

THE PORTRAIT OF AN ABUSIVE MAN

1) HE HAS INTENSE “POWER AND CONTROL” ISSUES

- SIMPLY PUT, BATTERING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE ACTUALLY “WORK” (BUT ONLY SHORT-TERM):
 - ...TO CONTROL A PARTNER (HER THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, STATEMENTS, AND ACTIONS)
- TO GET WHAT THEY WANT IN A PARTICULAR SITUATION, E.G.
 - ...TO STOP A PARTNER FROM “NAGGING” OR “RAGGING ON” THEM
 - ...TO AVOID AN UNCOMFORTABLE PERSONAL OR MARITAL ISSUE
- TO FEEL AS IF THEY HAVE A SENSE OF POWER IN THEIR LIVES; THE VAST MAJORITY OF BATTERERS ARE NOT “OUT OF CONTROL” ALTHOUGH THEY OFTEN SEE THEMSELVES AS BEING “COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL” DURING AN ABUSIVE INCIDENT
- MEN ARE, AT SOME LEVEL, VERY AWARE OF WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND EVENTUALLY, IN TREATMENT, THEY ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE **CLEAR CHOICES** THAT THEY HAVE BEEN MAKING IN THE PAST:
 - **WHERE THEY WILL BE ABUSIVE**
 - ...NOT IN PUBLIC PLACES
 - ...NOT IN FRONT OF THE POLICE
 - ...NOT IN FRONT OF THEIR KIDS
 - **WHEN THEY WILL BE ABUSIVE**
 - ...A MAN WHO RECEIVED DIVORCE PAPERS AT WORK AND THEN WAITED UNTIL AFTER WORK TO TIE UP HIS PARTNER AND KIDNAP THEIR CHILDREN
 - **HOW MUCH AND WHAT KIND OF ABUSE THEY WILL ACTUALLY USE**
 - ...THEY MAY AVOID CERTAIN WORDS OR PHRASES (E.G. SAYING “BITCH” BUT NOT USING THE WORD “CUNT”)
 - ...THEY THROW SOMETHING THAT WON’T BREAK OR THAT IS LESS EXPENSIVE TO REPLACE (RATHER THAN THROWING A COMPUTER OR A TV)
 - ...THEY GRAB OR RESTRAIN INSTEAD OF HITTING
 - ...THEY SLAP INSTEAD OF PUNCHING
 - ...THEY HIT IN THE ARM OR THE BACK INSTEAD OF THE FACE (WHERE BRUISES WOULD BE MORE NOTICEABLE)
 - ...THEY THREATEN WITH A WEAPON BUT DO NOT ACTUALLY USE ONE

...E.G. MEN IN A DOMESTIC ABUSE GROUP PROGRAM TALKED ABOUT THEIR “**MOST VIOLENT INCIDENT**” WITH THEIR PARTNER

...THEY MAKE AND ACKNOWLEDGE CLEAR CHOICES EVEN IN THE MIDST OF FEELING RAGEFUL AND “COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL” AT THE TIME OF THE ABUSIVE INCIDENT

- **WHEN THE ABUSE WILL STOP**

...E.G. A MAN WHO WAS DRUNK LEAVES A BAR, BEGINS BEATING HIS PARTNER IN AN ALLEY NEXT TO THE BAR (SITTING ON TOP OF HER AND HITTING HER); HIS FRIEND COMES OUT OF THE BAR TO SEE WHAT IS GOING ON, TOUCHES HIM ON HIS SHOULDER; HE STOPPED THE VIOLENCE AND GOT OFF HER IMMEDIATELY AND DID NOT THEN BECOME VIOLENT WITH HIS FRIEND

- THE HOME IS OFTEN VIEWED AS A “**SAFE PLACE**” TO ABUSE HIS PARTNER AND CHILDREN AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE SEEN AS “SAFE TARGETS”
 - IN AN **ABUSE INVENTORY**, A “DEMARICATION POINT” OCCURS WHEN MEN BEGIN TO DIRECT THEIR VIOLENCE ONLY AT THEIR PARTNERS AND CHILDREN, EVEN IF THEY HAVE BEEN VIOLENT WITH OTHER MEN IN THE PAST DUE TO THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES IF VIOLENCE IS “IN PUBLIC”

2) HE GETS VERY REAL PAYOFFS AND REINFORCEMENTS FOR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR BECAUSE ABUSE DOES WORK TO TEMPORARILY GET HIM WHAT HE WANTS AND OFTEN, THERE MAY HAVE BEEN FEW, IF ANY SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES, FOR MANY MEN OVER THE COURSE OF THEIR LIVES

- WHEN WOMEN AND CHILDREN FEAR FOR THEIR EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING AND SAFETY, THEY ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO ACQUIESCE AND DO WHAT THEY ARE TOLD BY THE ABUSER.
- MEN ALSO EXPERIENCE “REWARDS” FOR THEIR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE A CHILD OR A YOUNG ADULT (E.G. APPROVAL AND RESPECT)
 - ...E.G. FROM FATHERS, COACHES, FRIENDS, AND PEERS

- ANOTHER CLEAR PAYOFF FOR MANY MEN IS THE STRESS REDUCTION THAT OFTEN COMES WITH THE ABUSE AND VIOLENCE
...THERE IS A PAIRED ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND AND A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL RELEASE OF TENSION
- SOME MEN, WHEN THEY ACT OUT THEIR EXPLOSIVE ANGER, AND MAY LITERALLY EXPERIENCE AN ALTERED STATE: A “HIGH” OR A “RUSH”
- IN ADDITION, MEN OFTEN DO NOT RECEIVE CONSEQUENCES UNTIL THE POINT WHEN THEIR PARTNER REFUSES TO PUT UP WITH THE ABUSE AND/OR THE LEGAL SYSTEM BECOMES INVOLVED WITH THEIR LIVES

3) HE HAS A STRONG ATTITUDE OF “MALE ENTITLEMENT:”

- THE HOME IS OFTEN VIEWED AS AN “INNER SANCTUM” AND A PLACE WHERE THE MAN HAS A RIGHT TO BE “KING OF THE CASTLE” AND WHERE OUTSIDERS AND BEHAVIORAL AND LEGAL DIRECTIVES FOR THE WORLD-AT-LARGE DO NOT BELONG OR APPLY TO HIM (AS FAR AS HE IS CONCERNED)
...MANY BATTERERS SAY THAT THEY ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT PUSHING, GRABBING, AND HITTING WITH PARTNERS AND CHILDREN IS ACTUALLY ILLEGAL
- THE DECISION TO INCREASINGLY “UP THE ANTE” FROM EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL ABUSE TO THREATS AND INTIMIDATION TO PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS PART OF PROCESS OF EXERTING CONTROL THAT IS DEEMED TO BE THEIR “PREROGATIVE” AS A MAN DUE TO THEIR BELIEF THAT THEY ARE ACTUALLY **ENTITLED**, AS “HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD,” TO BE “IN CONTROL” OF THEIR PARTNERS AND CHILDREN.
- **WHAT IS “MALE ENTITLEMENT?”**
...HAVING AN ATTITUDE THAT CONVEYS MALE DOMINANCE, A GENERAL DISRESPECT FOR WOMEN, AND THE IDEA THAT, ESSENTIALLY, MEN ARE MORE COMPETENT, CAPABLE, AND INTELLIGENT THAN WOMEN ARE.
- THIS ATTITUDE LEADS TO THE DISTORTED BELIEF THAT:
 - ***“I, AS A MAN, HAVE THE RIGHT AND EVEN THE OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTROL HOW MY PARTNER THINKS, FEELS, AND ACTS, AND TO MAKE HER INTO THE PERSON WHO I THINK SHE SHOULD BE.”***

- **SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF MALE ENTITLEMENT:**

- ...**MAKING GENERALIZATIONS AND BELIEVING STEREOTYPES ABOUT WOMEN, E.G.**

- ...*"WOMEN ARE ALL IRRATIONAL"*

- ...*"WOMEN ARE NO GOOD IN BUSINESS"*

- ...*"IT'S A WOMAN'S JOB TO TAKE CARE OF ME AND THE KIDS"*

- ...*"WOMEN SHOULD BE BAREFOOT AND PREGNANT"*

- ...**HAVING THE EXPECTATION THAT A MAN WILL MAKE ALL THE "IMPORTANT" DECISIONS IN A RELATIONSHIP, E.G.**

- ...*"I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONE WHO'S IN CHARGE IN MY HOME"*

- ...**DECIDING WHERE THEY WILL LIVE, WHETHER OR HOW MUCH A PARTNER WILL WORK AND WHAT KIND OF WORK IS "ACCEPTABLE" FOR HER TO HIM, WHETHER A PARTNER WILL GO TO SCHOOL TO GET FURTHER EDUCATION**

- ...**CONTROLLING HOW HOUSEHOLD MONEY IS HANDLED AND SPENT**

- ...**PRESSURING AND INTERROGATING HER TO ACCOUNT FOR ALL THE MONEY SHE SPENDS**

- ...**ACTING AS IF HER WORK AROUND THE HOUSE AND WITH THE CHILDREN IS NOT AS "IMPORTANT" AS HIS OUTSIDE JOB (EVEN IF THEY THEY HAVE DECIDED TO DO THIS TOGETHER)**

- ...**KEEPING THE CHARGE CARDS OR CHECK BOOK IN HIS POSSESSION AND IN HIS CONTROL**

- ...**GIVING HER AN "ALLOWANCE" AS YOU WOULD TO A CHILD**

- ...**TREATING HER LIKE A "SERVANT," AN "UNDERLING," OR AN "EMPLOYEE," E.G.**

- ...*"I EXPECT YOU TO HAVE DINNER ON THE TABLE WHEN I GET HOME FROM WORK"*

- ...**DECIDING WHO DOES WHAT IN TERMS OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES AND PARENTING TASKS**

- ...**VIEWING AND TREATING A PARTNER LIKE A SEX OBJECT, E.G.**

- ...*"SHE'S MARRIED TO ME. IT'S MY RIGHT AS HER HUSBAND TO GET LAID WHENEVER I WANT IT"*

- THIS DESIRE TO CONTROL, SHAPE, AND MOLD A PARTNER INTO SOMEONE WHO IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM UNDERLIES ALL CONTROLLING, ABUSIVE, AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR.

4) HE HAS LEARNED TO BE CONTROLLING AND ABUSIVE WITH HIS PARTNER

- A PRIMARY RISK FACTOR RELATED TO FEMALE PARTNER ASSAULT IS OBSERVING AND/OR EXPERIENCING ABUSE AND VIOLENCE IN A BATTERER'S FAMILY OF ORIGIN (MEN LEARN TO BATTER BY WATCHING THEIR PARENTS AND, SOMETIMES, THEIR SIBLINGS AND PEERS)
- NUMEROUS STUDIES HAVE FOUND THAT, IF A MAN IS ABUSED BY HIS PARENTS OR HE WITNESSES OTHERS IN THE FAMILY BEING ABUSED, HE IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO PERPETRATE SEVERE VIOLENCE WITH HIS PARTNER (FAGAN ET AL, 1983; SAUNDERS, 1994; SHIELDS ET AL, 1988).
...IN FACT, RESEARCH INDICATES THAT THERE MAY BE AN EVEN STRONGER EFFECT FOR WITNESSING VIOLENCE THAN FOR BEING ITS ACTUAL TARGET (HOTALING & SUGARMAN, 1986)
...NOT SURPRISINGLY, MEN WHO BOTH WITNESSED AND EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE IN THEIR FAMILIES OF ORIGIN ARE THE MOST “AT RISK” TO BECOME BATTERERS THEMSELVES
- THE VAST MAJORITY OF MEN WITH WHOM I HAVE WORKED WITNESSED OR EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL ABUSE, CONTROLLING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS, AND MALE ENTITLEMENT WHEN THEY WERE GROWING UP
... THERE WAS ALSO A SMALL GROUP OF MEN WHO DID NOT FIT THIS DESCRIPTION:
...**THEY VIEWED THEMSELVES AS “GOLDEN BOYS” OR “LITTLE PRINCES” WHEN THEIR PARENTS (AND, SOMETIMES, EVEN THE LARGER COMMUNITY) VIEWED THEM AS “SPECIAL” WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG**
- RESEARCH THAT TESTIFIES TO THE IDEA OF VIOLENCE AS A LEARNED BEHAVIOR AROSE FROM INVESTIGATIVE EFFORTS INTO AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN 1963 BY ALBERT BANDURA, WHO DEVELOPED WHAT WAS TO BE CALLED THE **“SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY”**
...THE EXPERIMENT WITH NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN WAS DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS:
...ONE GROUP WATCHED AN ADULT ATTACK AN INFLATABLE “BOBO DOLL”
...ONE GROUP WATCHED A CARTOON WITH AN AGGRESSIVE CHARACTER
...ONE GROUP EXPERIENCED NO EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE
...SOON AFTERWARD, THE PRESCHOOLERS WERE MILDLY FRUSTRATED WHEN A RESEARCHER TOOK AWAY A FAVORITE TOY
...THOSE YOUNGSTERS WHO WERE EXPOSED TO AGGRESSION ACTED IN A SIGNIFICANTLY MORE BELLIGERENT MANNER THAN THOSE WHO WERE NOT (BANDURA, 1979)

- IN FOLLOW-UP STUDIES, BANDURA FOUND:
... THAT HIGH-STATUS ADULTS (SUCH AS PARENTS) ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MODELS FOR LEARNING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR, AND
...THAT DEPENDENT CHILDREN TEND TO BE THE MOST COMPLIANT LEARNERS
- THUS, THE SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY DISCUSSES HOW HABITUAL BEHAVIORS, SUCH AS AGGRESSION, ARE ACQUIRED THROUGH THE DIRECT OBSERVATION OF OTHERS AND HOW THESE ARE THEN MAINTAINED BY SOCIAL PAYOFFS CALLED “REWARDS”
- THIS THEORY EXPLAINS ALL TOO CLEARLY HOW, WHEN CHILDREN (ESPECIALLY BOYS) OBSERVE OR EXPERIENCE CONTROL, ABUSE, AND VIOLENCE IN THEIR FAMILY OF ORIGIN, THEY ARE PRIMED TO BECOME ABUSIVE THEMSELVES
- OFTEN BATTERERS LITERALLY RE-PLAY HURTS, RESENTMENTS, AND FRUSTRATION FROM THEIR FAMILY OF ORIGIN WITH THEIR PARTNERS
...ONLY THIS TIME THEY ARE BIG AND STRONG ENOUGH TO “FIGHT BACK,” TAKE CHARGE, AND IMPOSE THEIR WILL ON OTHERS WHO SEEM TO BE DEMEANING OR “PROVOKING” THEM TO TRY TO CONTROL THE SITUATION OR PERSON
...THEIR PARTNERS AND THEIR CHILDREN LITERALLY BECOME THE “SCAPEGOATS” FOR THESE MEN’S “LIFE ANGST AND PAIN”

5) HE HAS FEELINGS OF POWERLESSNESS, LOW SELF-ESTEEM, TOXIC SHAME, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND OTHER EMOTIONAL ISSUES (PAGELOW, 1984; GOLDSTEIN & ROSENBAUM, 1985; TOLMAN & BENNETT, 1990; MAIURO ET AL, 1986)

- THIS IDEA IS NOT INTENDED TO SERVE AS AN “EXCUSE” TO “LET BATTERERS OFF THE HOOK” IN TERMS OF THEIR CLEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ABUSIVE AND CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR BUT IT IS A STARK REALITY FOR MANY ABUSIVE MEN
- HOWEVER, FOR THE SAME REASONS THAT WE HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE CURRENT GENERATION OF YOUNGSTERS GROWING UP IN ABUSIVE HOMES, THESE CONSEQUENCES OF BATTERERS BEING RAISED IN AN ABUSIVE HOME NEED TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ADDRESSED IN THE TREATMENT PROCESS
- THE VAST MAJORITY OF BATTERERS WERE ONCE CHILDREN WHO SAW AND EXPERIENCED VICTIMIZATION IN THEIR OWN CHILDHOOD

- THIS VICTIMIZATION LEAVES THE SAME SORTS OF EMOTIONAL SCARS ON BATTERERS THAT IT DOES ON CHILDREN TODAY
- GROWING UP IN A FAMILY WHERE ABUSE IS OCCURRING LEAVES CHILDREN FEELING EMOTIONALLY DEVASTATED AND “ADRIFT” IN THEIR LIVES
- CHILDREN OFTEN FEEL POWERLESS, INEFFECTUAL, INADEQUATE, INCOMPETENT, UNLOVABLE, AND SHAMEFUL ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM
 - ...THEY FEEL LIKE A FAILURE/A LOSER/”NOT GOOD ENOUGH” IN MANY, IF NOT MOST AREAS OF THEIR LIVES ALTHOUGH THIS MAY BE COMPENSATED FOR AND HIDDEN BY A GRANDIOSE/ARROGANT/”KNOW-IT-ALL” PRESENTATION AND FACADE (E.G. SUCCESSFUL EXECUTIVES, PROFESSIONALS SUCH AS DOCTORS AND LAWYERS, AND WEALTHY ENTREPRENEURS)
 - ...THEY MAY ATTEMPT TO NUMB THESE FEELINGS WITH ADDICTIVE AND COMPULSIVE BEHAVIORS, E.G.
 - ...ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE
 - ...COMPULSIVE GAMBLING
 - ...SEXUAL ACTING-OUT (PORNOGRAPHY, AFFAIRS, STRIP CLUBS)
 - ...WORKAHOLISM
- THIS EMOTIONAL PAIN MAY MANIFEST ITSELF IN **PERSONALITY DISORDERS (FROM THE DSM-V)**
 - ...LONGSTANDING STABLE PATTERNS OF INNER EXPERIENCE AND BEHAVIOR THAT LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT DISTRESS OR IMPAIRMENT IN IMPORTANT AREAS OF FUNCTIONING

BELOW ARE SEVERAL OF THE DISORDERS THAT ARE MOST COMMON IN BATTERERS:

1) NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER INCLUDES:

 - ...A PERVASIVE PATTERN OF GRANDIOSITY, ARROGANCE, AND HAUGHTINESS
 - ...REQUIRING EXCESSIVE ADMIRATION
 - ...A LACK OF EMPATHY FOR THE NEEDS AND FEELINGS OF OTHERS
 - ...HAVING A STRONG SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT, I.E. UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS OF FAVORABLE TREATMENT OR AUTOMATIC COMPLIANCE WITH HIS WISHES
 - ...A TENDENCY TO EXPLOIT OTHERS INTERPERSONALLY
 - ...BELIEVING THAT HE OR IS SPECIAL AND UNIQUE AND SHOULD ONLY ASSOCIATE WITH OTHER SPECIAL PEOPLE
 - ...OFTEN BEING ENVIOUS OF OTHERS OR BELIEVING THAT OTHERS ARE ENVIOUS OF HIM

2) ANTI-SOCIAL PERSONALITY DISORDER INCLUDES:

- ...A PERVASIVE PATTERN OF DISREGARD FOR AND THE VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS SINCE AGE 15
- ...A FAILURE TO CONFORM TO SOCIAL NORMS THAT HAS LED TO ACTS THAT ARE GROUNDS FOR ARREST
- ...A RECKLESS DISREGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF SELF OR OTHERS
- ...A CONSISTENT IRRESPONSIBILITY (E.G. FAILURE TO SUSTAIN CONSISTENT WORK BEHAVIOR OR HONOR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS)
- ...IRRITABILITY AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR THAT HAS LED TO REPEATED PHYSICAL ASSAULTS
- ...A LACK OF REMORSE AND INDIFFERENCE TO HURTING AND MISTREATING OTHERS

3) PARANOID PERSONALITY DISORDER INCLUDES:

- ...A PERVASIVE MISTRUST AND SUSPICIOUSNESS OF OTHERS
- ...A BELIEF THAT OTHERS ARE EXPLOITING, HARMING, OR DECEIVING HIM
- ...A BELIEF THAT THERE ARE HIDDEN DEMEANING OR THREATENING MESSAGES IN BENIGN REMARKS OR EVENTS
- ...A TENDENCY TO PERSISTENTLY BEAR GRUDGES
- ...A PERCEPTION THAT THERE ARE ATTACKS ON HIS CHARACTER WHICH ARE NOT APPARENT TO OTHERS AND BEING QUICK TO REACT ANGRILY OR TO COUNTERATTACK

4) BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER INCLUDES:

- ...FRANTIC EFFORTS TO AVOID REAL OR IMAGINED ABANDONMENT
- ...UNSTABLE AND INTENSE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ALTERNATING BETWEEN THE EXTREMES OF IDEALIZATION AND DEVALUATION
- ...IMPULSIVITY IN AT LEAST TWO AREAS THAT ARE POTENTIALLY SELF-DESTRUCTIVE (E.G. SPENDING, SEX, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, EATING DISORDERS, RECKLESS DRIVING)
- ...EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY DUE TO MARKED REACTIVITY OF MOOD
- ...CHRONIC FEELINGS OF EMPTINESS
- ...INAPPROPRIATE INTENSE ANGER OR DIFFICULTY CONTROLLING ANGER (I.E. FREQUENT DISPLAYS OF TEMPER AND RECURRENT PHYSICAL FIGHTS)

- BUT WHAT BETTER WAY TO COMBAT THESE INTENSE AND UNCOMFORTABLE REACTIONS THAN TO LASH OUT AT OTHERS AS A MEANS OF GAINING SOME SENSE OF POWER AND CONTROL IN THEIR UNIVERSE
 ...A DESIRE TO HAVE SOME CONTROL IN OUR LIVES IS, IN REALITY, A PART OF THE HUMAN CONDITION FOR ALL OF US
 ...THIS IS A DESIRE FOR SAFETY AND PREDICTABILITY
 ...BATTERERS BELIEVE THAT, IF THEY GIVE UP TRYING TO CONTROL OTHERS, THEY WILL BE CONTROLLED AND VICTIMIZED BY EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING AROUND THEM
 ...THIS BELIEF MAY ARISE FROM THE TOXIC SHAME AND THE VERY REAL VICTIMIZATION THAT THEY OFTEN EXPERIENCED IN THEIR FAMILIES OF ORIGIN
 ...WHEN BATTERERS STOP THE VIOLENCE AND DECREASE OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE, FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND INADEQUACY OFTEN EMERGE MUCH MORE CLEARLY
 ...EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T APPEAR TO BE PRESENT PRIOR TO THE TREATMENT PROCESS
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** PEOPLE WHO ARE ABUSIVE AND CONTROLLING DO NOT FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES (STOSNY, 1995) AND THESE EMOTIONAL ISSUES, IN FACT, THEN STRONGLY CONTRIBUTE TO MEN MAKING THE CHOICE TO TRY TO CONTROL AND ABUSE THEIR PARTNERS AND CHILDREN

6) HE HAS A SIGNIFICANT SKILLS DEFICIT IN A NUMBER OF VERY IMPORTANT AREAS

- HE OFTEN LACKS SOME BASIC INTRA- AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS EVEN THOUGH HE MAY PRESENT HIMSELF QUITE DIFFERENTLY IN OTHER SETTINGS (THE “JEKYLL-HYDE SYNDROME”) :
 ...*“I GET ALONG GREAT WITH EVERYONE IN MY LIFE EXCEPT MY DAMN WIFE/GIRLFRIEND”*
 ...HE IS GENERALLY COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STRESSORS IN HIS DAILY LIFE AND OF HIS TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES FROM THE PAST AND THEIR IMPACT ON HIS CURRENT MOODS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS
 ...HE HAS LITTLE AWARENESS OF HIS THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS AND HAS GREAT DIFFICULTY ACKNOWLEDGING AND RECOGNIZING HIS ANGER CUES AND TRIGGERS AND HIS PERSONAL ESCALATION PROCESS
- HE IS OFTEN UNWILLING TO RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS OTHER THAN FRUSTRATION, IRRITATION, ANGER, OR RAGE (E.G. NOT ADDRESSING HIS SADNESS, HURT, FEAR, SELF-DOUBT, INSECURITY, CONFUSION, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND TOXIC SHAME)

...HE VIEWS THESE VULNERABLE FEELINGS AS “FEMININE” AND
“WEAK” AND FEARS THESE TYPES OF FEELINGS WILL LEAVE
HIM FEELING MORE VULNERABLE TO OTHER PEOPLE

- **HE TENDS TO SEE HIMSELF AS “COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL”**
...“*EVERYTHING WAS GOING GREAT IN MY LIFE, AND THEN I JUST
‘BLEW UP’/‘SAW RED’/‘WENT BALLISTIC’*”
- **HE TENDS TO BE SELF-CENTERED AND SELF-ABSORBED**
...HE HAS LITTLE SENSE OF THE IMPACT OF HIS WORDS AND ACTIONS ON
OTHERS AND HAS LITTLE EMPATHY FOR THOSE WITH WHOM HE
EXPLODES
...OFTEN HE DOES NOT SEE WHAT HE IS DOING AS BEING HURTFUL
AND DAMAGING TO HIS PARTNER, HIS CHILDREN, OTHER
PEOPLE, OR HIMSELF
- HE OFTEN TENDS TO EXTERNALIZE RESPONSIBILITY GENERALLY IN HIS LIFE
AND HAS DIFFICULTY TAKING CLEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS
THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, ACTIONS, AND INACTION, ESPECIALLY WHEN HE
FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE, ANXIOUS, OR INSECURE
...HE USES A VARIETY OF **PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSES** TO AVOID BEING
HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS DISRESPECTFUL AND ABUSIVE
BEHAVIORS
- **DENIAL/LYING:** COMPLETELY REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT
ANY “PROBLEM” EVEN EXISTS
...“*IT NEVER EVEN HAPPENED, I NEVER DID THAT, I DON’T GET
ALL THAT ANGRY ANYMORE, I DON’T HAVE A PROBLEM, I
CAN’T REALLY REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED*”
- **MINIMIZING:** MAKING A PROBLEM LESS THAN IT REALLY IS
...“*IT WASN’T ALL THAT BAD, SHE EXAGGERATES, IT’S NOT THAT
BIG A DEAL, I ONLY PUSHED HER ONCE, THAT’S NOTHING
COMPARED TO WHAT MY BUDDIES DO TO THEIR WIVES,
WHAT MY FATHER DID TO MY MOTHER WAS MUCH WORSE
THAN ANYTHING THAT I DO WITH MY WIFE*”
- **BLAMING:** BEING UNWILLING TO TAKE ANY KIND OF CLEAR
RESPONSIBILITY BY FOCUSING ON OTHERS, THEIR
BEHAVIORS, AND THEIR “PROBLEMS” AND “ISSUES”
...“*SHE’S JUST TOO DAMN SENSITIVE, SHE KNOWS HOW TO
‘PUSH MY BUTTONS,’ SHE STARTED IT, SHE’S JUST OUT TO
‘GET ME,’ SHE’S THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO BE IN AN
ANGER/ABUSE CLASS, SHE’S ALWAYS ‘RAGGING’ ON ME,
SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT, SHE HIT ME FIRST*”

- **JUSTIFYING:** OFFERING REASONS AND MAKING EXCUSES FOR HIS CONTROLLING AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR
 ...”*I WAS DRUNK/HIGH, I WAS ‘STRESSED OUT,’ I DIDN’T KNOW WHAT I WAS SAYING/DOING, I JUST ‘REACTED,’ I JUST ‘LOST IT,’/I JUST ‘SAW RED’*”

- HE OFTEN HAS FEW INTERPERSONAL SKILLS THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN MAKING HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PARTNER MORE HEALTHY
- HE TENDS TO BE NEGATIVE AND TENDS TO BROOD AND RUMINATE ABOUT HIS OWN AND OTHERS’ SHORTCOMINGS AND THE “INJUSTICES” HE PERCEIVES HIMSELF TO BE EXPERIENCING AT THE HANDS OF OTHER PEOPLE
 - ...HE TENDS TO BE OVERLY SENSITIVE TO SNUBS AND SLIGHTS; HE MAY EVEN SEEM “PARANOID” TO OTHERS
 - ...HE TENDS TO BE MOODY AND VACILLATE QUICKLY BETWEEN BEING CHARMING AND LOVING AND BECOMING RAGEFUL AND HOSTILE
 - ...HE TENDS TO HAVE SUPERFICIAL AND SHALLOW FRIENDSHIPS OR NO FRIENDSHIPS AT ALL WITH OTHERS, HE RARELY CONFIDES IN OTHER PEOPLE, AND HE EXPECTS HIS FEMALE PARTNER TO FULFILL ALL THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS THAT HE EXPERIENCES
 - ...THIS OFTEN LEADS TO AN INTENSE EMOTIONAL OVERDEPENDENCE ON HIS PARTNER AND HIS UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT WHAT SHE IS SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE FOR HIM
 - ...E.G. HE EXPECTS HER TO BE AN ALL-GIVING/ALL LOVING “MOTHER FIGURE” FOR HIM
 - ...HE MAY BE RAMBLING AND UNFOCUSED IN HIS COMMUNICATION
 - ...TRYING TO CONTROL WHAT HAPPENS BY TALKING CONTINUALLY AND “TAKING AND THEN HOLDING THE FLOOR”
 - ...HE BECOMES EASILY REACTIVE, DEFENSIVE, AND ARGUMENTATIVE
 - ...HE OFTEN INTERRUPTS HIS PARTNER AND HAS AN INTENSE NEED TO “GET THE LAST WORD IN” DURING AN ARGUMENT OR CONFLICT
 - ...HE OFTEN HAS DIFFICULTY ASSERTING HIMSELF OR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHER PEOPLE
 - ...HE MAY BE PASSIVE AND CONFLICT-AVOIDANT WITH HIS PARTNER AND OTHERS UNTIL HE MAKES THE DECISION TO “EXPLODE” AND BECOME ABUSIVE
 - ...HE DOES A VERY POOR JOB OF NEGOTIATING, COMPROMISING, OR ADDRESSING AND RESOLVING CONFLICT WITH HIS PARTNER AND OTHERS
 - ...HE OFTEN HAS A “WIN-LOSE”/“RIGHT-WRONG” MENTALITY ABOUT ANY CONFLICT SITUATION