What is Coercive Control?

Understanding domestic abuse using emotional, physical, financial coercive control

I'm not sure but what you're doing isn't right - it's wrong

What is Coercive Control?
INTRODUCTION

Last year, I helped campaign for a new UK law on Coercive Control. That law was passed in March 2015 and came into force on the 29th of December 2015. While working on the new law, it became clear that what coercive control means isn’t very well understood by victims or the professionals supporting them.

We shouldn’t be surprised that victims do not know they’ve been experiencing coercive control, when we are just now getting a law that recognises it. Victims of abuse know that what has been happening to them wasn’t right, but they didn’t understand that it was domestic abuse and now it’s illegal.

I’m writing this book for all the women and men who experience the psychological, financial, isolating and monitoring forms of coercive control, so they can understand it and the new law.

Educating yourself is the first step in stopping abuse – to go from being a victim to being a survivor.

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Wendy Green a domestic violence professional who has generously shared her knowledge and years of experience with me.
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1. WHAT IS COERCIVE CONTROL?

IT'S ALL ABOUT THEM

Evan Stark coined the term Coercive Control to help people understand domestic abuse is more than a “physical violence”. It is a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim's liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self. It is not just women’s bodily integrity which is violated, but also their human rights.

Coercive control is the most common form of domestic abuse. Victims can experience abuse without being physical assaulted. But victims that are physically assaulted also experience coercive control.

Charities, police and the media have historically focused on physical violence. People still talk about domestic violence not domestic abuse. It’s easier to identify that there is criminal behaviour when someone is standing in front of you with a black eye or broken wrist. In the past the police and agency’s primary role has been to try and stop violence escalating and prevent women from being murdered. In the UK a woman is killed every three days and two men a month are murdered by their current or former partner.

A lesser known statistic is that 500 women a year commit suicide due to domestic violence. Of those, just under 200 attended hospital for domestic violence on the day that they committed suicide. (Walby, S. 2004)

The high suicide rate is due to the overwhelming feeling of hopelessness some victims feel. Victims of domestic abuse, of physical and coercive control, feel they have no means of escape. Coercive control undermines every aspect of a person’s being. It includes: limiting access to money, isolation, degradation, mind-games, and the micro-regulation of everyday life. The abuser will monitor phone calls, who they see, what they buy. They monitor and watch the victim ready to berate or punish them when they do something they disagree with, or not done their way.
Creating a world according themselves

The perpetrator creates a world where they are the centre, it is about what they want and need, and the victim’s needs are not considered. Their partner will be constantly being monitored and undermined. “Always walking on eggshells” is a common description victims use to describe their life with their tormentor. The victim is always on high alert, always trying to please the abuser and keep on their good side. However, no matter what they do, the abuser will continue to be unpredictable and the abuse always starts again.

The abuser sets the rules on how the victim behaves, how the house is run and children are raised. Their rules are based on the perpetrator’s view of how his partner should perform for them – everything from cooking to sex should meet their expectations. They disregard their partners and children’s needs and wants.

A perpetrator will use any tool or tactic to keep their victim under their control – lying, undermining the victim, threats, intimidation, berating, monitoring everything they do, keeping them increasingly impoverished and isolating them completely. Their main objective is to have complete control over this person and ensure that they continue to get what they want.

_If you are constantly having to guess what someone wants, how they will react and that anything you do can have negative consequences, it will imprison you in despair and hopelessness._

What can make it worse is that outside the house people may think this person is charming, friendly and even a great partner. A victim was told “you got lucky when you married him”. Abusers can be Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. In public they appear one way and behind closed doors they turn into a monster.

The impact of coercive control is really just starting to be recognised and we still have a long way to go. The police, social services and support agencies will ask “does this person physically hurt you”? If you say “no” then you are often viewed as low risk and offered little or no action, help or support because they are focusing on victims with physical injuries or risk of a serious assault. Recognising coercive control is the first step. Seeing
that what you are experiencing isn’t normal, it’s not acceptable and there is help available. This book will help you get started on your journey to a safer life.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

THE TERRORIST

Abusers are terrorists, bullies, tyrants, oppressors, dictators. They want to rule over the home, their partner and their children. One of the most devastating parts of their behaviour is the psychological damage. Here are just some of the tactics abusers use.

Fear is a powerful tool for abusers. Fear of violence. Sometimes you don’t have to hurt someone, you just have to make them believe you will. Threats of violence against the victims, children or animals are common.

The fear of losing custody of the children is a powerful motivator to keep a victim in the home. Even if others say that wouldn’t happen, the victim believes the abuser is capable of carrying out the threat.

Not being able to provide for yourself and your children is another fear that a lot of victims have and keeps them trapped.
Accusing victim of having affairs Abusers who have jealously delusions are convinced the victim is having an affair. There isn’t any truth in it. A simple “hello” to a stranger is all the evidence a deluded jealous partner needs to prove that she is having affair. Delusions are irrational and the abuser simply can’t be convinced otherwise. Jealously can be dangerous and if this is happening to you, please get help right away.

Convincing either the victim or others that what they do is in the victim’s best interest. Abusers will start off saying “I’m worried about her/him could you just tell me and report back to me what they are saying/doing/going”. They also set up excuses why the victim appears with bruises “she/he is drinking a lot”, “keeps get drunk and falling over”. Claiming the victim is very depressed or has mental health issues is another tactic. They say this to explain the victim’s emotional deterioration. The motivation is simply to either get people to help them monitor the victim or to create a reason as to why the victim has bruises or is making allegations.

Manipulating and turning others against the victims Abusers will tell people lies in order to get outsiders to side with them and turn their back on the victim. It is another form of isolating the victim. It can also take the form of encouraging others to be rude or mean towards the victim.

Making victims doubt their sanity Abusers will do things to mess with the victims’ head like moving or removing objects, claiming they weren’t told something when they were, saying things like “you’re crazy” making you doubt what happened.

Threatening suicide to persuade victim to “save” them Emotional blackmail is another means to manipulate and keep the victim with them. “If you leave I will kill myself” is a common tactic. The victim feels obligated to stay and help them.

Ignoring the victim refusing to talk to or engage with the victim as a punishment for displeasing them.

Exploiting victim’s vulnerability A victim that is defenceless is particularly at risk. If the victim perhaps has a disability that stops them from being mobile, the abuser can use that against them. Abuser don’t show compassion; the disability is just another opportunity to control that person.

Telling the victim “they will never let them go” Victims feel they will never escape, they feel trapped when their abusers say “I will never let you go” or “if I can’t have you, no one will”. These threats strike fear – victims asking themselves how far will they go. Some victims feel they will be safer if they stay, because of the fear that if they leave they will be hunted down or killed.
Threats to expose the victim either information, photos or videos

Abusers like to humiliate victims and often will threaten to divulge information or photos (revenge porn) of the victims. If the victim hasn’t done anything they can use, they will still simply make up something that will cause the victim the most embarrassment.

Erosion of victim’s self-worth by:

- Persuading them that no one will believe them
- Convincing the victim that they couldn’t cope without them
- Telling them that no one else would want them
- Accusing them of paranoia or questioning sanity
- Berating – constantly criticising, scolding, telling them are doing something wrong, inept
- Belittling - telling them they are ugly, undesirable, stupid, weak

Making a victim feel bad about themselves is probably the most common forms of coercive control. It can be subtle such as “oh let me do that you know you are hopeless at it” or it can be hostile and mean “you’re are worthless”, “you can’t do anything right”

Abusers belittle and attack their victim’s self-esteem and not in just one area but several. “you’re ugly” “you’re a crap mother”, “you can’t even clean a toilet right”. This constant criticism and undermining of a person leaves them with no self-worth. They feel they are incapable of do anything right and if the abuser left they would fail; they would end up worse off. It cripples them into staying in the abusive situation. It is truly horrible, leaving the person a shell of their former self.
3. RELATIONSHIP CONTROLS

THE CHAPERONE

- Isolating victim from friends and family. One man would make sexual advances to the wife’s friends so they stopped coming around. Others just make it clear they don’t want friends or families there. They make them feel uncomfortable until they stop coming around.

- Another abuser would make complaints about anyone helping the victim. He made complaints against the police, domestic violence support workers and her lawyer. Anyone who helped her he would be threatened with a formal complaint or lawsuit.

- Creates repercussions for victim if they talk or meet with others
- Not allowed to see or communicate with outsiders without abuser present
- Controls contact information on mobile or computer
- Accesses, monitors and reads texts, email and social media

Abusers want their victims to be isolated. They will make it impossible for victims to continue to have a relationship with others, especially those that can offer support or encourages the victim to leave. The more a
victim is isolated the more dependent they are on their abuser. That is the objective to isolate and make them financially dependent on them so they believe they have no alternative than to stay.

4. THE FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

THE BANKER

- Victim doesn't have access to bank account
- Restrictive spending allowance
- Has to account for all spending
- Restricting ability to earn a living
- Victim’s name is not on joint assets

Having money gives people options. If someone has access to money, they will be able to set-up a new home and therefore much more likely to leave. If, on the contrary, if they don’t have access to the bank account, or they are only given a small allowance, it limits their options.

Abusers often use money to control their victims or as punishment. Most don’t like spending or sharing their money with their partner or children. They want the money for themselves, to do what they want, when they want. Sarah’s husband went a way for a golf holiday but left her no money or access to money for four days. She had to ask a friend to buy milk for the kids and bring some wood for the fire.
These same abusers may be generous at the pub buying drinks for friends. It's part of their image. Mary had a beautiful, big house on the outside it looked amazing but inside it was shabby. Her husband wouldn’t let her buy anything for the house. He either claimed they couldn’t afford it or he simply didn’t see it as adding to his image because he wouldn’t allow her to invite anyone over.
CASE STUDY

Emma 38 is bright, articulate with impeccable manners and mother to two football mad boys. They had a very middle class family life. Everyone thought that Emma and her husband Mark were a normal family. He was charming and seemed very attentive toward Emma and the boys. But when they were at home things were very different.

“I've experienced abuse throughout my 13-year marriage,” Emma explains. “Towards the end of the relationship, he had become more physical. However, in the years leading up to this, I experienced on-going harassment, emotional abuse and isolation from friends and family plus complete control over family finances. I had not realised until more recently that this was domestic abuse.”

“I have been made to feel that I should not be away from the home and my friends and family were made to feel very unwelcome within our home – there was an aura of hostility towards them created by him. Mark worked from home so it didn't matter where we lived. He chose a rural home so I became more isolated and dependent on him.”

“The most difficult aspect in trying to escape him and move on is the financial control he had – still has. My husband paid the bills, he made financial decisions, bought all the food and therefore had control over what the family ate. I was given a small allowance each week and had to explain what I did with it.”

“The financial control started straight away, but I was unaware of a lot of until we started to get a divorce. When we got married, I sold my home and together we bought a house but he didn’t put my name on the deeds. He said it was an oversight, he told me he had changed the deeds only to find out years later that he hadn’t.”

“He used his control over the money to ensure that I remained financially reliant on him and to try to keep me with him. When it was clear we were divorcing, he stopped paying bills and where possible transferred the bills into my name without my knowledge.”

“He has blocked me being able to pay an outstanding council tax bill so I would be chased by the council and threatened with court action. He refused to release the money to pay the bills, knowing that I could be taken to court and also run up additional charges. He did the same with unpaid parking fines he ran up while driving the car which is in my name, refusing to pay these so I was chased for the debt.”

“During the division of assets, he refused to disclose information. I couldn’t access any money until a final agreement so I had to settle just so I could afford to live. Today he claims he is penniless so he pays £3.50 a
week for each child. He refuses to give them any additional money for school bus, sports or extra tuition. Yet, he has gone abroad on four holidays this year.”

“He continues to try to interfere in my life and cause chaos. It’s very stressful and I’m not sure when it will end. We’ve been divorced for almost three years and still this man has a tremendously negative impact on my life.”

“Money is his God. He has lost me and the children. How will that comfort him in his old age?”
5. USING VIOLENCE

The Thug

- Physically stopping the victim from leaving, dragging them home.
- Physically abusive including: pushing, prodding, slapping, hitting,
- Throttling, strangulation, choking

Many victims live in fear of physically being harmed. An abuser can be physical only a few times but the threat and fear is enough to keep their victim obedient.

Alcohol and drug abuse increases the physical risk for victims. Events where there is drinking or partying are difficult for victims, they know when they get home they may be attacked. Victims don’t enjoy football, Christmas, New Year’s or just a night at the pub because they are worried about the consequences.
6. USING SURVEILLANCE

The spy

- Using mobile or computer technology to monitor movement, conversations, contacts
- Persuading others to report where the victim goes or what they say
- Using GPS tracking devices
- Installing video or listening devices

Being a victim can mean that all your movements, conversations are monitored. Technology means that an abuser can monitor everything the victim does. What they do online, who they talk to, what they say, see all their photos. It means they have no privacy. Victims who are being monitored using technology need help so they are not tracked if they plan on leaving their abuser. The Digital-Trust.Org has information on how to configure and clean your phone so you can’t be tracked.
7. KEEPING YOU IMPRISONED

The watch dog

- Confiscating passports, driving licences and other forms of ID
- Keeping victim effectively under house arrest
- Only allowed out escorted or with some form of surveillance
- Forces victim to “check in”
- No access to money for transport
- Withholds keys to house or car
- Refusing access to friends or family
- Keeping the victim virtually under house arrest

It is difficult to believe that victims are subjected to virtual house arrest but it does happen. The abusers will put barriers to victim’s movement so they are isolated, dependent on them and of course so they can’t leave.

Jaya was only allowed to leave the house to take the children to school. When she left the house she had to call her husband and keep him on the phone the whole time she was collecting the children. She was not permitted to talk to anyone to and from collecting the children. She finally escaped by passing notes to the children’s teacher who contacted the police.

That is a frightening case it demonstrates to what extent some abusers will go to have complete control over their victim. Adam’s partner use to make him hand over his phone every night so he could look at the location history, which keeps a track of where the phone had been.

Another victim didn’t even realise what her husband was doing was coercive control. He put spyware on her phone so he could see where she was all the time. He told her it was because he wanted to “keep her safe and be able to get to her in an emergency”. He didn’t tell her he could watch her through the phone, read her texts etc. Interestingly, he also didn’t suggest that the same software on his phone so she could watch out for him.
Case Study

Mark and Anna were partners that also had a business together. Anna managed the finances for the business, Mark undertook the 'work' and 'public face of the business'. The relationship ran into difficulty and Anna wanted to end the relationship. When Mark agreed “that it would probably for the best”, Anna turned ‘nasty’. Unsurprising the business suffered. Mark was afraid to approach her or discuss any business issues in case it made the situation worse. Anna ended up removing money from the business and running up overdrafts.

Mark started to notice that the information which he included in private emails to friends was later used by Anna in arguments. Then when Mark went on jobs for work, Anna would appear. Mark couldn’t understand how Anna knew so much and where he was going to be all the time. This caused severe stress to Mark; completely undermining his confidence, turning him into a 'nervous wreck'.

Anna had put spyware on Mark’s work and home computer. This gave Anna the ability to monitor all of Mark’s emails, read documents and access passwords. The passwords allowed her to log in to Mark’s email and Facebook account and start sending offensive messages to friends and family so it looked as if Mark had sent them.

The surveillance went further than spyware. Anna had also installed web cameras in the office that could be operate remotely. When he was out of the office Anna could monitor Mark’s location because she used his phone’s GPS to track him.

Mark cleaned his computers, secured his accounts and removed the surveillance equipment but Anna’s stalking behaviour didn’t completely stop, however the impact was greatly reduced and Anna was no longer able to access information about Mark. The couple came to a financial agreement with Mark agreeing to give substantial amounts to Anna just to stop the harassment.

Male victims of ex-partner stalking are often targeted financially or the stalkers try to damage the victim’s reputation. Often it is both. This was Mark’s experience; he lost money and clients but it also made him anxious, reduced his self-confidence and makes him wary of others all due to Anna’s abusive actions.
8. WHEN THE ABUSE CONTINUES

How abuse changes once you leave

When a victim leaves, it is a dangerous time for them. They are at a higher risk for a physical assault and they must take extra safety precautions. Abusers often can’t accept that their victim has left and they try to get them to return. Many victims do return. On average, a woman will leave the home seven times before they leave their abuser for good. Maybe they are persuaded because the abuser acts remorseful or promises to go to anger management alternatively a lack of finances and support means they feel they have no other choice. But soon the pattern of behaviour returns, the abuse can even escalate because the abuser feels more empowered. They think she/he tried to leave and can’t, so now I really can do anything I want.

Those victims that successfully leave will often still have to deal with ongoing abuse, but the type of abuse changes. The victims change too. When victims are able to get away from their abusers they have the opportunity to start the healing process. The more that victims are able to get support, the more resilient they become. In time, they often get to the point where they are no longer afraid of their abuser. This takes time; some victims will be able to do that in a year or less others it can take three to five years. However, with help, people can go from being a victim to being a survivor.
In 14 there are support organisations that can help victims move on and heal from their abuse. I also recommend some books because investing time to read and understand more about abusers is the best way for someone to help themselves.
9. PHYSICAL ABUSE

DEALING WITH NEW THREATS

The most common problems victims report about the abuser:

- Giving unwanted gifts
- Following the victim
- Coming to the house or work place
- Criminal Damage
- Putting trackers on the car

Victims hope that once they leave they will be safe. Unfortunately, this isn’t true. In fact, the most dangerous time for domestic abuse is when the person leaves their abuser. It is one of the “triggers” for violence. The main objective in planning an escape is physical safety.

Abusers still may continue to show up at a house or workplace for a considerable period of time. It is very frightening when walking out of the house to see your tormentor watching you. You don’t know if they are going to be nice or nasty. You will be asking “how did they find me”? “Have I had my mobiles compromised or trackers put on my car?” An ex-partner will often know who the victim will turn to for help and where they would go to stay. They may manage to manipulate a family member or friend to telling them. It is important that the victim’s new addresses are flagged on the police system and that they do call and report the abusers.

Sending unwanted gifts is another tactic. People around the victim see it as a gesture and may even encourage the victim to give him another chance. The victim doesn’t want these gifts; they don’t want the contact. If the abuser starts damaging the home or car, it’s a serious issue and an indication that they may be willing to carry out a physical attack as well.
10. UNWANTED COMMUNICATIONS

NO! I DON’T WANT TO TALK TO YOU

- Phone, text, direct messaging or email
- Social media either directly or leaving messages that indicate that he is still monitoring the victim
- Getting a third party to deliver a message
- Letters

Abusers will use a range of excuses and tactics to keep in contact with their victim. One of the most common is children. They will insist that they should have the mother’s phone number to be kept informed about the children. They will email about contact, but it’s just an excuse to be vile.

Abusers are often very good at manipulating others. They will call friends and family to persuade them to help them get back together or do the opposite to be mean and nasty about the victim. Friends will then act inadvertently thus becoming an abuser by proxy. Well-meaning friends in family will try to act as a mediator or a marriage counsellor but they may not understand or recognise the pattern of abusive behaviour. They tell the victim what the abuser said passing on horrible comments which is upsetting to the victim.

Today, social media is a popular tool which abusers use to humiliate ex-partners. It provides a means to monitor them or send them messages. This type of maltreatment, being played out in public to all your friends, family or
work colleagues, is devastating for victims. They have to spend energy and time trying to get it removed, or live with the harmful posts remaining online.
11. REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE

I will make you regret leaving me

- Post personal information online
- Revenge porn
- Contacting friends and families
- Sharing humiliating pictures or information
- Spreading rumours and gossip
- Making complaints to authorities or workplace
- Making false statements to the court
- Not paying bills and putting them in the victim’s name

Both male and female victims of ex-partner abuse can experience an attack on their reputation. Male victims are attacked in order to ruin their ability to earn a living. These can be a professional attack about their work or suggest they are doing something dodgy. Suggesting the abuser engages in inappropriate behaviour or being called a peadophile are also common attacks.

Women are often attacked on their looks and that they are promiscuous; words like whore and slut are often used. Distributing intimate photos to friends and family, or online, is another means to inflict pain on a victim. The trigger for revenge porn often happens not when the women leaves, but when she gets a new partner.

Claiming a victim is mentally ill is also a favourite attack of abusers. It is used to ruin the victim’s credibility especially his/her claims about their abuser. In other words, “you can’t believe them, they are mentally ill”. Ironically, it is the abuser that could be considered having mental health issues as they have difficulty recognising that it is their behaviour that has resulted in their partner leaving. Abusers often seem incapable of accepting the responsibility for their partners leaving, so to explain it, they use their partners alleged mental illness as the reason why they left.
12. SYSTEM ABUSER

Creating anxiety through false reporting

- Use child access rights to maintain contact with victim
- Reporting to authorities including: police, housing association, child protective services
- Making vexatious complaints to police, housing, social services
- Requesting information using parental rights from schools or GPs
- Making complaints to employers
- Using family court system to punish victim e.g. custody hearings
- Making complaints against professionals supporting the victim

Abusers are often arrogant. They believe they are very clever. Yet, we see the same tactics used over and over again. Falsely reporting someone to the authorities is one of the most common types of abuse. It is indirect, it involves causing their victim stress by having to explain, justify or prove that the accusations are baseless. It causes stress and can result in the victim having to hire lawyers, therefore depleting their limited financial resources.

Alice’s husband had her in court 9 times in one year. He alleged she breached a contact order. She hadn’t, he misinterpreted/twisted what the order said, in order to take her to court. Each time he took her to court he lost more contact with his children as a result. Yet, he continued to take her back to court. He wasn’t worried about being a good father. What he wanted to do was impoverish her by running up her legal costs, consume all her time fighting the court orders, so that she didn’t have the time or energy to work. Eventually, he lost all physical contact and was restricted from bringing her back to court for two years. She lost several thousands of pounds, and a year of her life, fighting this man in court.

Abusers will use any means to make a report. They will contact schools, housing, police, social services and the victim’s employers. It can’t be very difficult because agencies have a duty to investigate complaints. Agencies often don’t recognise, or have a policy to deal with, complaints that are part of a harassment campaign. It can
also be difficult to prove, or get the police to investigate, this type of abuse as harassment. But they can and they do, and the new law on coercive control should help the police recognise the ex-partner is an abuser.
13. FINANCIAL ABUSE

You aren’t getting any of my money

- Non-payment of allowances
- Abuser claims poverty to avoid payments
- Not disclosing financial assets and/or delaying financial settlement
- Running up bills in joint names, refusing to make payments so creditor pursues victim
- Restricts ability to earn a living e.g. ruining reputation

Money is often a contentious issue. During the separation, an abuser who already controlled the finances will hide money and assets. They will deny those assets ever existed. It can astonish victims how easily the ex-partner can lie to a court or act illegally during a divorce. On the other hand, the victim is often very truthful, much to their detriment.

Abusers will punish victims financially by transferring bills into the victim’s name without their knowledge or consent. The victim is the one that ends up with the penalties and threats of court action or bailiffs.

They don’t treat their children any better. Remember, abusers often extremely self-centred, they don’t worry or care about others, including their children. Their attitude is often that “the victim got my money in divorce I’m not paying them anymore”. “They can use the divorce settlement (which was probably not fair to begin with) to take care of the kids”. The other attitude is that their ex-partner can just go on benefits.

It is particularly difficult to prove an abuser’s income if they are self-employed, or if they are willing to lie to the court or if they misrepresent their income to the Inland Revenue. It can be difficult get the documentation needed to make them pay maintenance.

Mary’s ex-husband Tom drives around in a very nice car, he goes on two to three holidays a year abroad and owns multiple properties which he put in other family members’ names. But Tom only pays £3.50 per week per child because of his “declared income”. Mary doesn’t have money to do an asset trace and prove he is lying and the Child Maintenance Service or Child Support Agency (CSA) doesn’t conduct those
enquiries. The children are old enough to recognise that their father isn’t supporting them and needless to say they don’t want much to do with him.
14. NEW LAW

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The new law is helpful. It will give the criminal justice system a piece of legislation that will recognise non-violent abuse. Whenever, a new piece of legislation is introduced it also means that new guidelines and training are created. That is just as important because it will educate police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the judges on coercive control. Hopefully, this will give them the confidence to identify, investigate and prosecute the perpetrators.

However, it doesn’t mean victims of domestic abuse will always be treated well by the criminal justice system. The stalking laws were brought in 2012 ago, it is still very much a post-code lottery how well a stalking victim is listened to and if the police and CPS investigate and prosecute a case.

The more evidence a victim can gather the better their chances of being listened to by the police. Victims should start a log of incidents; day, what happened, what evidence/witness, how it made you feel and what actions you took. Examples of the type of evidence you may have include: text, emails, phone records, videos, voicemails, bank statements or receipts, witness statements, interactions with agencies or charities, risk assessments, tracking devices found on the car or tracking software on the phone and property damage.

There were over 350,000 cases of domestic abuse incidents reported in the UK in 2014-2015. The police are overwhelmed with the volume of complaints. They lack of resources to deal with the high volume of complaints properly. Domestic abuse charities are also struggling. Unfortunately, it means often is the physical violence cases and the extreme coercive control cases are the only ones that acted upon. That is why I written additional books to help you, help yourself in keeping safe.
SERIOUS CRIME ACT 2015 (DOMESTIC ABUSE - SECTION 76)

Prior to this new law, it was difficult to get a conviction for financial, psychological and emotional abuse. This new law sets out that repeated or continuous behalf of coercive control by intimate partner is a criminal offence.

In order for the law to apply, it has to be an intimate or ex-intimate relationship. It can include partners or members of the same family. Such as:

(a) they are, or have been, married to each other;

(b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;

(c) they are relatives;

(d) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);

(e) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);

(f) they are both parents of the same child;

(g) they have, or have had, parental responsibility for the same child.

The law says abusers can be held accountable for their actions when they “ought to know” that a reasonable person in possession of the same information would consider it abuse.

It’s an offence if the abuser’s behaviour has had a “serious effect” on the victim. If the behaviour causes:

(a) fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against the victim or

(b) it causes the victim serious alarm or distress which has a substantial adverse effect on victim’s usual day-to-day activities.

There is a defence if the person accused of abuse can show that

(a) in engaging in the behaviour in question, the alleged abuser believed they were acting in the victim’s best interests, and

(b) the behaviour was in all the circumstances reasonable.

However, this defence is not available to an abuser in relation to behaviour that causes victims to fear that violence will be used against them.
If an abuser is found guilty on the higher offence of causing fear, they can face up imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or a fine, or both. On the lesser offence they can face imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months, or a fine, or both.
15. OTHER LAWS

**LAWS THAT MAY BE USED**

The following is a list of offences that may be considered, derived from the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of behaviour</th>
<th>Possible offences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence including spitting, punching, slapping, pushing, kicking, head-butting, hair pulling, choking, strangling or suffocating.</td>
<td>Battery, see section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Assault occasioning actual bodily harm, see section 47 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This includes assault with a weapon.</td>
<td>Wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm, see section 20 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Wounding or causing grievous bodily harm with intent, see section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Attempted murder, see section 1 of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence resulting in death.</td>
<td>Murder or manslaughter, see CPS Guidance Homicide: Murder and Manslaughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening with a weapon or article used as a weapon, eg, knife, tool, telephone, chair.</td>
<td>Threats to kill, see section 16 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Common assault, see section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Affray, see section 3 of the Public Order Act 1986 – this can take place inside a dwelling. Specific bladed article or weapon charges can be considered if in a public place or on school premises: Having an offensive weapon in a public place, see section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an article with a blade or point in a public place, see section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having an article with a blade or point (or an offensive weapon) on school premises, see section 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Threatening a person with an offensive weapon in a public place, where there is immediate risk of serious physical harm to that person, see section 1A of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening a person with an article with a blade or point in a public place, where there is immediate risk of serious physical harm to that person, see section 139AA of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening a person with an article with a blade or point (or an offensive weapon) on school premises, where there is immediate risk of serious physical harm to that person, see section 139AA of the Criminal Justice Act 1953.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These offences were inserted by section 142 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threatening, abusing or insulting a person with intent to cause fear or provoke violence (where at least one party is outside a dwelling).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear or provocation of violence, see section 4 of the Public Order Act 1986.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Intentionally causing harassment, alarm or distress to a person.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentional harassment, alarm or distress (where at least one party is outside a dwelling), see section 4A of the Public Order Act 1986. Stalking, including where it puts a person in fear of violence, see section 2A and 4A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Throwing articles, eg, crockery, even if they miss their target.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common assault or battery, see section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Affray, see section 3 of the Public Order Act 1986 – this can take place inside a dwelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaging or destroying property, or threatening to do so, including by fire.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forcing entry into a house.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tying someone up or otherwise preventing them from leaving a room/house.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preventing someone from seeking aid, eg, medical help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persistent verbal abuse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offensive, obscene or menacing telephone calls, messages, letters or social network communications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coercive Control Behavior</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting a person in fear of violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenge pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive unwanted contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret or forced administration of drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of a court order limiting or preventing contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressuring a victim/witness to ‘drop the case’ or to not give evidence, including during the investigation stage, ie, where a person has not been charged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001</strong> for harming during or within one year of the conclusion of proceedings. Perverting the course of justice, see CPS Guidance on Public Justice Offences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. HELP AND SUPPORT

IT ISN’T EASY - GET HELP, UNDERSTAND YOUR ABUSER

Recommended Books

- Living with the Dominator: A Book About the Freedom Programme by Pat Craven and Jacky Fleming
- Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men by Lundy Bancroft
- Daily Wisdom for Why Does He Do That? by Lundy Bancroft
- Psychopath Free Paperback by Jackson MacKenzie
- Antidote For A Stalker by Mike Proctor
- Stalkers and their Victims (Cambridge Medicine) by Paul E. Mullen (for professionals working with victims)

RECOMMENDED ORGANISATIONS

Victims of domestic abuse will need a range of support and services. Here are organisations that can assist them.

WWW.DIGITAL-TRUST.ORG WE PROVIDE A RANGE OF FREE ADVICE FOR VICTIMS - FROM GOING TO THE POLICE TO HOW TO SECURE YOUR MOBILE. WE ALSO HAVE SERVICES TO HELP INCREASE YOUR SAFETY

www.cyberthreatconsultants.co.uk Helping victims with their security and can help gather evidence.

www.maypole.org.uk Helping women leave abusive relationships, resource for women going through divorce or going to court.

LEGAL ADVICE

www.rightsofwomen.org.uk legal advice and information, the law and legal rights.
www.divorceaid.co.uk has a range of useful advice.
www.barprobono.org.uk providing free legal advice and representation from barristers.
www.childrenslegalcentre.com/ providing free legal information, advice and representation to children, young people, their families, carers and professionals.
www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice providing information about whether legal aid is available for your case and whether you are eligible. Call 0345 345 4 345.
www.citizensadvice.org.uk providing free legal advice on a range of issues including immigration, housing and benefits.
www.lawcentres.org.uk provides a directory of local legal advice centres in the UK.
www.frp.org.uk/ advises, advocates and campaigns for families whose children are involved with, or require, social care services.

**Domestic violence**


www.allwaleshelpline.org.uk runs a 24 hour helpline offering support and advice on domestic violence for women in Wales. Call 0808 80 10 800.

www.mensadvice.org.uk runs a helpline to help men that are experiencing domestic abuse Call 0808 801 0327

www.dvmen.co.uk advice for men who are experiencing domestic abuse

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk runs a 24 hour helpline offering support and advice on domestic violence for LGBT people in England and Wales. Call 0300 999 5428.

www.galop.org.uk providing advice and support to LGBT people affected by domestic and sexual violence and hate crime. Call 020 7704 2040.

www.victimsupport.org.uk provides a network of advice and support services for victims of crime. Call 0845 30 30 900.

www.signhealth.org.uk/deafhope provides a sign-language based service designed to help deaf women and children affected by domestic violence.

www.stalkinghelpline.org helpline offering advice on stalkers Call 0808 802 30300

**Financial**
www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/categories/divorce-and-separation Impartial information to help you with your finances if you’re going through divorce or separation.

Emotional support

www.freedomprogramme.co.uk is a programme and books help women understand abusive men and to help them make sense of their experience

www.mind.org.uk runs a helpline and offers advice and support Call: 0845 766 0163

www.samaritans.org crisis support for anyone in emotional distress Call 08457 90 90 90

www.asianfamilycounselling.org counselling for individuals, couples and families of Asian communities.

www.gingerbread.org.uk Helps lone parents and their children. Runs weekday helpline Call: 0800 018 5026
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Perry is the CEO of the Digital-Trust and the UK’s leading expert on digital abuse, cyber stalking and harassment. She works with and advises the several UK charities including: The National Stalking Helpline, Network for Surviving Stalking, Action Scotland Against Stalking as well as Women’s Aid. She is also an advisor to Coventry Cyber Security MBA programme. She works with and provides training to domestic violence and public protection police officers.

She is the author of the Network for Surviving Stalking and the Women’s Aid national guidelines on Stalking and Harassment: Digital Stalking - A guide to Technology Risk for Victims. That guide has been members of the UK police, stalking charities and domestic violence groups.

Coming from an early background both in marketing and technology She has over 20 years working in the tech industry. Jennifer is an American with a BA in advertising from the University of Oklahoma from the school of Journalism. Find out more at http://www.digital-trust.org/jennifer-perry
ABOUT DIGITAL-TRUST, CIC

The Digital-Trust is a non-for-profit organisation that helps victims of abuse, particularly digital abuse. Today, our digital lives mean that when someone wants to hurt us they can use technology against us. We identify risks from using of mobiles, social-media or other cloud based services. Then we help victims to understand those risks and give clear easy to use advice on how they can make changes to reduce those threats.

The Digital-Trust also works with and supports many different professionals from technology, academia, criminal justice and charities. We collaborate with many different organisations so we can deliver more help to victims.

OTHER BOOKS FOR 2016

My books are to help you help yourself. Understanding more about what is happening, knowing what you should or can help you to stay safer and regain control.

- How to secure your iPhone.
- How to secure your Android.
- How to secure your Windows phone.
- How to you increase your digital security.
- What you need to know before going to the police
- What is stalking?