Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are often linked to other abusive behaviors. Although physical assaults may occur only occasionally, they can instill the fear of future violence, allowing the abuser to take control of the partner’s life. The Gender-Inclusive Power and Control Wheel is a helpful tool to understand the overall pattern of abusive and violent behavior.

Coercion and Threats:
Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt the partner. Threatening to leave the partner or report the person to welfare. Threatening to make a false accusation.

Intimidation:
Making the partner afraid by using threats, locks, and gestures. Destroying the partner’s property. Abusing pets. Wielding weapons or kitchen implements.

Gender Privilege:
Treating the partner like a servant: acting like the “king or queen of the castle.” Being the one to define the partner’s roles. Making a false allegation.

Economic Abuse:
Preventing the partner from getting a job, or demanding the partner work longer hours or get a second job. Making the partner ask for money. Not letting the partner have access to family income.

Emotional Abuse:
Putting him or her down. Humiliating the person. Playing head games. Not taking responsibility for one’s own actions. Ridiculing the partner’s appearance or sexual performance.

Isolation:
Controlling what he or she does, who the partner sees and talks to, what he or she reads, and where the partner goes. Limiting the partner’s outside activities. Using jealousy to justify actions.

Using Children:
Making the partner feel guilty about the children. Criticizing the partner in front of the children. Telling the children the partner doesn’t love them. Interfering with visitation.

Denying, Minimizing, and Blaming:
Making fun of the abuse. And not taking his or her concerns seriously. Saying the abuse didn’t happen. Shifting responsibility for the behavior. Saying the abuser caused it.

Original Power and Control Wheel developed by:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802

Adapted by:
SAVE: Stop Abusive and Violent Environments
Technical assistance - Training - Education
P.O. Box 1221
Rockville, MD 20849
6/24/09