

## **The Power and Control Wheel**

Let's dig deeper into how patterns of violence are used to gain power and control. The Power and Control Wheel was developed by a scholar and social activist named Ellen Pence. It captures the experience of 20,000 victims of abuse.

This wheel is about the tactics that some individuals, more often men than women, use in an abusive relationships. We often focus just on the outside ring, the physical and sexual violence. But we miss all the other forms of abuse that have a massive emotional impact.

The physical or sexual violence or the threat of the violence is what underlies all these other tactics. Women experiencing abuse will tell you about how a specific look or wag of a finger can represent a huge threat. The point of all these tactics is to maintain power and control within a relationship.

For example, if we are referring to "Minimizing, Denying and Blaming": an abusive person might say: "If you were a better person, I wouldn't have to do what I did."

The reference to "Using male privilege" is not male bashing! It's the belief that some men have that they are entitled to have someone cook for them, or have sex with them, or that they have the right to know where their partner is at all times and to control who they talk to.

Physical and sexual violence are the behaviours that provide the context for the tactics that are used to maintain power and control. Pence said in an interview that in working with men who were abusive, it was not so much that they wanted power and control in their relationships; it was more that they felt entitled to it.

[If you're interested in learning more, see this interview with her: [Ellen Pence](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9dZOgr78eE)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9dZOgr78eE>]