



**Toronto West
Local Immigration Partnership
Community Collaboration at Work**

Women Against Violence Action Group Presents

Gender Based Violence
First Response Toolkit For Frontline Staff

Fourth Edition - February 2020



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Mission Statement

Women Against Violence is an Action Group of the Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership (TWLIP) that aims to promote the message that gender-based violence is everyone's issue to address. The Action Group supports local community organizations in enhancing knowledge and building capacity to address this issue.

Purpose of Toolkit

This toolkit has been prepared to help frontline staff:

- Respond to clients and situations with sensitivity
- Increase victim/survivor safety
- Provide information on resources and options
- Make effective, timely referrals to specialized services and supports
- Encourage victim/survivor to take action to end the violence and begin to take steps towards positive changes in their lives.

Note:

This guide is not intended to replace an agency's policies, procedures and guidelines.



Global estimates published by WHO indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Most of this violence is intimate partner violence. Worldwide, almost one third (30%) of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner in their lifetime.

Picture Source: Amnesty International

Key facts Source: WHO (World Health Organization)

What is Gender-Based Violence?

Gender-based violence (GBV) includes any form of violence that is based upon an individual's gender, gender expression or gender identity and is intended to control, humiliate or harm the individual. GBV includes various forms of violence such as domestic violence, physical violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, forced labour, human trafficking, femicide, cyber-violence and emotional and psychological violence (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services).

Facts

Indigenous women experience violence at a rate that is **2.7X** higher than that which is reported by non-Indigenous women (Statistics Canada, 2017) and report more severe forms of violence, (Statistics Canada, 2013).

Transgendered people are almost **2X** as likely as cisgendered women to experience intimate partner violence (Nadine, MacGregor & MacQuarrie, 2015).

According to 2011 police data, girls aged 12 to 17 were violently victimized at a rate nearly six times higher than that for younger girls, and almost twice as high as the rate for adult women (Stats Canada, 2013)

Immigrant and refugee women are more vulnerable to gender-based violence due to language barriers, isolation from their family, precarious work and uncertain legal status (Status of Women Canada, 2015).

Cost of violence against women is total of **1 billion** dollars each year, Criminal Justice (\$684 million), Police (\$187 million), Counselling (\$294 million). (War at home 2016)

A total of 87,000 women were intentionally killed in 2017. More than half of them (58 per cent) – 50,000 – were killed by intimate partners or family members. (UNODC, 2018)

An estimated 9.7% of women and 2.3% of men have been **stalked by an intimate partner** during their lifetime. (CDC, 2017)

Approximately 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) worldwide have experienced **forced sex** (forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts) at some point in their life. (UNICEF, 2017)

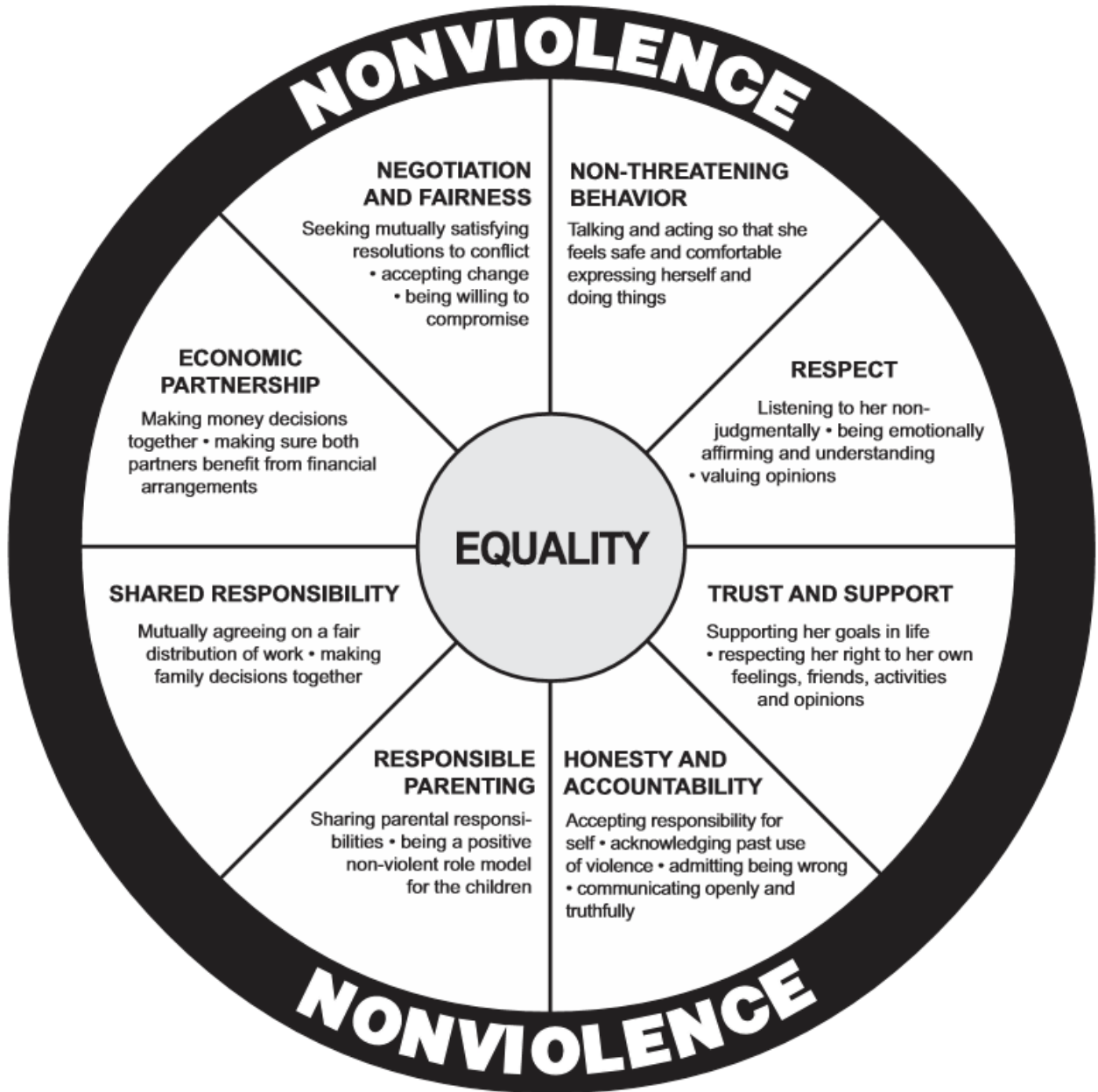
POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Violence within adult relationships involves intentional and systematic tactics of abuse which are used to establish power and maintain control over the thoughts, beliefs, and conduct of a partner. These tactics can include, but are not limited to, the examples below:



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.theduluthmodel.org

EQUALITY WHEEL



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

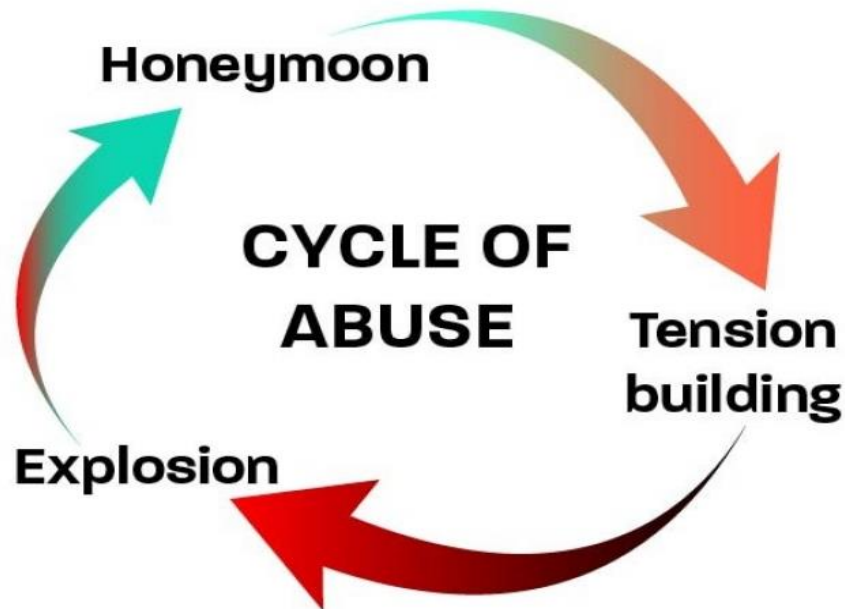
202 East Superior Street

Duluth, Minnesota 55802

218-722-2781

www.theduluthmodel.org

BEHAVIOURS TYPICALLY DISPLAYED DURING THE CYCLE OF ABUSE



Honeymoon

- Apologetic
- Respectful
- More attentive
- Improved communication
- Helps around the house
- Promises to change
- Gives gifts and compliments

Tension

- Insults
- Threats
- Sarcasm
- Jealousy
- Accusation
- Fault finding
- Controls what she does
- Sudden mood changes
- Emotionally distant

Explosion

- Intimidating body language
- Will not allow her to leave
- Throws things
- Slams doors
- Silent treatment
- Physical assault
- Name calling
- Yelling & swearing

Source: *Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence (2014)* pg 16&.89
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/vaw-clinical-handbook/en/index.html

First Response Steps

Please note that this is a framework with strategies to support a client through a disclosure of abuse. However, each response must be adapted to support a client's individual concerns, needs and goals.

A. Identifying Abuse

As a worker, you may suspect an individual is experiencing abuse. They may not want you to call them at home or leave messages. They may cancel meetings at the last minute or appear socially isolated, sad, afraid or withdrawn. This person may initially present to your agency asking questions about various possible outcomes and may speak in hypotheticals. They may say that they are gathering information on behalf of an individual they know who is experiencing abuse.

If you suspect that an individual you are working with may be experiencing violence or abuse, it is imperative to respond supportively and remember that they are the expert of their own experiences. They may not identify their experiences as abuse, and they may not choose to discuss the topic further.

If they should choose to identify the abuse, it is extremely important to provide them with opportunities to tell their own story through their own words.

Practice LIVES

Listen	Listen closely with empathy not judgement
Inquire about needs and concerns	Assess and respond to their needs and concerns – emotional, physical, social and practical
Validate	Show that you believe and understand the client
Enhance safety	Discuss how to protect them from further harm.
Support	Help them connect to services, social support

Initial open-ended questions you could ask to encourage the client to discuss it with you:

- **(Victim/survivor's name)** you have told me a little bit about **(abusive person/type of relationship/abuse tactic)**. Can you tell me a little about what happened the last time this occurred?
- How often does this behavior happen? How do you feel when **(abusive person)** behaves like this?
- What type of behaviors would scare you if **(abusive person)** acted against you?
- Has **(abusive person)** ever threatened you or hurt you? Physically, emotionally, financially?
- Do you have concerns about your safety? Your children's safety?
- Are you concerned about the impact of your partner's behavior on your children?
- Do you feel safe to go home after our meeting today?

B. Responding to a Disclosure

If the victim/survivor does disclose abuse, the front-line worker should keep in mind that their response must be sensitive to the client. The frontline worker should:

- Remain calm and remind the client that the abuse they are facing is not their fault.
- Listen with no judgement, validating and believing what the client is saying.
- Respect how much or how little context of the abuse the client is willing to share (VAW-informed interpreters should be used whenever necessary).
- Assess and mitigate the level of risk the client is facing, while supporting whatever decision they choose to keep themselves safe.
- Get the victim/survivor's permission before taking action on their behalf and respect their right to make their own choices.
- Be transparent as you explain confidentiality, along with the limitations of confidentiality when issues of child protection arise.
- If children are involved or witnessing abuse, you have to let the victim/survivor know that you have a duty to report to Children's Aid Society (Visit <http://www.oacas.org/childrens-aid-child-protection/duty-to-report/> for more information on your duty to report)

Tips for managing the conversation

- ✓ Choose a private place to talk, where no one can overhear (but not a place that indicates to others why you are there).
- ✓ Assure the client that you will not repeat what they say to anyone who doesn't need to know. If you are required to report their situation, explain what you must report and to whom.
- ✓ First, encourage them to talk and show that you are listening.
- ✓ Encourage them to continue talking if they wish, but do not force them to talk ("Do you want to say more about that?").
- ✓ Allow silences. If they cry, give them time to recover.

Remember: Always respect the wishes of the victim/survivor.

Questions you might ask?

- *Are you afraid of your partner?*
- *Has your partner or someone else at home threatened to hurt you? If so, when?*
- *Has your partner threatened to kill you?*
- *Does your partner bully you or insult you?*
- *Does he try to control you – for example not letting you have money or leave the house?*

Source: Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence (2014) pg 16&.89
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/vaw-clinical-handbook/en/index.html

c. **Basic Safety Planning**

A **safety plan** is created in collaboration with the client that includes actions and strategies they have found effective in keeping themselves safe. The plan can include new resources that they are willing to employ to increase their safety.

A safety plan can include potential action plans, a list of resources or referrals specific to the client's needs, or a safe escape plan, should they ever consider leaving the abusive situation. If the client discloses that they are in immediate danger (i.e. of being assaulted onsite/during the current meeting) and you as a worker are at risk as well, prioritize safety and call emergency services (911). If they have stated that they are in danger and are seeking supports, determine:

- If they have any immediate medical injuries that need to be addressed. If they give consent, support them to seek out medical assistance for physical ailments. If possible, accompany them to this emergency visit.
- If the client would like to call 911 to report the abusive incident, support them with that call. Advocate for any necessary language interpretation services they may need.
- If they are in need of additional counselling services or need to connect to specialized VAW services, provide them with crisis numbers to call. Note: a list of available crisis resources is located on page 16 of this kit.
- If they do not feel safe to return home, brainstorm safe places where they can stay. This could include a relative, trusted friend, neighbour, VAW women's shelters, or safe community spaces such as a church.
- If they are in need of a shelter space, locate crisis shelters through www.sheltersafe.ca and support them in calling appropriate shelter locations to complete an intake.
- Create a list of crisis supports, community resources, personal support and emergency contacts they can keep to access services. If possible, keep a copy in the client file.
- If the client chooses not to access alternative housing and wishes to remain in the relationship, provide them with referrals to specialized VAW resources to create a more in-depth safety plan.
- Encourage them to keep a copy of all important documents with them or in another location for safe keeping. If possible, keep these photocopies in the client file with your agency.

Signs of Immediate Risk of Gender Based Violence

- ✓ Worsening Violence
- ✓ Threatened with a weapon
- ✓ Tried to strangle them
- ✓ Beat them when pregnant
- ✓ Constantly jealous
- ✓ Victim feels perpetrator could kill them



Child Safety Plan

This plan was developed to help someone in an abusive situation to teach their children basic safety planning. It is based on the belief that the most important thing that children can do for their families is to get away from the area of violence! They cannot stop the abuse, although they often try by distracting the abuser or directly interfering in the abusive episode. It is important to tell the child that the best and most important thing for them to do is to be safe. Children who experience domestic violence can be profoundly affected. It is very traumatic for them to be faced with violence directed at them or at someone they love. Personal safety and safety planning are extremely important and necessary for children whose families are experiencing violence. Children should learn ways to protect themselves.

There are several ways to help you develop a safety plan with your children.

- ✓ Have your child pick a safe room/place in the house, preferably with a lock on the door and a phone. The first step of any plan is for the children to get out of the room where the abuse is occurring.
- ✓ Stress the importance of being safe, and that it is not the child's responsibility to make sure that his/her parent is safe
- ✓ Teach your children how to call for help. It is important that children know they should not use a phone that is in view of the abuser. This puts them at risk. If you have a cell phone, teach your children how to use it. Teach them how to contact police by dialing 9-1-1
- ✓ Ensure that the children know their full name and address. Rehearse what your child will say when they call for help.

Example of Calling the Police:

Dial 9-1-1

The person answering the phone will say "Police, Fire, Ambulance."

You say "Police"

Then your child says: My name is _____ . I am _____ years old. I need help. Send the police. Someone is hurting my mom/dad.

The address here is _____ .

The phone number is _____ .

- ✓ It is important for children to remain on the line with police as long as possible and while safe to do so.
- ✓ Pick a safe place to meet your children, out of the home, after the situation is safe for you and for them so you can easily find each other
- ✓ Teach your children the safest route to the planned place of safety for them.



Follow up/ Resources (Check the referrals provided, with worker names):

- | Service Referred | Organization | Staff Name |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Medical Services | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Children's Services | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Police Services | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Legal Services | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Housing Services | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Financial Services | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Interpreter Services | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Support Group | _____ | _____ |

Other Relevant Information:

Staff Signature:

Please note: Keep the original document in your file and send copy to a Manager and Executive Director without client's name to ensure confidentiality

This samples is taken from COSTI's "Wife Assault/Woman Abuse" Protocol Prepared by Marina Morrow June 1993

Referral Chart

What to refer for	Where/ who to refer to	Contact Information	Responsibility for follow- up
Shelter/Housing			
Crisis Centre			
Financial Aid			
Legal Aid			
Support Groups			
Counselling			
Mental Health Care			
Primary Care			
Child Care			

Source: Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence (2014) pg.32
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/vaw-clinical-handbook/en/index.html

Crisis Lines & Resources

VAW Crisis Lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assaulted Women’s Helpline: 416.863.0511, Toll-Free 1.866.863.0511 • Distress Centre: 416- 408-4357 • VAW Shelter Crisis Line: www.sheltersafe.ca (each shelter has a crisis line) • Toronto Rape Crisis Centre: 416-597-8808 • Women’s College Hospital Domestic Violence Program: 416-323-604 • Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-833-999-9211
Shelters 24 hour Drop In with beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Family Intake: 416.397.5637 or 416.338.4766 • VAW Shelters in Canada: www.sheltersafe.ca • Sistering: 416-926-9762 • Fred Victor: 416-644-1734
Legal Info/Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbra Schlifer Clinic: 416- 323-9149 • CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario): www.cleo.on.ca • Criminal Injuries Compensation Board: www.sjto.gov.on.ca/cicb • Law Society Referral Services (LSRS): 416-947-5255, Toll Free: 1-855-947-5255, www.findlegalhelp.ca • Local Community Legal Clinic, Duty Counsel Offices, Specialty Legal Clinics: www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact • METRAC: 416-392-3135 (Information Regarding Legal Rights) • Ontario Legal Aid: http://www.legalaid.on.ca/ • Toll Free: 1-800-668-8258 (interpretive services available), www.legalaid.on.ca
Police and Victim Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 911 • Police Escort Services 416-808-2222 • Victim Services Toronto Crisis line: 416-808-7066
Employment & Social Services (Ontario Works)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.toronto.ca (Search employment services to verify closest location to the client.) • Toll free: 1-888-465-4478
Services Directory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 211 or for on-line search https://www.211toronto.ca/
Safety Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Escape Plan provided by The Redwood https://www.torontowestlip.ca/wp-content/uploads/Escape-Plan.pdf • Victim Services Toronto, Safety planning tools and resources http://victimservicestoronto.com/resources/#safety-planning
Other Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence Resources https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8c17-R1-Domestic-Intimate-Partner-Violence-Resources-FINAL.pdf • Joining Hands: Reaching Out To Our Communities, Rexdale Women’s Centre 2011 http://www.rexdalewomen.org/pdf/RWC_2011_NFF_lowres.pdf • Opening Doors for Abused Women – A Collaborative Approach to Prevent Violence Against Women http://www.rexdalewomen.org/pdf/NFF-Campaign-Opening-Doors-for-Abused-Women2014-15.pdf • What is Gender-Based Violence Training: http://ocasi.org/gender-based-violence • Safe Pet: www.linktoronto.org • Shelter Movers: http://sheltermovers.com/

Glossary of VAW Terms

Abuser/Abusive Partner is a person who engages in a pattern of coercive, exploitative and violent tactics against an intimate partner in order to establish and maintain power, control and dominance over the partner.

Advocacy includes the support that domestic violence programs offer to individual women, including 24-hour crisis line, shelter, food, clothing, transportation, general, legal and medical assistance, accompaniment to court and other services, information and referrals, assistance with rent and utilities, crisis intervention, support groups, men's re-education groups and childcare and children's programming.

Battered Woman/Domestic Violence Victim/Survivor is someone who has experienced verbal abuse, financial abuse, physical abuse or sexual violence.

Child Support means money that one parent pays to the other parent to help support their children financially after a separation or divorce. It is also sometimes called "maintenance."

Child Support Guidelines are laws with rules and tables used to determine how much child support should be paid when parents separate or divorce. The Federal Child Support Guidelines are regulations under the Divorce Act and apply when parents divorce. Provincial or territorial guidelines apply when there is no divorce.

Economic Abuse includes, but is not limited to the withholding and/or restricting of money needed for food and/or clothing, denying the right to seek and/or maintain employment, taking personal money, denying independent access to money and/or, excluding the victim from financial decision-making.

Gender- Based Violence (GBV) is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society.

Physical Abuse includes bodily harm, discomfort or injury including hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, pushing, burning, biting, torture, restraining, and assault with a weapon, withholding of food and/or medical care, and/or murder.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse is any act that provokes fear, diminishes the woman's dignity or sense of self-worth, and/or intentionally inflicts psychological trauma as a means of exerting power and control over the woman. Psychological abuse can include criticism, degradation, humiliation, excessive possessiveness, threats (suicidal, homicidal, deportation, kidnapping children, harming family, friends and/or pets), controlling a person's daily activities, social isolation, and/or purposeful destruction of property and/or pets.

Sexual Abuse includes any act of forced sexual activity, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual touching, the refusal to use protection from STD's or unwanted pregnancy during sex, and forced exposure to, or participation in pornography or prostitution.

Spiritual Abuse includes degrading another person's spiritual beliefs, withholding the means to practice, and/or forcing adherence to a belief system.

Verbal Abuse is the use of vexatious comments that are known or that ought to be known to be unwelcome, threatening, degrading, offensive, and/or embarrassing. Economic/Financial Abuse is the misuse of an individual's money or belongings by another individual.

Violence against Women (VAW) / Woman Abuse is directed to those who identify as women, through the actual or threatened physical, psychological, sexual, financial, verbal, or spiritual abuse by someone with whom she shares an acquaintance, intimate, familial, or romantic relationship. The United Nations General Assembly (1993) also defines woman abuse as, "any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring or in private."

Women Abuse is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Using this definition as a point of departure, woman abuse is defined here as the actual or threatened physical, psychological, sexual, financial, verbal, or spiritual abuse of a woman by someone with whom she has/or has had an intimate, familial or romantic relationship (United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993).

Source: World Health Organization 2013

