

Term Sheet

Domestic Violence are often interchangeable with terms such as intimate partner violence, dating violence, Family Violence, and Spousal Abuse. Violence Against Women are all but not limited to the following items:

Spiritual Abuse: Refers to any kind of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse that takes place in a religious context. Or the term may refer to manipulations that damage a person's relationship to God or to his/her core self. Within an Orthodox Christian Setting, this can look in the form of using scripture, liturgical life, saints, tradition, church fathers, or any other church practice to control, demean, minimize, and overpower the victim. This can also take place in the form of faulty clerical and community response (or lack of response) to a victim coming forward for help.

Double Abuse: Also known as secondary abuse, it is when victims of abuse are inadvertently or intentionally mistreated by the people they thought they could trust with their story. Usually, the primary way that people Double Abuse is through their initial response to a victim's disclosure of abuse. This type of abuse is nuanced and can manifest itself in myriad of ways, but three ways it can manifest are as follows:

- **Withholding:** Many abuse victims have experienced the sting that comes from the aftermath of sharing their abuse. For one reason or another, the people they confide in began to treat them differently. Whether it is parents not allowing their child to play with another child who has been sexually assaulted, or an adult being given the cold shoulder at church on Sunday after telling their small group about their abusive home life, all these instances serve to shun the victim and push them into further oppression.
- **Discrediting:** One of the main ways people Double Abuse is by disbelieving and discrediting victims. Too many victims have experienced having their names privately and publicly smeared after confessing their abuse. If the person who harmed the victim witnesses these unsupportive responses, they may feel justified and even emboldened in their abusive behavior.

Grooming: Often unnoticeable to the untrained eye, grooming is a term that is used to describe how a person builds a relationship with a child or vulnerable adult in order to manipulate, exploit or abuse them later on. People of all ages can be groomed into an abusive relationship. Often, the whole community can be groomed by the perpetrator which makes it harder for the victim to come forward and makes it less likely that the community will side with the victim. Community or Organizational Grooming refers to organizations and communities that take part in the grooming (preparation) process.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse: This form of abuse can include intimidation, isolation, threats, exploitation of children, manipulation, silence, and humiliation. It often unfolds as a pattern of behavior over time that aims to diminish another person's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth. Victims often report "walking on eggshells" when living with someone who is psychologically or emotionally abusive. This type of abuse often results in anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts or behaviors, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Coercive Control: Refers to a pattern of controlling behaviors that create an unequal power dynamic in a relationship. These behaviors give the perpetrator power over their partner, making it difficult for them to leave. A person may exert control by deciding what someone wears, where they go, who they socialize with, what they eat and drink, and what activities they take part in. They may also prevent them from going to work or school. The controlling person may also demand or gain access to the partner's computer, cell phone, or email account and may try to get their partner to cut contact with family and friends so that they are easier to control. Coercive control can cause psychological trauma and research into coercive control suggests that this type of abuse often predicts future physical violence.

Verbal Abuse: Insults serve to undermine a person's self-esteem. This may involve name-calling, highlighting a person's insecurities, or putting them down. Eventually, the person experiencing this abuse may start to feel as though they deserve the insults.

Sexual Abuse: Occurs when the perpetrator manipulates their partner (or another person) into unwanted sexual activity. They may use spirituality, religion, pressure, threats, guilt-tripping, lies, or other trickery to coerce them into having sex. Excusing sexual coercion or withholding affection on religious grounds is also considered sexual abuse.

Hyper-Headship: A term used to describe a specific kind of domestic abuse that is perpetrated by Christian (and other religious) men. In this situation, the man uses harsh, oppressive, and authoritative behavior with his partner or wife, and justifies those actions by distorting the Biblical definition of a man's role as leader and head of the household. Hyper-headship is a form of controlling behavior: a common kind of emotional abuse.

Economic Abuse: This occurs when a person controls someone's access to money and does not allow them to make financial decisions. This can make it harder for the victim to leave the relationship.

Gaslighting: A form of psychological abuse in which a person or group causes someone to question their own sanity or perception of reality. People who experience gaslighting may feel confused, anxious, or as though they cannot trust themselves.

- **Most violence against women is perpetrated by current or former husbands or intimate partners.**
- **Domestic Abuse can escalate into physical abuse and, in some cases, homicide.**
- **Signs that an abusive relationship is becoming dangerous include regular physical abuse and murder threats.**
- **Every 11 minutes a girl or woman is killed within a home; in the United States, 3 women die a day from intimate partner violence.**