

What does reproductive coercion look like?

PREGNANCY PRESSURE:

When an individual pressures or coerces a woman into becoming pregnant against her will.

- Threatening to hurt a woman physically, economically, or emotionally if she refuses to get pregnant;
- Making a woman feel guilty for not wanting to become pregnant;
- Claiming a woman must not be “in love” if she does not want to become pregnant.

BIRTH CONTROL SABOTAGE:

When an individual interferes with a woman’s use of contraception in an attempt to cause her to become pregnant against her will.

- Physically or economically preventing a woman from obtaining birth control;
- Hiding, throwing away, or destroying a woman’s birth control pills;
- Pulling off contraceptive patches or pulling out vaginal rings;
- Refusing to use condoms, removing condoms during sex, or poking holes in condoms;
- Refusing to pull out during sex when previously agreed upon.

PREGNANCY OUTCOME CONTROL:

When an individual pressures or coerces a woman into continuing or ending a pregnancy against her will.

- Making a woman feel guilty for wanting to continue a pregnancy or have an abortion;
- Convincing a woman that she has no other option but to continue a pregnancy or have an abortion;
- Hurting a woman (or threatening to hurt a woman) physically and/or emotionally if she continues a pregnancy or has an abortion;
- Physically or economically preventing a woman from obtaining an abortion;
- Physically assaulting a woman in an attempt to induce a miscarriage.



Educating friends and family about reproductive coercion can help them recognize abusive behaviors in their own relationships and encourage them to take steps to protect themselves and their reproductive autonomy.



Feminist Women’s Health Center

Clinic phone: 404.728.7900

Toll free: 800.877.6013

www.feministcenter.org



National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Phone: 303.839.1852

Fax: 303.831.9251

Email: mainoffice@ncadv.org

www.ncadv.org



Recognizing and Addressing Reproductive Coercion: A Guide for Women

facts

definitions

action



What is reproductive coercion?

- Reproductive coercion is the behavior used to pressure or coerce a woman into becoming pregnant or into continuing or ending a pregnancy against her will, through the use of manipulation, intimidation, threats, and/or actual acts of violence.
- Reproductive coercion most-often manifests within the context of an intimate, heterosexual relationship, when a man uses pregnancy-controlling behaviors in an effort to maintain power, control, and domination over a woman.
- Reproductive coercion is considered a form of intimate partner violence (IPV); however, women victimized by reproductive coercion may not recognize that these behaviors are abusive, particularly if there is no history of physical or sexual violence in their relationship.

Note: The language of this brochure reflects the fact that reproductive coercion most often manifests within the context of an intimate, heterosexual relationship. Reproductive coercion may occur within the context of LGBTQ relationships, as well as non-sexual relationships (e.g., parent-child relationships) and other types of intimate relationships that are not specified here.



Ask yourself...

- Am I afraid to ask my partner to use condoms?
- Has my partner ever refused to use a condom or gotten angry when I asked him to?
- Has my partner ever pressured me to get pregnant when I didn't want to?
- Has my partner ever tampered with or thrown away my birth control?
- Has my partner ever accused me of not loving him because I did not want to become pregnant?
- Has my partner ever made me feel ashamed, or threatened to hurt me, because I wanted to use birth control or have an abortion?
- Have I ever had to hide my birth control from my partner?
- Has my partner ever pressured me to get an abortion when I didn't want one?
- Has my partner ever accused me of cheating on him because I wanted to use birth control?
- Has my partner ever tried to convince me that taking birth control would ruin my chances of having children in the future?

If you answered yes to any of the above...

Your partner may be trying to take control of your reproductive decisions, and your health and safety may be in danger.

Your partner may be trying to get you pregnant against your will in order to keep you physically or financially tied to him forever.

You are not alone, and you deserve to make your own decisions about your body and your future without being made to feel ashamed or afraid.

Take control of your reproductive health!

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO BECOME PREGNANT...

Talk to your health care provider about birth control that your partner cannot see, feel, or tamper with. **Examples include: Implant (Nexplanon), Injection (Depo Provera), Intrauterine Devices (IUD - Mirena or ParaGuard)**

FACTS ABOUT INTRAUTERINE DEVICES (IUD)...

- An IUD is a small and very safe medical device that sits inside your uterus.
- An IUD protects against pregnancy for 5 to 10 years.
- An IUD can be removed at any time if you want to become pregnant.
- The copper IUD (ParaGuard) is hormone-free, and a good option if you do not want to use hormonal birth control.
- The strings of your IUD can be cut so that your partner cannot feel them.

If you are interested in obtaining birth control and you would like to find a family planning clinic near you: www.bedsider.org

IF YOU RECENTLY ENGAGED IN UNPROTECTED SEX, AND DO NOT WANT TO BECOME PREGNANT...

Talk to your health care provider about emergency contraception:

Morning after pill (Plan B)

- In many regions of the U.S. you can purchase Plan B over the counter in a drug store without a prescription.
- **SAFETY TIP:** Take the morning after pill while you are still at the drug store or health clinic so that your partner does not discover the packaging materials in the trash.

ParaGuard IUD

- The copper IUD acts as an emergency contraceptive if inserted within one week of unprotected sex, and will then continue to protect against pregnancy for up to ten years, or until you decide to have it removed.

IF YOU ARE PREGNANT AND DO NOT WANT TO CONTINUE THE PREGNANCY...

Visit one of the resources below to find a safe, legal, and confidential abortion provider near you:

National Abortion Federation
1.877.257.0012
www.prochoice.org

Feminist Abortion Network
www.feministnetwork.org

SAFETY TIP: If there is a chance that your partner will check the recent calls on your cell phone, use a friend's phone or a pay phone to call and make an appointment for an abortion.

IF YOU ARE PREGNANT AND YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THE PREGNANCY...

- Remember that prenatal care is vital for yours and your baby's health and wellness during and after your pregnancy.
- Visit your health care provider as soon as possible to begin receiving prenatal care.

If you are pregnant and would like to find prenatal care resources near you:

www.womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/index.html

If you are pregnant and you would like to find adoption services near you:

www.friendsinadoption.com
www.yourbackline.org

Free, faith-based counseling for all pregnancy options: www.faithaloud.org



Intimate partner violence and women's reproductive health

- 1 in 4 women in the U.S is abused by their intimate partner.
- Roughly 25% of women who report that they are being physically or sexually abused by their intimate partners also report being pressured or forced to become pregnant.
- Women victimized by their intimate partners are less likely to use birth control, either because of their partner's unwillingness to use birth control or because their partner demands that they become pregnant.
- Women victimized by their intimate partners are at greater risk for poor reproductive health, including:
 - Unintended pregnancy
 - Sexually transmitted infection (STI)
 - Miscarriage
 - Stillbirth
 - Infant death

If you are concerned for your physical safety call one of the domestic abuse hotlines listed below to find support and resources near you:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.799.SAFE
1.800.799.7233
www.thehotline.org

National Dating Abuse Hotline
1.866.331.9474
www.loveisrespect.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1.800.656.HOPE
1.800.656.4673
www.rainn.org

