

ABUSE: Defined

Physical abuse is defined as any forceful or violent action directed at someone else. Some examples of physical abuse are:

- Slapping, choking or strangling, maiming, stabbing, punching, scratching, wrestling, kicking, spanking, grabbing, pinching, biting, burning, pushing, poking, restraining, pulling hair, picking the other partner up, carrying the other partner, throwing the other partner bodily, forcing the other partner to eat or drink something, stopping the other partner from getting medical attention, stealing or hiding the other partner's medication, throwing things at or near the other partner, using any object or weapon against the other partner, physically making the other partner do something against his or her will (forcing him/her to sit down, hang up the phone, get into the car, put something down, stay at home, etc.).

Sexual abuse is defined as any non-consenting (not freely agreed to) sexual act or behavior. Some examples of sexual abuse are:

- Forcing or demanding sexual activity when he/she says no, when he/she is asleep, when he/she is drunk or high, when he/she is afraid of being hurt (or that the children will be hurt or sexually abused) if he/she says no, when you have not asked first, asking for or demanding sexual activity after you have physically or psychologically abused him/her (for example: hit, pushed, or threatened him /her).
- Physically attacking the sexual parts of his/her body (penis, breasts, vaginal area, and buttocks), pulling or ripping his/her clothes off, demanding or forcing him/her to engage in sexual behaviors that she does not like, or that embarrass or humiliates him/her, or that scare or hurt him/her (such as oral or anal sex, sex in public places, tying him/her up, putting handcuffs on him/her, or forcing him/her to have sex with other people).

Psychological abuse is defined as behaviors (words or actions) that are used to intimidate, create fear, or threaten another person. Some examples of psychological abuse are:

- Acting like you are going to physically or sexually abuse the other partner or the children.
- Holding your hand up like you are going to slap, hit or punch, throwing things, making the other partner think that you are going to throw or punch something, hurt the children, use a weapon, or break something, etc.
- Using your physical size to intimidate the other partner (standing over him/her, backing him/her against a wall, blocking him/her from leaving the room or house), getting in the other partner's face, using a commanding, intimidating tone of voice, yelling at the other partner, the children, or pets, etc.
- Using threatening behaviors like: driving recklessly with your partner and/or the children in the car, throwing things, hurting a pet, punching walls, threatening the other partner with an object or weapon (including cleaning a weapon in front of him/her), slamming doors, smashing or breaking things, following the other partner around to watch what he/she is doing, pulling the phone out of the wall, etc.
- Telling the other partner that you are going to physically or sexually abuse him/her.
- Saying that if he/she does something you are going to slap, smack, shoot, stab, or hit him/her, the children or pets, making vague threats (like "You're going to get it", or "You better not piss me off", or "Now you're in trouble") or referring to abuse you have subjected him/her or someone else to in the past (like "Do you want me to hit you again?" or "You're acting like you did that last time I hit you.", or "When you do that you remind me of my ex-partner and you know what happened to him/her.")
- Making threats to do things to the other partner and/or the kids, such as saying that you will take away the children (or have them taken away), that you will have him/her arrested, that you will not pay child support, that you will have an affair, hurt a pet, commit suicide, or start drinking or using drugs (especially if you have been violent to him/her while under the influence).

While psychological abuse may not cause immediate physical damage, it is very powerful because you have hurt him/her (and/or the children) in the past. All threats and threatening behaviors are abusive because you have shown that you may back up your threats with violence.