

Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence Toolkit

Compiled by:



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What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner.

Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence.

The 3 Rs

If someone you know is in a domestic violence situation we recommend following the three R's:

- Recognize
- Respond
- Refer

RECOGNIZE-the signs of Domestic Abuse: An abusive relationship is one-sided (as opposed to equal) and is marked by extreme jealousy and control. A telling sign is that the abused partner is afraid to say 'No' to their partner, and consents to their demands including those for sex, out of fear.

RESPOND-If someone reaches out to talk to you about their abuse, your job is to be as supportive and non-judgmental as possible while honoring your own boundaries. Support can mean providing resources, helping survivors connect to services, and listening.

REFER-You are not alone. Help a victim find an agency that can help. [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](https://www.thehotline.org/) can be accessed 24/7 at 800-799-7233. Please note, hold times can be long and with shelters in high demand, you should be prepared to call back many times to check for availability. Typically the survivor must make the first phone call, but you may offer to help them.

Recognize

Are you being abused? What are the Red Flags?

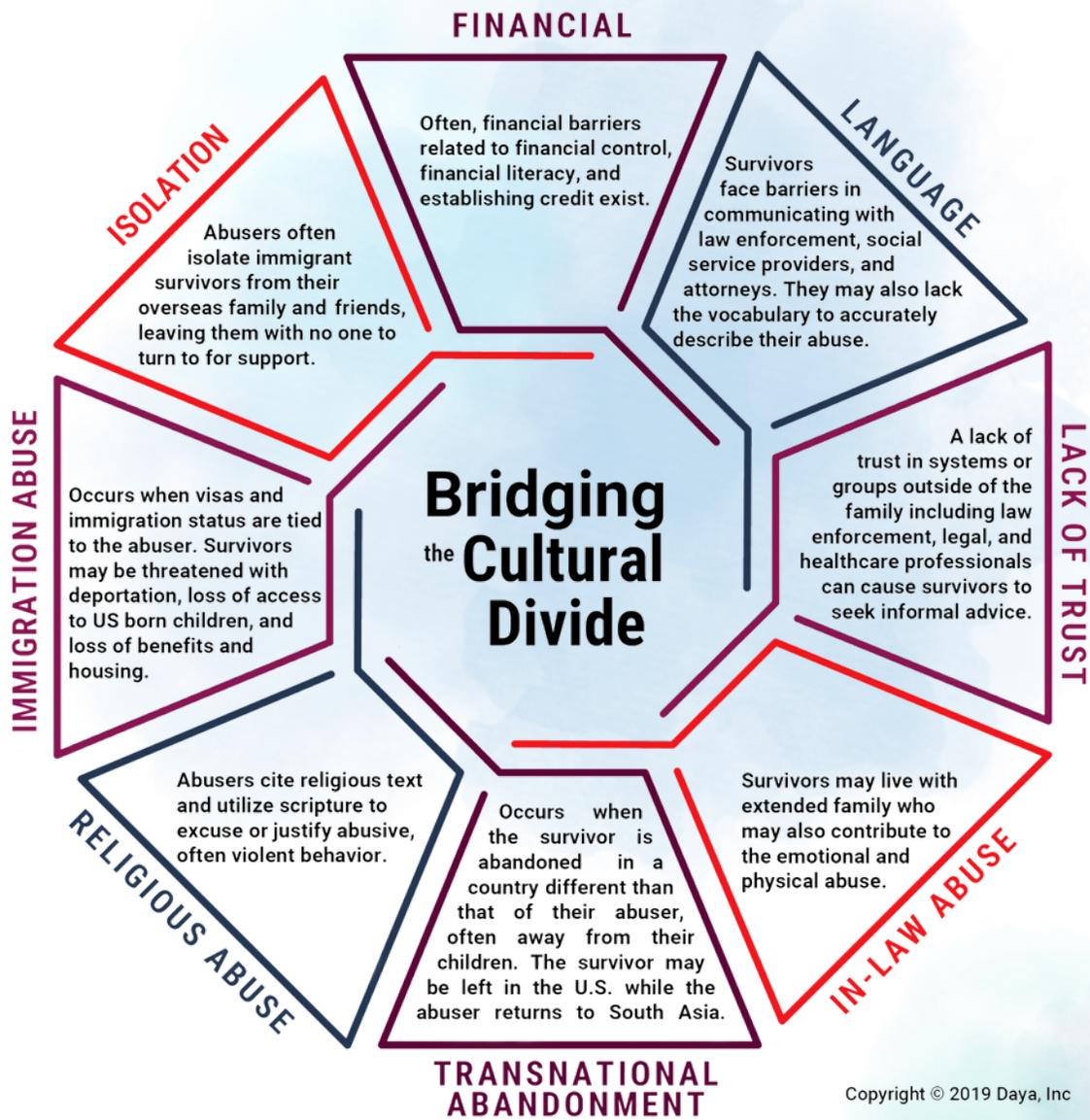
Does your partner:

- Isolate you from friends and family?
- Prevent you from doing things that you enjoy?
- Embarrass or make fun of you in front of your friends or family?
- Intimidate or threaten you?
- Call you names, put you down, or humiliate you?
- Make you feel like you are unable to make decisions?
- Threaten to harm, deport, or divorce you?
- Call you constantly or track your car, phone, social media, or email?
- Control where you go and who you speak to?
- Tell you that you are nothing without them?
- Blame you for their behavior, feelings and actions?
- Keep you from working or accessing money?
- Treat you roughly by hitting, slapping, grabbing, or punching you?
- Try to keep you from leaving after a fight or leave you somewhere after a fight to “teach you a lesson”?
- Use their drug/alcohol problem as an excuse for abusing you?
- Make you feel like there “is no way out” of the relationship?

Bridging The Cultural Divide



Daya's culturally specific services address the unique challenges faced by South Asian survivors.



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Confidential Hotline 713-981-7645

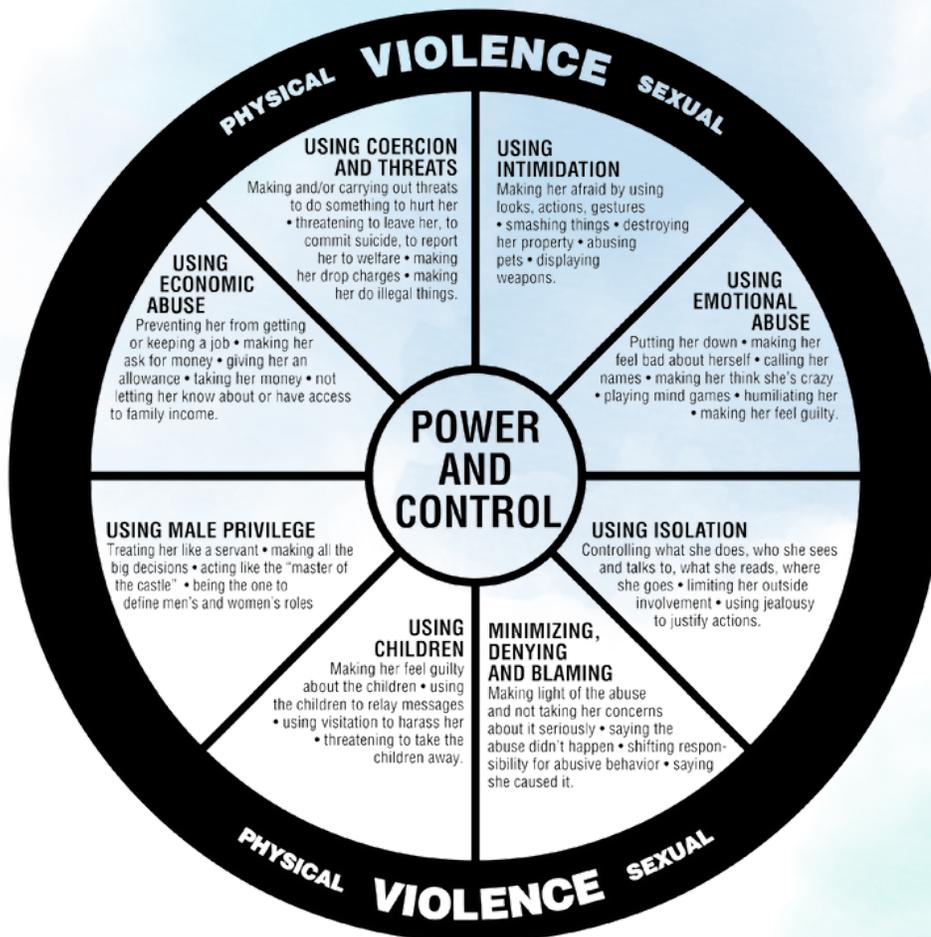
dayahouston.org

Power and Control Wheel

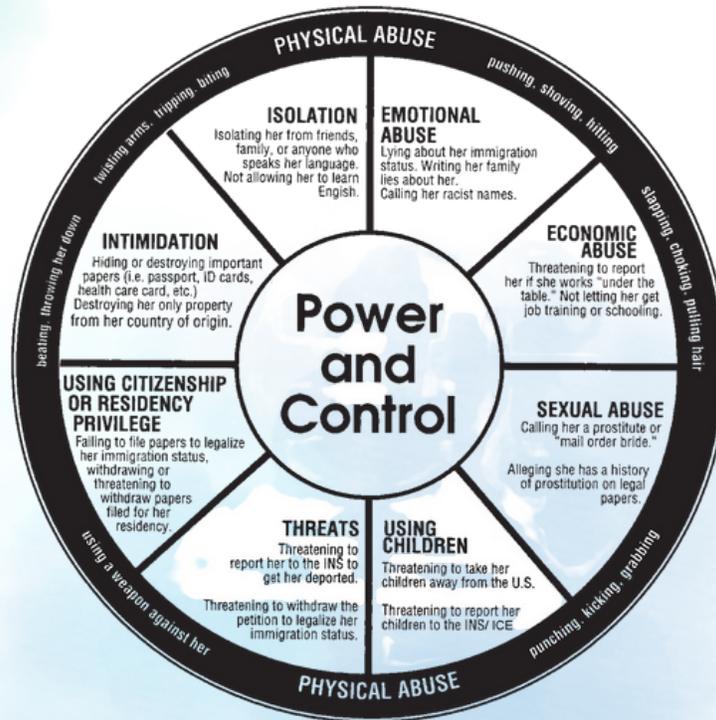
Power & Control Wheels: A useful lens for examining domestic violence, these are tactics an abusive partner may use in a relationship. Explore the following wheels to see how domestic violence may look within relationships. Click here to learn about the power and control wheel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OrAdC6ySiY>

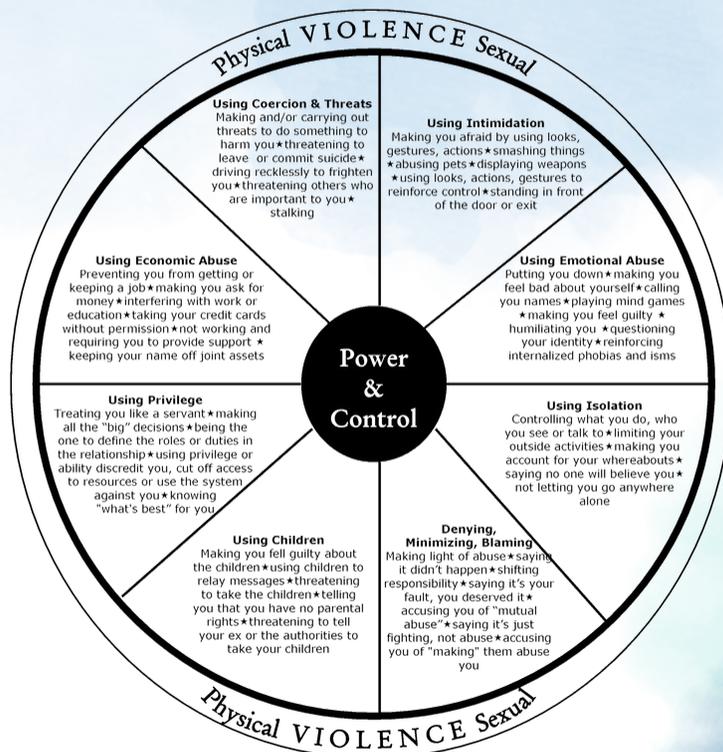
Original Power and Control Wheel



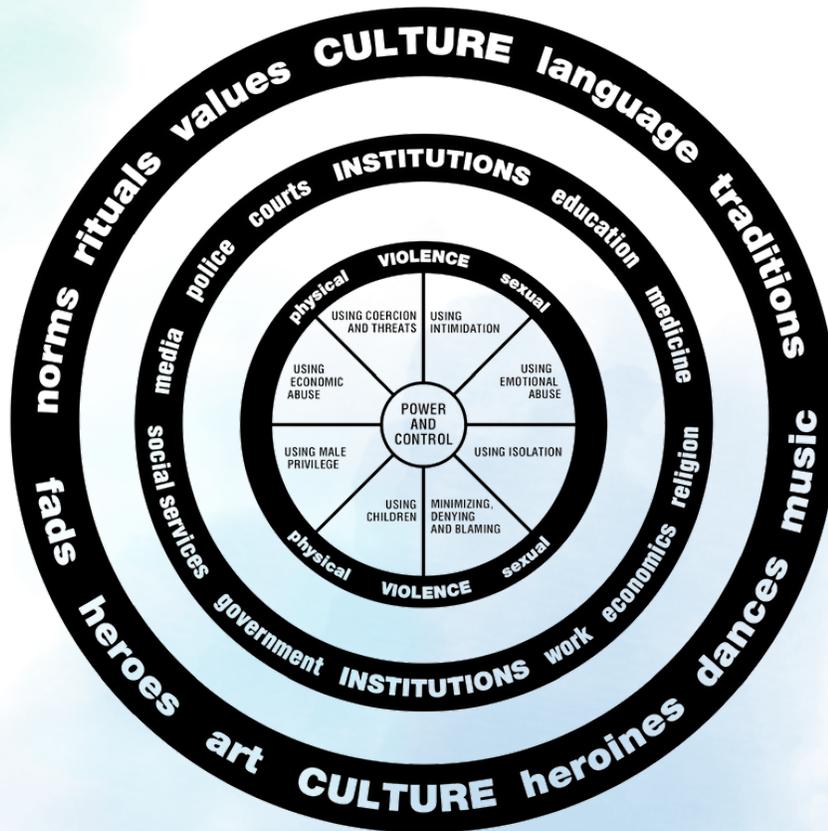
Immigrant Power and Control Wheel



Gender Inclusive Power and Control Wheel



Culture Power and Control Wheel



Respond

If you know someone who is being abused:

- Listen and empathize
- Maintain their confidentiality and refrain from trying to find out information about them
- Do not judge or advise
- Never give the impression that you don't believe their story (even if you know their partner)
- Suggest they contact professionals like Daya
- Offer to drive them to appointments and offer support after difficult appointments
- Be available to take their calls while also holding your own boundaries and taking care of yourself
- Offer to hold on to a bag of important items (documents, money, etc.) in case they need to flee in an emergency

Use simple and powerful statements of support:

- “I believe you.”
- “It’s not your fault.”
- “You are not alone.”
- “I care about you and am here to listen or help in any way I can.”
- “You didn’t deserve this.”
- “I’m glad that you are sharing this with me, it takes a lot of courage.”

Be a safe person for survivors to share their story with:

- Leave out “why” questions and don’t try to investigate.
- Remind the survivor, more than once, that they are not to blame and they do not deserve to be abused.
- Do not push the survivor to take actions or share information if they are not ready.
- Check in periodically. The event may have happened a long time ago, but that doesn’t mean the pain is gone.
- Help the survivor identify people and organizations that can trust.
- Know your resources and honor your boundaries. If you feel overwhelmed, communicate with the survivor and help them locate a professional for help.

Tracking Log

Sometimes it helps to keep a log of the incidents that happen. This is to be kept with the Safety Plan that is on the following pages. A Domestic Violence Tracking Log is a confidential document designed to help individuals who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence (DV) to record and detail incidents of abuse. This log can serve as a tool for memory, reflection, evidence gathering, or seeking legal or supportive interventions.

What should be included in the log?

- **Date and Time of Incident:** This establishes a timeline.
- **Description of Incident:** Detail what happened, including actions, words, threats, and any physical harm. Be as detailed as possible.
- **Location:** Where did the incident take place?
- **Witnesses:** Were there any witnesses? If so, note their names and contact details.
- **Injuries:** Detail any physical injuries, even if minor. Photographs can be helpful but ensure they're stored safely.
- **Aftermath:** Document any actions taken after the incident, such as seeking medical attention or contacting authorities.

Safety Planning

Safety Planning: Help a victim create a safety plan for themselves and their children. Safety planning is different for everyone and all of the points below might not apply to you.

When things are calm:

- Decide who you will trust to help you in an emergency such as neighbors, friends, coworkers, or
- family members. You decide what you share and with whom.
- Make and share a code word, phrase or emoji to use with allies when you are in danger. Share
- your phone location with people who can come to you or call 911.
- Choose how to get out of the home and rehearse this alternative plan. When planning with children, say that you are “practicing for an emergency”.

When Planning to Leave:

- Pack a bag of everything you and your children will need when you leave (see this checklist) and choose a safe and easy place to leave it. Or, organize these items at home in such a way that they will be easy to grab quickly without the abuser noticing.
- Use fake names to save Daya's and other agencies' numbers in your phone. Choose a trusted adult to keep any evidence you want to access later like photos of or statements about the abuse.
- Learn how your abuser tracks your location and prepare to turn off any tracking features or even
- leave your phone behind before you leave for a shelter or an ally's home.

In an Emergency:

- During arguments, try to stay in rooms where you have access to exits. Stay away from anything that can be a weapon (kitchen utensils, countertops, moving cars, firearms).
- If you call 911, you can say "I'm afraid for my life and I need a protective order". Results are not guaranteed but this can help law enforcement understand the risk level.

After Leaving:

- Call 911 to inform the police that you have fled your home from abuse. This is especially important if you flee with your children to another state.
- Keep copies of protective orders at all times and share with people who care for the places where your family lives, works and goes to school. If there is no protective order or custody agreement, ask your kids' school to let you know if the abusive parent tries to pick them up

Items to Take When Fleeing

IDENTIFYING DOCUMENTS

- Identification
- Driver's License
- Birth Certificate
- Greencard / Work Permit
- Passports
- Social Security Cards
- Welfare Identification

ASSETS

- Money/ Credit Cards
- Bank/ Checkbooks
- House & Car Keys
- Small Saleable Objects

PERSONAL ITEMS

- Medications
- Photos / Digital Photos
- Diaries / Journals
- Children's favorite toys & blankets
- Address Books

IMPORTANT PAPERS

- Protective Order
- Divorce Papers
- Income Tax Returns
- Insurance Papers
- School Records
- Medical Records
- Custody/Visitation Orders
- Vehicle Titles
- Daya's or Agency's Information
- Apartment Lease/ House Deed

Refer

Houston Area Domestic Violence Shelters:

(providing shelter and non residential services)

- [The Bridge Over Troubled Waters](#) 713-473-2801
- [Bay Area Turning Point](#) - 281-286-2525
- [Houston Area Women's Center](#) -713-528-2121
- [Family Time](#) -281-446-2615
- [Fort Bend County Women's Center](#) 281-342-4357
- [Women's Center of Montgomery County](#) -936-441-7273
- [Resource & Crisis Center of Galveston County](#) -409-763-1441

Find more here: <https://www.familiestofreedom.org/hou-directory-of-shelters.php>

Culturally Specific Organizations:

Your Houston Area domestic violence agencies never turn anyone away when providing safety services, information, and referrals. To reflect Houston's diversity, some organizations are culturally specific to help victims from shared backgrounds address common barriers such as language and culture.

[Asians Against Domestic Abuse](#) - (713) 339-8300: Culturally tailored for Asian and Middle Eastern survivors

[An Nisa Hope Center](#) - (832) 324-9111: Culturally tailored for Muslim survivors

[Daya](#) - (713) 981-7645: Culturally tailored for South Asian survivors

[Fresh Spirit Wellness](#) - (713) 588-4418: Culturally tailored for survivors of color

[The Empowered Survivor](#) - (281) 406-3417: Culturally tailored for survivors of color

Law Enforcement:

When someone's life is in danger or they are facing the risk of serious bodily harm, you should call 911. Law enforcement can give you information about a protective order.

Pasadena - 713-477-1221

LaPorte - 281-471-3811

Deer Park - 281-479-1511

South Houston 713-944-1910

Galena Park - 713-675-2566

Jacinto City- 713-672-2455

Harris County Sherriff's Special Victims Unit - 713-274-9370

HPD Family Violence Unit - 713-308-1100

HPD (Non emergency) - 713-884-3131

Legal Services:

Legal Agencies can provide information, accompaniment, and representation for protective orders, divorce, custody, and other legal matters related to domestic violence.

Harris County District Attorney Family Criminal Law Division 713-755-5888

Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse (AVDA) - 713-224-9911

Houston Volunteer Lawyers - 713-228-0732

Lone Star Legal Aid Foundation - 713-652-5911

Texas Advocacy Project- 800-374-HOPE

Other Services:

MENTAL HEALTH

If you are **feeling overwhelmed** and need to talk with someone at any time, 24/7, please call or text 988. For the National Domestic Violence Hotline, text the word START to 88788.

If you are in an immediate **mental health crisis**, you can also call the Harris Center.

MEDICAL

For **affordable medical care** including OB/GYN, childrens' and primary care, please find your nearest provider in Harris County here , or in Fort Bend county here.

FINANCIAL

To get **financial help** visit Texas Benefits or any of these organizations: Memorial Assistance Ministries, Northwest Assistance Ministries or Catholic Charities.

When helping someone do:

- Listen
- Validate - Use sentences like “I believe you” and “you don’t deserve this”
- Maintain Confidentiality
- Document what they tell you
- Refer to professionals who can help

When helping someone don’t:

- Give advice
- Judge
- Offer mediation or to speak with the harm-doer
- Question their story of experience