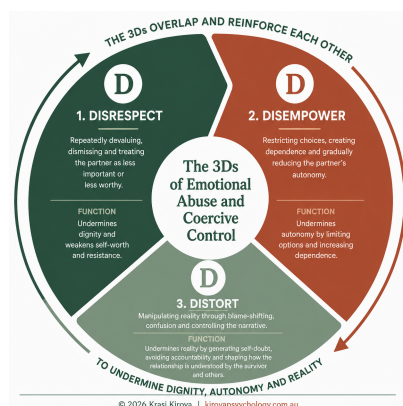


The 3Ds of Emotional Abuse and Coercive Control

FULL VERSION

A comprehensive reference guide to the behaviours and dynamics within each domain.



DISRESPECT

What it involves: A pattern of behaviours that communicate the partner is unimportant, less worthy as a person, less capable, or less deserving of respect, care and consideration.

The aim is: Weaken resistance by breaking down the partner's sense of self (their identity, confidence and self-esteem) and establish double standards within the relationship that benefit the abuser.

Superiority and Contempt

- Consistently displaying an attitude of entitlement or intellectual superiority
- Persistently criticising, belittling, making snide remarks, and expressing contempt
- Consistently communicating that the partner is unattractive, inferior, or "lucky" to have the abuser
- Consistently adopting a patronising or condescending attitude towards the partner

Verbal and Psychological Attacks

- Frequently engaging in verbal explosions, yelling, and name-calling
- Haranguing – engaging in prolonged, relentless verbal attacks that diminish the partner, exhaust them emotionally, and demand confession, submission, or apology
- Repeatedly exploiting pre-existing insecurities and known vulnerabilities (e.g. history of trauma, strained family relationships, personal fears, or mental health struggles)

Emotional Withholding and Dismissal

- Using prolonged or repeated silent treatments as punishment
- Chronically dismissing or invalidating the partner's needs, feelings, preferences, and rights
- Repeatedly minimising the partner's concerns while placing exaggerated importance on one's own

Public Disrespect and Practical Neglect

- Repeatedly making the partner feel unwelcome, unwanted, or embarrassed in social situations
- Consistently undermining the partner's joy, pride, or accomplishments
- Repeatedly showing disdain or disinterest in what matters to the partner
- Consistently prioritising personal wants over family needs and shared responsibilities
- Consistently contributing unequally to household tasks
- Repeatedly avoiding or evading shared responsibilities
- Consistently failing to support the partner's physical or medical needs

DISEMPOWER

What it involves: *A pattern of behaviours that remove choices, restrict opportunities, limit access to resources, create fear, and make the partner increasingly reliant on the abusive partner.*

The aim is: *To entrap and disempower the partner through eroding their autonomy and creating dependence.*

Restricting Autonomy and Everyday Choices

- Routinely micro-regulating the partner's everyday life
- Consistently controlling the partner's appearance and bodily autonomy (e.g. weight, clothing, medical procedures)
- Enforcing a regime of family life based on arbitrary and, at times, contradictory rules that carry negative consequences for non-compliance
- Repeatedly making significant joint decisions without the partner's input
- Insisting that conversations and arguments occur on their terms (e.g. when they happen and how long they continue)
- Controlling the pace of the relationship (too fast or too slow) on their terms

Creating Dependence Through Resources and Opportunities

- Exerting financial control by restricting access to money, bank accounts, financial information, passwords, or independent financial decision-making
- Financially exploiting the partner by unfairly benefiting from their income or earning capacity through manipulation, coercion, or chronic irresponsibility, misuse of shared finances, secret spending (e.g. gambling, sex workers etc.)
- Sabotaging the partner's employment, education, or career opportunities by preventing them from working, studying, pursuing career goals, or maintaining employment
- Creating conditions that make the partner increasingly dependent on them
- Consistently withholding essential support or resources, including restricting access to necessary medical interventions

Isolation, Surveillance and Restricting Freedom of Movement

- Isolating the partner from family and friends by making social contact increasingly difficult and deliberately undermining their social and family relationships
- Repeatedly monitoring or tracking the partner's daily activities
- Using technology-facilitated abuse to monitor, intimidate, harass, or control the partner (e.g. tracking devices, spyware, repeated messaging, monitoring online activity, or unauthorised access to accounts)
- Restricting the partner's access to the home or transportation, including taking away keys or forcing them out of the home, even in the middle of the night

Fear, Intimidation and Coercion

- Repeatedly using threats, angry outbursts, intimidation, or fear to influence the partner's behaviour
- Creating physical exhaustion by preventing sleep, rest, or medical recovery
- Creating a sense of entrapment (e.g. driving dangerously with the partner and children in the car, or preventing the partner from entering or leaving a room or vehicle)
- Threatening suicide to influence the partner's decision-making
- Using cruelty to animals, or threats to harm them, to intimidate or control the partner
- Pressuring or coercing the partner into unwanted sexual experiences
- Interfering with the partner's reproductive autonomy to promote or prevent pregnancy

Common Forms of Technology-Facilitated Abuse

- Monitor text messages, emails and phone activity.
- Install spyware or malicious software on devices.
- Track a partner's movements through smartphones, GPS devices or location-sharing applications.
- Place hidden tracking devices in vehicles or children's belongings.
- Install hidden cameras or listening devices within the home.
- Harass, threaten or intimidate through repeated messages, emails or social media.
- Share, or threaten to share, intimate images.
- Control passwords, online accounts and access to finances.
- Monitor banking transactions and spending.

DISTORT

What it involves: *Using various strategies that distort reality, create uncertainty, conceal the abuse, shift blame, undermine the partner's trust in themselves, and influence how others perceive the relationship.*

The aim is: *Manage reality, create confusion, conceal the abuse from the partner and those around them, and generate self-blame.*

Managing Reality

- Repeatedly shifting blame and refusing to take accountability
- Positioning themselves as the vulnerable one or the true victim
- Using manipulative tactics (e.g. gaslighting, lying, inducing guilt)
- Making controlling behaviours appear reasonable, necessary, or acts of care
- Positioning themselves as more knowledgeable or better informed on every topic

Creating Confusion

- Displaying rapid and unpredictable shifts in mood or personality
- Alternating abuse with periods of relative calm and affection, offering apologies, gestures, and promises to change when the partner threatens to leave
- Gradually escalating abusive behaviour while never returning to the warmth and kindness of the early relationship
- Repeatedly overwhelming the partner with excessive texts, emails, or other forms of communication

Generating Self-Blame and Isolation

- Framing the partner's resistance as selfish or harmful behaviour
- Discrediting, ridiculing, or weaponising the partner's emotional reactions to the abuse (e.g. their distress, confusion or anger)
- Displaying excessive mistrust, jealousy, and baseless accusations
- Convincing the partner that family and friends are harmful influences

Concealing the Abuse

- Crafting a false public persona that conceals the private harm (e.g. through social media or positions of care)
- Creating strategic reputation damage by convincing others that the partner is unstable
- Turning family members and children against the partner

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The 3Ds Framework was developed through practice experience and informed by established research on emotional abuse and coercive control. The following sources, alongside the broader literature in this field, informed its conceptual development.

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