

Coercive control: children's experiences and effective responses

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Help and support

- Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline: 0800 027 1234
- LGBT helpline – 0300 123 2523
- Men's Advice Line – 0808 801 0327
- www.womensaid.scot



This session will look at:

- What is coercive control?
- Children's experiences of coercive control
- Children's recommendations on improving practice



What is domestic abuse?



Scottish Government definition



The gendered analysis

- 79% female victims/male perp, 18% male victims/female perp, 3% same-sex relationships (Police stats 2015/16)



“The socially attributed norms, roles and expectations of masculinity and femininity which affect intimate relationships and family structures are integral to the **use and experience of violence and abuse**, whether perpetrated by men or by women.”
(Orr, 2007)



What is domestic abuse: harmful assumptions

- Incident based
- Physical violence focused
- "Separation equals safety"



Separation \neq safety

- Leaving an abusive relationship is the **most** dangerous time for women and children
- Abuse often continues or escalates after separation, particularly through child contact arrangements



Coercive control

“Coercive control ...is **ongoing** and its perpetrators use various means to **hurt, humiliate, intimidate, exploit, isolate,** and **dominate** their victims. Coercive control is **personalized**...and is **gendered** in that it relies for its impact on women’s vulnerability *as women* due to **sexual inequality.**” (Stark, 2009)



Forms of control

- Tried to Make Crazy (gaslighting)
- Monitored Time
- No Socializing with Friends
- Did Not Allow to Go to School
- Can't Leave House
- Kept from Seeing Family
- Took her Money
- Restricted Car Use
- Threatened to Take Children
- Did Not Allow to Work
- Kept from Medical Care





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CYP and Domestic Abuse

- Children not just 'witnesses'
- Research shows:
 - perpetrator may also be directly - physically and/ or sexually - abusive to the child
 - experiencing violence to their mothers may have an abusive and detrimental impact on children concerned
 - perpetrator may use child as part of their violence against women.



CYP & Coercive Control

Children affected by many forms of coercive control beyond physical violence against their mother, including:

- Control of time and movement within the home
- Deprivation of resources and imprisonment
- Isolation from the outside world



Coercive control in Scotland: a new legislative framework

Domestic Abuse Act criminalises a course of behaviour against a partner or ex-partner which aims to:

- (a) make them dependent
- (b) isolate them from friends, relatives or other sources of support,
- (c) control, regulate or monitor their day-to-day activities,
- (d) deprive them of, or restrict their freedom of action,
- (e) frighten, humiliate, degrade or punish them



Offence is aggravated if:

- Offender directs behaviour at a child as part of the abuse or makes use of a child in carrying out the abuse
- A child sees or hears, or is present during an incident of behaviour
- A reasonable person would consider the course of behaviour, or an incident of behaviour that forms part of the course of behaviour, to be likely to adversely affect a child usually residing with either/both the victim and perpetrator.





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Where to find out more

- Power Up Power Down videos:
<https://www.cypcs.org.uk/policy/domestic-abuse/power-uppower-down/videos>
- Power Up Power Down booklet and Super Listener resource:
<http://womensaid.scot/project/power-up-power-down/>

