yourself in a favorite place.
- **Stretch or massage areas of tension.** Roll your shoulders if you are tensing them, for example, or gently massage your neck and scalp.
- **Slowly count to ten.** Focus on the counting to let your rational mind catch up with your feelings. If you still feel out of control by the time you reach ten, start counting again.

Consider professional help if:

You feel constantly frustrated and angry no matter what you try.

Your temper causes problems at work or in your relationships.

You avoid new events and people because you feel like you can't control your temper.

You have gotten in trouble with the law due to your anger.

Your anger has ever led to physical violence.

WHAT KEEPS PEOPLE IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

- **EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCE** – Victims sometimes become so isolated that they don't have any other close relationships outside of their abuser. This makes them feel more dependent and emotionally attached to the abuser. It also makes leaving the relationship much more frightening.
- **FEAR** – Fear can immobilize a victim; one may feel trapped, often torn between fear of leaving and fear of staying. These fears are very realistic, as most homicides and dangerous incidents occur after the victim ends the relationship.
- **FINANCIAL DEPENDENCE** – Abusers often prevent the victim from having access to the family's financial resources, making it more difficult for them to leave. Victims may have difficulty finding work, affordable housing, food and clothing in case of separation or divorce.
- **HOPE** – The "good" part of the cycle may reinforce a victim's hope for change and reduce their resolve to leave. The abuser may make promises and take some action towards changing. This may give the victim hope that the abuse will stop, making them more willing to give the abuser another chance.
- **HOUSING** – Lack of housing alternatives forces many victims to remain where they are. Low incomes, large families or unstable households are not attractive to potential landlords. Prior evictions or criminal charges from abusive incidents may show up on background checks.
- **IMMIGRATION STATUS** – When a victim is not a legal resident, the abusive partner may use their immigration status as a tactic to control their partner. They may threaten to get their partner and partner's children deported, withdraw their petition to legalize partner's immigration status, not allow partner to learn English, or threaten to report partner for working under the table.
- **ISOLATION** – Victims are often not aware of their legal rights. They may not know where to turn for emotional support. A victim may feel too ashamed to tell others about the abusive situation. Systems designed to support victims looking for help and intervention often end up victimizing them further.
- **PHYSICAL ILLNESS/EXHAUSTION** – Coping with abuse demands great energy. A victim may have no reserves to resist illness, or they may be trying to recover from injuries. Some victims may have a disabling condition that makes them dependent on the abuser for care. Some victims may also feel responsible for caring for the abuser if they become ill.
- **SELF ESTEEM AND GUILT** – Abusers frequently blame the victim for the abuse, making them feel that the abuse is their fault. These victim-blaming attitudes are often reinforced by friends, family, and society. Isolation and continued abuse from an intimate partner reinforces feelings of worthlessness.
- **TRADITIONAL VALUE SYSTEM** – Cultural and religious influences regarding the sanctity of marriage or a committed relationship may encourage the victim to hold onto the relationship at all costs. They may have been advised by authority figures that it is their obligation to remain in the relationship.



Why Individuals Stay in a Battering Relationship

- **Economic Dependence** - Who will support the children and me?
- **Parenting** - Children need both parents. "I grew up without one parent and I don't want my children to have to."
- **Religious pressure** to keep the family together.
- **Extended family pressure** to keep the family together.
- **Fear of being alone, being on their own**; fear that they can't "make" it alone.
- **Loyalty** - "I wouldn't leave my partner if they had cancer or a broken leg, this is no different."
- **Savior Complex** - If I stay, I can "help them", "I can make them better."
- **Fear of the partner committing suicide**. Partner threatens to kill him/herself if the person leaves.
- **Pity** - The partner is really much worse off than they are. Feel sorry for their partner.
- **Denial** - It's really not so bad.
- **Love** - The person is quite lovable when they aren't being abusive.
- **Duty** - "I got married till death do us part. My vows are important to me."
- **Guilt** - The victim feels that the problem is their fault. The abuser tells them that it is their fault. They take responsibility for the other persons' behavior.
- **Responsibility to save the marriage** - The victim feels that it's their responsibility to work things out. (Many people view that it's the wife's responsibility to keep the marriage together emotionally, the husbands financially).
- **Shame, embarrassment and humiliation** - "I don't want anyone to know."
- **Security** - Belief in the myth of growing up and "living happily ever after" and not being alone in life.
- **Identity** - many people feel that they need a partner in order to be complete.
- **Optimism** - things will get better ("Hope springs eternal").
- **Low self esteem** - it must be my fault. I must deserve it. I'll never find anyone better. A little love is better than no love at all.
- **Survival** - Fear of death, the perpetrator has stated that they will kill the victim if they ever leave.
- **Learned Helplessness** - The feeling of passivity and paralysis which begins when the abuse is reinforced and perpetrated by the family, friends and helping professionals who ignore the problem, don't believe it really happened and/or blame the victim.
- **"Stockholm Syndrome"** - When hostages are held for a long period by their captors they begin to identify with their captors. Many battered women who are literally held hostage by their partners manifest this syndrome.
- **End effects of terror** - When people live in unending terror and stress, their ability to resist gets worn away, they lack energy to make moves, they become confused and exhausted.

WHY DO WOMEN STAY?

BELIEFS

Anger causes violence!
Women are manipulative!
If I don't control her, she'll control me!
Smashing things isn't abusive, it's venting!
Sometimes there is no alternative to violence!
Women are just as violent as men!
Women want to be dominated by men!
Somebody has to be in charge!
Jealousy is natural in men!
Silence is a breakdown in communication!
Men can't change is women won't!

SIGNS OF BATTERERS

They are jealous.
They blame others for their faults.
They blame circumstances for their problems.
They demonstrate unpredictable behavior.
They belittle their partner verbally.
They cannot control their anger.
They always aks for a second chance.
They say they'll change - they won't do it again.
They may have been an abused child or witnessed their father's abuse of their mother.
They play on their partner's guilt.
Their behavior often become worse when they do drugs or alcohol.
They are closed-minded. Their way is the only way.
They may seem charming, gregarious, gentle to family members.
They dislike women, believe that "a woman's place is in the home, and that men have the right to control women."
They often abuse their children.

ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

How will she and the children get by?

PARENTING

It is important for the children to have a father.

RELIGIOUS AND FAMILY PRESSURES

Keep the family together.

PITY

He's really the one who is so bad off.

RESCUER

If she stays, she can help him

FEAR OF HIS SUICIDE

He says he'll kill himself if she leaves.

DENIAL AND MINIMIZING

It's really not that bad.

LOVE

She loves him and he is wonderful when he's not abusive.

DUTY AND LOYALTY

She agreed to the marriage "death do us part."

GUILT

She feels, and he claims, that all of their problems are her fault.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is up to her to save the marriage.

SHAME, EMBARRASSMENT, HUMILIATION
She doesn't want anyone to know.

IDENTITY

She needs to be in a relationship to feel complete.

OPTIMISM

Things will get better given time.

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

She must deserve this; she'll never find anyone better.

SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING

Men are just like this, they can't help it.

SURVIVAL

Fear that he will make good on threats to find or harm her or the children if she leaves.

ISOLATION

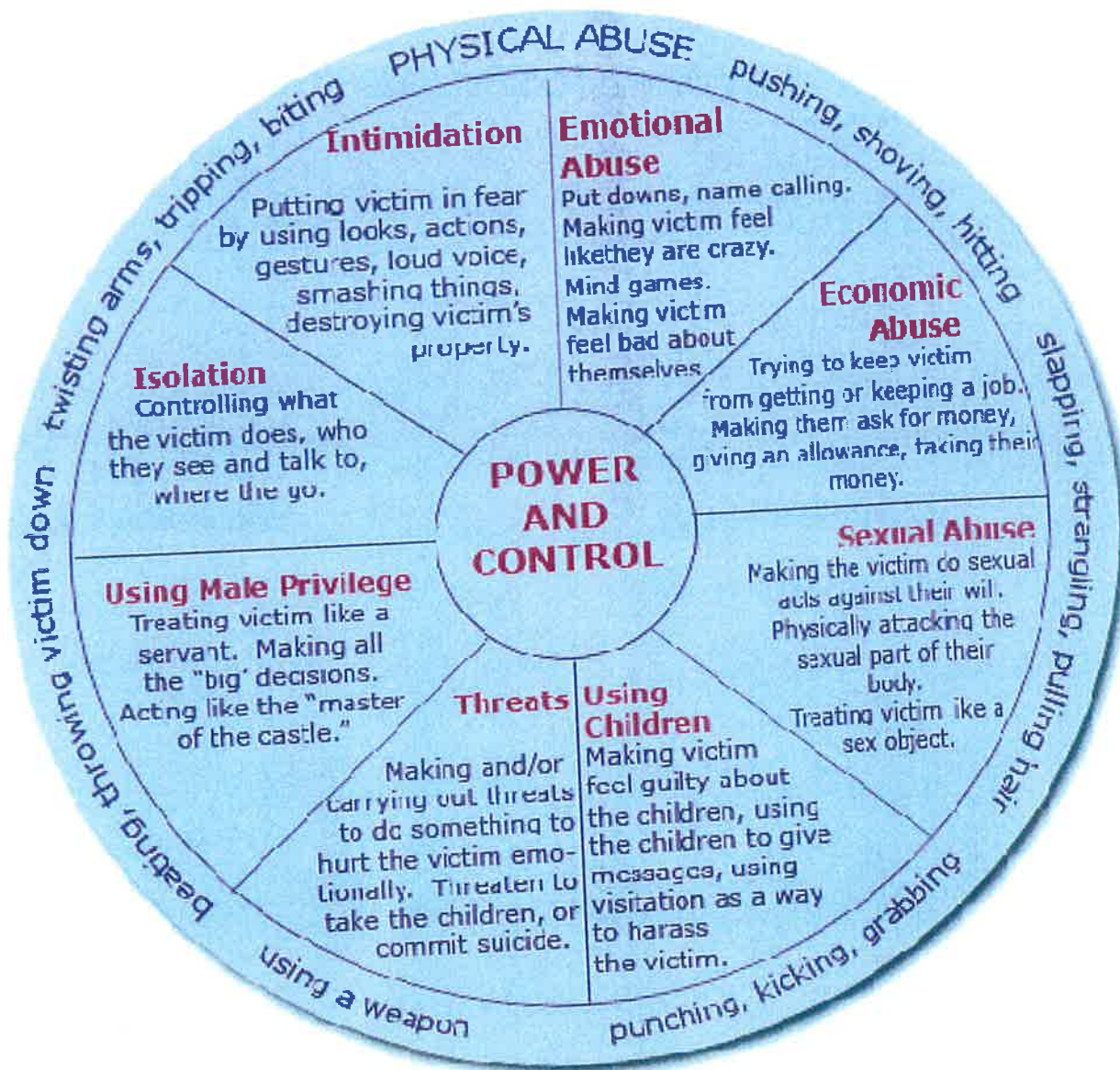
She has few, if any, friends and he has isolated her from the family.

IGNORANCE

She has little or no knowledge or community resources for which she might qualify.

REPUTATION

No one would believe her because he is such a great guy.



The more times the cycle is completed the less time it takes to complete.

The "Honeymoon"

Abusers act differently after violent episodes. Some ignore or deny the violence. Some blame their "anger" on something you said or did. Some fear losing you and act genuinely sorry. This phase is often called the "honeymoon". The abuser will try to make up for his violence. He may act sorry, send cards and flowers, buy presents, help around the house, spend time with his kids, go to church, get counseling, or make promises. The abuser may seek pity. It's important to realize that this phase is an attempt to draw you back into the relationship. This phase is never a real "honeymoon".

Tension

This feels like walking on eggshells. Nothing is right. There is no way to predict what the abuser wants.

While there may not be physical violence (or at least physical violence is minimal), there is emotional abuse, intimidation and threats. Fear of violence is often as coercive as violence itself.

As the cycle is repeated, the violence usually increases in frequency and severity.

Violence

This is the actual violent episode. It includes physical, emotional or sexual abuse. **A crime is committed.**

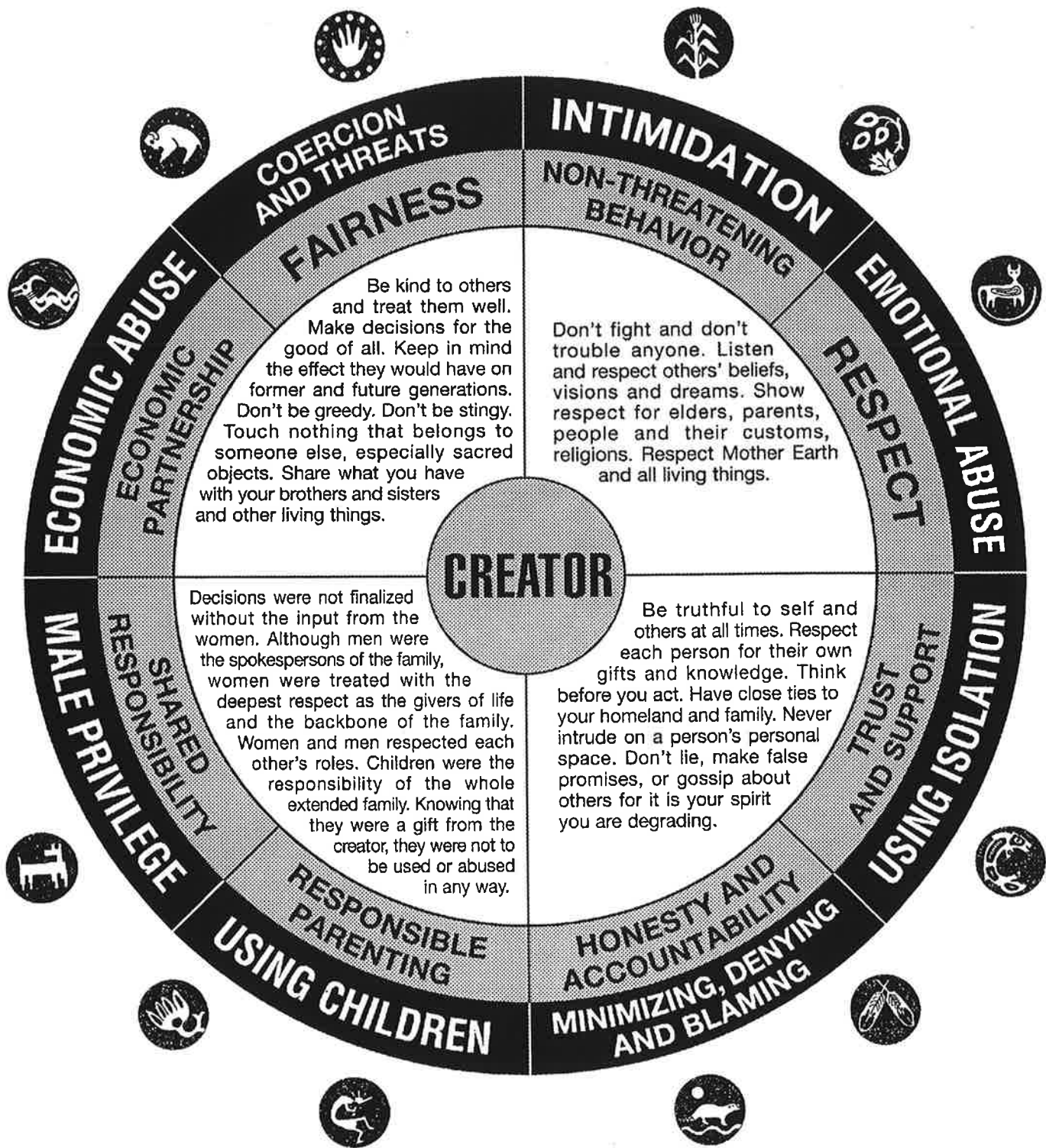
The Cycle of Violence



ACADV

The Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence, P.O. Box 4762, Montgomery, AL 36101

Cycle of violence concept developed by Dr. Lenore Walker in the early 1980s.



MENDING THE SACRED HOOP

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Post Separation Power and Control Wheel



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