

The Nature of Abuse

Abuse in relationships is any behavior or pattern of behavior used to coerce, dominate or isolate the other partner. It is the use of any form of power that is imposed by one partner over the other to maintain control within the relationship.

Abuse includes but is not limited to:

Physical Abuse: Hitting, choking, slapping, burning, shoving, using a weapon, physically restraining; intentional interference with basic needs (e.g. food, medicine, sleep).

Isolation: Restricting freedom-controlling contacts with friends and family, access to information and participation in groups or organizations, locking up in a room/restricting mobility, monitoring telephone calls.

Psychological & Emotional Abuse: Constantly criticizing, ridiculing (self, family, friends, past), trying to humiliate or degrade, lying, undermining self-esteem, misleading someone about the norms and values of the gay/lesbian communities in order to control or exploit them.

Stalking/Harassing Behavior: following, turning up at workplace or house, parking outside, repeated phone calls or mail to victim and/or family, friends, colleagues.

Threats & Intimidation: threatening to harm partner, self or others (children, family, friends, pets); threatening to make reports to authorities that jeopardize child custody, immigration or legal status; threatening to disclose HIV status; threatening to reveal sexual orientation to family, friends, neighbors, and/or employers.

Economic Abuse: controlling or stealing money, fostering dependency, making financial decisions without asking or telling partner.

Sexual Abuse/Harassment: forcing sex or specific acts, pressuring into unwanted sexual behavior, criticizing performance.

Property Destruction: destroying mementos, breaking furniture or windows, throwing or smashing objects, trashing clothes or other possessions.

**For Further Information Contact:
Vanderbilt Work/Life Connections-EAP (615) 936-1327**

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