



# Coercive Controlling Violence: The (not so) Silent Abuse

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# Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Coercive Control



## Defining Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

IPV refers to physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner. It is a serious public health issue affecting millions globally.

[Umbrella of DV]



## Defining Coercive Controlling Violence (CCV)

CCV involves patterns of control and manipulation, often subtle, designed to maintain dominance over the partner. It can be emotional, financial, or psychological.

[Non-physical]



## Differentiating Physical Violence and CCV

Physical violence involves bodily harm, while CCV centers around control tactics that may not involve physical harm but have significant psychological impacts.

[Physical or sexual]

# Subtypes of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- **Batterer/Victim:** A common dynamic where one partner consistently uses violence to dominate or punish the other.
- **Coercive Control:** A pattern of controlling behaviors aimed at limiting a partner's freedom, often without physical violence.
- **Family Conflict:** This form of IPV is often characterized by mutual hostility and conflict between partners, without a clear dominant aggressor.



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# Differentiating Domestic Violence on the Continuum of Severity is the First Screening Step

- ↳ What do we mean by “severity?”
- ↳ Important for victims to remember it's not a hierarchy
- ↳ Situational Couple Violence
  - ↳ Does not form a pattern; it occurs when one or both partners handles conflict with violence
- ↳ Separation-Instigated Violence
  - ↳ Does not form a pattern; it occurs when one or both partners handles a separation with violence
- ↳ Mutual Violent Control
  - ↳ Both partners engage in some form of violence as an act of fear or control on the other
- ↳ Coercive Controlling Violence
  - ↳ One or both partners engage in manipulative behaviors to maintain control in the relationship

# Challenges in Assessing CCV



## Unseen by Outsiders

CCV often occurs in private, making it difficult for friends or authorities to detect until severe harm occurs.



## Psychological Assessment Limitations

Traditional psychological tests may fail to capture the complex and varied nature of CCV offenders, leading to misdiagnosis or incomplete understanding.



## He Said-She Said

CCV cases often boil down to contradictory accounts between partners, complicating investigations and legal resolutions.



## Importance of Multiple Data Sources

To effectively assess and prevent CCV, various data sources must be analyzed to assess risk, patterns, and potential future violence.

# Emotional and Psychological Violence vs. CCV

*How are they the same? How are they Different?*

- **Emotional Violence:** Emotional violence involves behaviors that damage self-esteem, provoke fear, or create emotional dependency in the victim.
- **Psychological Violence:** Psychological violence is often seen in coercive control dynamics, where mental manipulation is used to exert power over a partner.
- **Overlap with CCV:** Both emotional and psychological violence are commonly seen within CCV



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# Analyzing CCV to Quantify Future Risk

- Acts of jealousy & requests for info or whereabouts
- Name Calling
- Verbal belittling
- Instigating an argument when expressing the desire to see friends or relatives
- Forbade contact with relatives or friends
- Controlled finances and/or purchases
- Forbade employment outside the home
- Making demands “or else”
- Threatened harm to children
- Deliberately damaging personal belongings
- Isolating from friends or relatives by disparagement
- Threatened self-harm if abandoned



# Predicting Future Risk in Coercive Control

- **Risk Prediction:** Generally, psychologists & other MH professionals cannot accurately “predict” risk within a certain % (e.g., it is 75% likely \_\_\_ will offend again)
- **Quantifying Controlling Behaviors:** Identifying specific controlling acts like forbidding employment or controlling finances helps predict future abuse risk.
- **Jealousy and Isolation:** Acts of jealousy and forbidding contact with friends or family are strong indicators of potential future abuse.
- **Threatening Behavior:** Behavior like threatening to harm children or self-harm if abandoned are key predictors of lethal violence.



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# Risk Factors of IPV in Homes with Children



## Parental Violence History

A history of violence between parents is a significant risk factor for continued IPV.



## Socioeconomic Status

Lower socioeconomic status is linked to higher instances of IPV due to stress and lack of resources.



## Substance Use

Substance abuse significantly increases the risk of IPV due to impaired judgment and increased aggression.

# Impact of CCV on Children

- Poorer outcomes for both women and children who have experienced CCV within the family
- When compared to Situational Couple Violence (SCV) & Separation-Instigated Violence (SIV), CCV is more likely to be frequent and severe
- CCV is more likely to persist postseparation (e.g., stalking, harassment, litigation, financially)
- Victims of CCV are more likely to be fearful of their partner than SCV and SIV
- Children exposed to CCV are more likely to continue to be exposed to violent and non-violent forms of control
- Children exposed to CCV are more likely to experience poorer emotional, cognitive, and social outcomes
- Children exposed to CCV are more likely to be used as a pawn to hurt the other parent (e.g., the children become used as a way to continue to inflict abuse)

# IPV/CCV Statistics

- ▶ **Gender:**

- ▶ 48% of women report experiencing CCV in the past 12 months, compared to 25% of people (overall) who experience IPV
- ▶ Women are more likely to experience unspecified intimidation, while men are more likely to experience verbal abuse

- ▶ **Relationships:**

- ▶ Gay men were slightly less likely than heterosexual men to experience IPV (overall) in their relationships by 26%
- ▶ Lesbian couples were less likely to experience instances of CCV in their relationships by 17% than heterosexual couples
- ▶ 54% of transgender folks have experienced some form of IPV, including CCV

# IPV/CCV Statistics

## ► Race:

- IPV disproportionately affects women of color due to systemic inequality, poverty, and reduced access to resources.
- 45% of black women and 40% of black men have experienced physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner
- 3 out of 4 advocates report that immigrant survivors fear accessing legal services related to their abuser

## ► Mental Health:

- CCV behaviors such as economic abuse, stalking, and reproductive coercion have shown positive correlations with PTSD, depression, and other MH symptoms

# CCV and the Court System

- ▶ CCV is not a physical bruise – makes it harder to “diagnose” by the court system
  - ▶ This problem has existed for decades within the physical vs. mental health systems
- ▶ Incessant litigation
- ▶ Custody
  - ▶ Allegations
  - ▶ Evaluations

# CCV and the Court System

- ▶ Protection from Abuse Petitions and Orders
  - ▶ Statute
  - ▶ How do they protect? (IPV/physical; lethality)
  - ▶ How do they harm? (CCV)
  - ▶ How can they determine?
  - ▶ Is there a PFA for CCV?

# IPV, CCV, and Lethality



## Lethality Risk in IPV

The presence of coercive control significantly increases the risk of lethality in intimate partner relationships.



## Factors Contributing to Lethality

Threats to kill, access to weapons, and previous strangulation attempts are key predictors of lethal outcomes.



## Stalking and Post-Separation Violence

Stalking and harassment often escalate after separation, increasing the risk of deadly violence.



# Treatment: To Recommend or Not Recommend

- ▶ **Batterer's Intervention Programs:** treatment includes a combination of psychoeducational treatment, anger management, and cognitive therapy. The BIP therapy is typically conducted in a group session. These programs have demonstrated poor treatment outcomes.
- ▶ **Restorative Justice/Circles of Peace:** Newer treatment that may go by different names in different jurisdictions. Emphasizes the accountability of the offender. First established by Arizona courts. Program runs approx. 26 weeks. Interventions is personalized vs. BIPs are not. Outcomes have not yet been scientifically validated in terms of recidivism.

# Treatment: To Recommend or Not Recommend

- ▶ **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT):** this is an evidence-based treatment that is a type of cognitive-behavioral therapy. DBT includes both group and individual sessions, typically several times per week at the onset. Over time, DBT has demonstrated success with individuals who struggle with mood instability. Thus, it was become a reasonable treatment consideration when treating offenders.
- ▶ **DV & Addiction:** There is a highly correlated relationship between IPV and addiction. If there are any allegations of addiction, it is recommended the individual receives treatment for the addiction and domestic violence. Typically, cognitive-behavioral therapy can address both; however, it will be important to receive an evaluation to determine the best prognostic course.

## Additional Resources

### Alle-Kiski Area HOPE Center

(Alle-Kiski Valley)

24/7 Hotline 724-224-1266

### Crisis Center North

(Northern Suburbs of Allegheny County)

24/7 Hotline 412-364-5556

24/7 Toll Free Hotline 1- 866-782-0911

Text (SMS) line 412-444-7660

### Center for Victims

(Mon-Yough Area and Allegheny County)

24/7 Hotline 1-866-644-2882

### Pennsylvania Office of Victim

#### Advocate

(State of Pennsylvania)

Hotline 1- 800-563-6399

### National Domestic Violence Hotline

(Nationwide)

24/7 Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

### Text to 911 (Allegheny County)

If you are unable to call 911, you may text to 911 in Allegheny County.

To send a text to 911, enter "911" in the "To" field. Send a short message of no more than 160 characters, including the location of the emergency and the type of help needed. Be prepared to answer follow up questions or instructions from the 911 dispatcher.

*Reminder to silence your cell phone so that message responses from 911 do not send an alert sound that may be heard by an abusive partner.*

# MAJOR CRIMES

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT

In the event of an emergency, active Domestic Violence situation, or to file a police report, please dial

# 911

**Pittsburgh Bureau of Police**  
Headquarters  
1203 Western Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA, 15233  
412-323-7800

*PBP DV Resource Guide, Rev. 10/12/23*



*Domestic Violence  
Unit*

# Domestic Violence Resource Guide

**PITTSBURGH BUREAU  
OF POLICE**

**POLICE CHIEF LARRY SCIROTTO**

Scan me for a digital copy of this pamphlet.  
Tear off to take me with you.



## Are You Concerned that You or Someone You Know is in an Abusive Relationship?

### Domestic Violence is a crime.

Victims of abuse have the right to call the police for help, seek assistance from the courts, and obtain information on where to find emergency shelter and services.

### Abuse Can Include:

- Physical, sexual, financial, or emotional abuse and control by a person with whom you currently, or formerly, have an intimate partner relationship.
- Jealously, possessiveness, or controlling behavior.
- Verbal abuse, harassment, or physical harm.
- Threats to kill you, your children, or himself/herself.



brightskyus.org

Scan me for a link to the Bright Sky app.  
Tear off to take me with you.



## Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (WC&S)

(City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County)

WC&S provides free and confidential services for all domestic violence victims regardless of race, gender, sexual identity, or any other factor.

### Services Include:

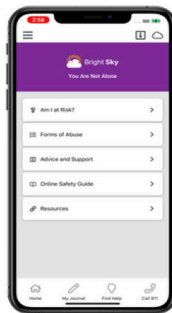
- A 24-hour hotline for safety planning, emotional support, and referral for other services.
- Temporary shelter for abused victims and their children.
- Legal options counseling and court accompaniment.

### Contact Women's Center & Shelter:

24/7 Hotline: 412-687-8005.

Connect with an advocate by **texting (412) 744-8445** or by visiting **WCSCanHelp.org** and clicking 'Chat for Help'.

### Bright Sky App (For IOS and Android)



Bright Sky is a safe, free, and easy to use app and website that provides practical support and information on how to respond to domestic violence. It is for anyone experiencing domestic violence, or for those who may be worried about someone else.

## Protection From Abuse (PFA) Order

Whether or not criminal charges are filed against your abusive partner, you may be able to obtain an immediate court-mandated PFA Order with safety provisions to protect you.

### A PFA Order Can:

- Order your abusive partner to stop violent behavior and refrain from harassing, contacting, or stalking you.
- Remove weapons from your abuser.
- Exclude your abuser from your residence.
- Grant temporary custody of your minor children to you.

### How to File for a PFA Order:

- To obtain a **Temporary PFA** Order from Family Court, go to Family Court located at 440 Ross Street, Room 3030, Pittsburgh, PA, 15219 between 8:00 a.m. and 11 a.m. on weekdays.
- To obtain an **Emergency PFA** at all other times, go to the Magisterial District Judge located at the Pittsburgh Municipal Court (MCB) Building at 660 First Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, 15219. Emergency PFA's may also be obtained at the MCB on weekends and court holidays 24 hours/day -OR- at your local Magisterial District Judge's office on weekdays from 11 a.m. to close of business. For questions, please call Arraignment Court at 412-350-3241.

Call a Domestic Violence Program Hotline at 412-687-8005 or 1-877-338-TALK (8255) for assistance with filing for PFA relief.

For additional information, please visit [www.alleghenydcourts.us/family/pfa](http://www.alleghenydcourts.us/family/pfa) or call 412-350-4441 for the Allegheny County Family Division.



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