

Sample Policy #2 – Departmental/Unit Policy: The Eight Types of Abuse

Source: Middlesex-London Health Unit, 2000. London, Ontario. Reprinted with permission.

A bullet (◆) indicates actions that are clearly criminal acts, or may be criminal acts depending upon the circumstances (Martin & Younger-Lewis, 1997).

1. ◆ Emotional/psychological/verbal abuse

- being forced to do illegal things
- false accusations
- name calling, finding fault
- verbal threats
- yelling
- intimidation
- accused of being stupid
- playing on emotions
- disbelieving
- bringing up old issues
- inappropriate expression of jealousy
- degradation
- turning a situation against her
- brainwashing
- mockery
- silence
- refusal to do things with or for
- insistence on always being most important
- neglect
- expectation to conform to a role
- real or suggested involvement with other women
- invoking a sense of guilt
- certain mannerisms, such as finger snapping
- threats to get drunk or stoned unless...
- manipulation
- argumentative
- withholding of affection
- punishment by not sharing in household chores
- never forgiving, holding grudges
- lying
- treatment as though a child
- saying one thing, meaning another
- denying/taking away her responsibilities
- failure to keep commitments
- threats with the loss of immigration status
- deliberate creation of a mess for her to clean up
- threats to report her to the authorities



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- forces her to drop charges
- tells jokes that belittle or indicate hatred toward women
- refusal to deal with issues
- minimizes her work or contribution
- puts pressure on her to stay while drugs or alcohol are being abused
- not coming home
- coming home drunk or stoned
- possesses pictures that indicate hate or violence against women
- egging her on, challenging her to engage in physical violence
- friendship or support of men who are abusive
- demands an accounting of her time and routine
- takes advantage of her fear of something
- puts her on a pedestal
- ridicules her food preferences
- threatens suicide unless...

Emotional abuse surrounding reproduction, pregnancy and childbirth

- refuses to allow or forces her to use contraception
- forces her to have an abortion
- refuses sex on the grounds that her pregnant body is ugly
- denies that the child is his
- refuses to provide support during the pregnancy
- refuses to provide support during the birth
- denies her access to the newborn child
- refuses to provide support or help out with the baby
- demands sex soon after childbirth
- places blame because the infant is the “wrong sex”
- refuses to allow her to breast-feed
- sulks/makes her feel bad for the time spent with the baby

2. Environmental abuse in home or vehicle

Home Abuse

- ◆ harms pets
- rips clothing
- locks her in or out
- throws/destroys her possessions
- slams doors
- throws objects or food
- denies her use of the phone
- punches walls
- mows over her garden

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Vehicular Abuse

- ◆ drives too fast
- ◆ drives recklessly, pounding the steering wheel
- ◆ drives while intoxicated
- ◆ forces her into a vehicle
- ◆ pushes her out of a vehicle when it's in motion
- ◆ threatens to kill her by driving into an oncoming car, etc.
- ◆ chases/hits her with a vehicle
- ◆ kills/injures her in a deliberate accident
- ◆ hits her while she's driving
- prohibits her from using a vehicle by tampering with the engine, taking the keys, etc.
- puts his foot over hers on the gas pedal
- grabs the steering wheel while she's driving

3. Social Abuse

- controls what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads and where she goes
- fails to pass on messages
- puts her down/ignores her in public
- blocks access to family or friends
- interferes with her family or friends
- change of personality with others
- is rude to her friends or relatives
- dictates her behaviour
- habitually chooses friends, activities or work rather than being with her
- makes a "scene" in public
- makes her account for herself
- censors her mail
- treats her like a servant
- refuses to give her space or privacy
- insists on accompanying her into the doctor's office

Social abuse involving children

- ◆ assaults her in front of the children
- initiates false child-abuse charges against her
- makes her stay at home with the children
- teaches children to abuse their mother through name calling, hitting, etc.
- embarrasses her in front of the children
- does not share responsibility for the children
- threatens to abduct the children or tells her she'll never get custody
- puts down her parenting ability

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Social abuse during separation or divorce

- buys the children's affection with expensive gifts
- does not show up on time to pick up children or does not have them back on time
- pumps children for information about their mother's boyfriends, etc.
- tells children their mother is responsible for breaking up the family
- uses children to transport messages
- denies her access to the children
- fails to supply a valid phone number

4. Financial abuse

- ◆ takes her money
- ◆ forges her name
- gives her false receipts
- cancels her insurance
- sabotages her efforts to attain economic freedom
- withholds money
- spends money foolishly or beyond means
- pressures her to take full responsibility for finances
- does not pay fair share of bills
- does not spend money on special occasions
- spends money on addiction, gambling, sexual services
- pressures/controls her working conditions
- keeps family finances a secret
- prevents her from taking a job



5. Ritual abuse

- ◆ mutilation
- ◆ animal mutilation
- ◆ forced cannibalism
- ◆ human sacrifices
- suggests/promotes suicide
- forces her to participate in rituals
- forces her to witness rituals



6. Physical abuse

- ◆ any unwanted physical contact
- ◆ kicks, punches, pinches, pulls, pushes her
- ◆ slaps, hits, shakes her
- ◆ cuts, burns her
- ◆ pulls her hair, head butts
- ◆ squeezes her hand, twists her arm
- ◆ chokes, smothers her
- ◆ force-feeds her

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- ◆ spits on her
- ◆ throws her or throws things at her
- ◆ hits with objects, whips her
- ◆ restrains her in any way
- ◆ urinates on her
- ◆ breaks her bones
- ◆ knifes, shoots her
- ◆ threatens to kill/injure her
- ignores her illness or injury
- denies/restricts food or drink, pressures/tricks her into alcohol or drug use
- stands too close/intimidates her
- hides/withholds necessary medication

7. Sexual abuse

- ◆ any unwanted sexual contact
- ◆ forces her to have sex; hounds her to have sex
- ◆ forces her to have sex with others, with animals
- ◆ utters threats to obtain sex
- ◆ pinches, slaps, grabs, pulls her breasts or genitals
- ◆ forces sex when she is sick, after childbirth or surgery
- sleeps around
- knowingly transmits sexual diseases
- treats her as a sex object
- pressures her to pose for pornographic photos
- displays pornography that makes her feel uncomfortable
- uses sex as the basis or solution for an argument
- criticizes her sexual ability
- unwanted fondling in public
- purposely does not wash and expects sex
- name calling (whore, slut, frigid, bitch)
- accusations of affairs
- degrades her body parts
- tells sexual jokes or makes sexual comments in public
- demands sex for drugs or alcohol, as payment or trade
- administers drugs or alcohol for sexual advantage
- insists on checking her body for sexual contact

8. Religious abuse

- uses religion to justify abuse or dominance
- uses church position to pressure for sex or favours
- uses her, then demands forgiveness
- prevents her from attending church
- requires sex acts or drug use as religious acts
- mocks her beliefs