



GLOSSARY OF TERMS DOMESTIC ABUSE

Think Business, Think Equality

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercive control is a pattern of behaviour that seeks to take away the victim-survivor's liberty or freedom, and strip away their sense of self. It is an act, or a pattern of acts, that is used to harm, punish or frighten their partner or ex-partner. It is used to maintain or regain control of a partner or ex-partner. Coercive control is recognised as a form of psychological abuse in the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrator against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends).

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Economic abuse incorporates a range of behaviours which allow a perpetrator to control someone else's economic resources or freedoms. It involves restricting access to money and other economic resources which can make it difficult to leave. It can also involve restricting access to essential things such as goods, clothing or transport, and denying the means to improve a person's economic situation.

EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Emotional and psychological abuse is a form of abuse, characterised by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behaviours that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. It aims to diminish a victim-survivor's sense of identity, dignity, self-worth, and independence. Perpetrators use tactics such as threats, verbal abuse, intimidation, bullying, abuse in the workplace, constant criticism and isolating someone from family and friends in order to exert control.

EQUALITY

Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are a woman or a man. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration - recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men.

GENDER

Refer to roles, attitudes, values and behaviours that men and women are encouraged to adopt by society. These characteristics can vary depending on the society around us and can change over time. For example, historically, gender role stereotyping would suggest that women should look after children at home while men go to work in the formal labour market.

STALKING

Stalking is persistent and unwanted behaviour which causes or has the intention to cause fear or alarm. It is a form of surveillance underpinned by the communication of that surveillance.

VICTIM-SURVIVOR

The term victim-survivor is used to capture that individuals experiencing domestic abuse can be both victim and survivor. Victims are often portrayed as helpless, powerless or passive in contrast to survivors who are active, heroic and resourceful. However, the terms used separately do not capture the experience of domestic abuse or the external factors that affect women's ability to leave.

PERPETRATOR

An individual who chooses to use abusive behaviours in order to assert power and control, usually to gain authority over their partner. Someone who is currently or has previously committed domestic abuse or stalking.

Close the Gap works in Scotland on women's labour market participation. We work with policymakers, employers and unions to influence and enable action that will address the causes of women's inequality at work.

Close the Gap
166 Buchanan Street
Glasgow
G1 2LW
0141 572 4730
info@closethegap.org.uk
www.closethegap.org.uk

 closethegap.org.uk

 Close the Gap



Close the Gap (SCIO) (known as Close the Gap)
is a Scottish charity, no SC046842.

Published January 2026