Coercive Control: identifying and responding

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Interpreting behaviours

**Victim**

They’re so devoted to each other
He doesn’t hit her
He just gets angry when he’s jealous because he loves her
There’s been no police calls, no trouble
It’s just the way they are, it’s a bad mix
He loves his kids, he’d never hurt them
He hits her when he’s been drinking, if he would just stop drinking...
He’s a man’s man
He’s Jack the Lad

**Controlling personality**

They are so in love
He can’t be abusive if he doesn’t hit her
He loves her so much, his feelings are strong
They argue a bit but nothing serious
The two of them should stay away from each other
It’s her he has a problem with, not the kids
He gets nasty when he’s drinking, he’s lovely when he’s sober
He has traditional male views and believes men and women should behave differently
He behaves in a traditional male way, a likeable rogue
# Interpreting Behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim behaviour</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why doesn’t she leave?</td>
<td>It can’t be that bad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why won’t she support a prosecution?</td>
<td>She’s messing the police around</td>
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<td>She just won’t engage</td>
<td>There’s nothing we can do</td>
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<td>She refused our help</td>
<td>She doesn’t want our help</td>
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<tr>
<td>She is sending him mixed signals</td>
<td>She’s messing him around</td>
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<td>She is messing us all around going back to him</td>
<td>She’s doing things which are plain stupid and frustrating</td>
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<tr>
<td>If she was really serious she’d leave</td>
<td>She’s not serious, she’s exaggerating</td>
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<td>Why doesn’t she consider the safety of the children?</td>
<td>How selfish, she should put her children first</td>
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<tr>
<td>She’s not following the safety plan</td>
<td>She can’t be that worried about him</td>
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Re-interpreting behaviours
Fear

What is fear?
Immediate fear
Chronic fear
What does fear look like?

Not all fear looks like immediate fear

Chronic fear may be identified through behaviours: not acting in their own best interests; over-focus on keeping someone else happy; pleasing someone despite negative effects on self and others including children

Allowing access to the home/ having sex with known abuser to stay safe

Wanting to keep people away

Acting out devotion

Avoiding any kind of betrayal

This is safety management
Anxiety
Separation Anxiety
What does anxiety look like?

Does not always look like violent bullying:

Stalking

Coercive Control

Excessive jealousy

Entitlement and need to win

Will do anything to maintain control

Manipulative

Violence, Begging, Crying, Threats, Menace, Withdrawal, Homicide
Useful questions: coercive control

Does your partner check your phone?

Can you see your friends and family whenever you like?

Can you go out whenever you like? Does your partner get irritated or angry if you disagree with them?

Do you have your own private money?

Does your partner look at your internet history?

Is your partner jealous?

Do your partner’s moods dominate your life?

How would your partner react if you said you were leaving?
Safety Trifecta

Interview
- Coercive Control Interview

Actions
- wide angle safety actions

Consequence Management
- a plan for each action’s consequence
## Escalating Risk/Threat

### Psychology
- Obsession
- Fixation
- Jealousy
- Controlling
- Has to be right/win
- Routine

### High Risk Markers
- History
- Victim fearful
- Threats to kill/suicide
- Weapons
- Strangulation or restrict air
- Violence/sexual violence
- Stalking
- Coercive control

### Triggers
- Separation: real or imagined
- Financial ruin
- Deteriorating mental/physical health
- Revenge
- Anything which diminishes control over life/partner
DART is like a searchable guide book for coercive control and stalking.

The content is drawn from research.

We have a specific approach to Coercive Control and Stalking.

We have developed the Homicide Triad and the safety Trifecta.
Case Studies

Please look at the case studies which represent two extremes and think about Coercive Control:

Identify any concerning behaviours in both victim and CP
Interpret those behaviours
What are/were the opportunities for intervention?
How would you gain the trust of the victims?