
COERCIVE CONTROLLING RELATIONSHIPS

By Rachael Major/2204546

ECYW6006

CONTENTS

1. **Understanding Coercive control** (5 minutes)
2. **Impact on young people** (5 minutes)
3. **Recognising the signs** (5 minutes)
4. **The role of youth workers as a protective factor** (5 minutes)
5. **How to support your child** (5 minutes)
6. **Activity and Summary** (5 minutes)

Reminders:

- Trigger Warning
 - Take notes
 - Ask questions
-

CONTENT 1: UNDERSTANDING COERCIVE CONTROL

- Define Coercive control
 - Why it is an important topic.
 - Characteristics of coercive control.
 - Vulnerabilities of young people
-

DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE

An act or a pattern of acts, of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation that someone uses to harm, punish or frighten others (Refuge, 2017).

Domestic abuse isn't always physical, "Coercive and controlling behaviour is at the heart of domestic abuse" - Women's Aid (2025, np).

IMPORTANCE CONTINUED....

A new report from the Youth Endowment Fund (2025) revealed that the type of violent and controlling behaviours that teenagers experience in their relationships include:

- Feeling pressured or forced into sexual activity against their will.
 - Having explicit images or videos of themselves shared online without their consent.
 - Made to feel afraid to disagree with their partner.
 - Their partner made them feel scared to break up with them.
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CHARACTERISTICS

- Obsessively texting or calling them.
- Isolating them from friends and family.
- stopping them from working or going to school/college/university.
- Getting upset/angry when they text or hang out with other people.
- Accusing them of flirting or cheating all the time
- Pressuring them to do things they don't want to do such as engaging in sexual activity before they are ready or sharing naked photos themselves online.
- Monitoring or controlling their social media accounts.
- Tracking their location via GPS.

(Welsh Government, 2025)

CHARACTERISTICS CONTINUED.....

“Love bombing” (Services for Education, 2025, np) - Providing gifts, coming across charming and attentive to ‘love bomb’ their partner.

Over time this can result in one partner demonstrating power and control over the other.



VULNERABILITIES

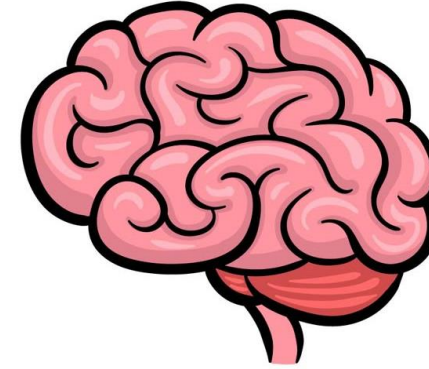
- Young people may not have had a lot of experience being in a healthy relationship to know what is and is not normal behaviour. Young people experiencing coercive control may not recognise it as abuse.
- Their views on love. For example, their partner's possessiveness may be thought of as 'romantic'.
- Social pressures to be in a relationship because all their friends are in relationships and social media showing unrealistic views on a perfect relationship.
- Unaware on who to ask for help, fear of not being believed as they are young.

(Safeguarding Worcestershire, 2013; Welch, 2025; Welsh Government, 2025).

CONTENT 2: IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

- Psychological effects
- Social effects
- Long term consequences

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT



Mental health problems - becoming anxious, depressed, increased paranoia, low self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth.

Taking a person's self-confidence and self-esteem is a slow torture of the mind which will impact everything they think and do, stripping them of their identity.

(Coercive control: A victim's guide, 2017; Erikson, 1950, cited in Sutton, 2020; Barnardo's, 2025).

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTINUED.....

Developing unhealthy coping mechanisms. Overeating or misusing substances such as vapes, alcohol, drugs to cope with their anxiety. They may feel that this use useful in the moment, but it can lead to addictions and other health problems.

(Coercive control: A victim's guide, 2017; Barnardo's, 2025)

Educational drop out, educational challenges, risk of involvement in criminal behaviour (Smith, 2018).

PHYSICAL IMPACT

- Low mental health can also lead to big impacts on physical health - self-harming or developing an eating disorder.
- Stress, anxiety and depression can lead to physical conditions or further aggravate existing medical conditions - headaches, muscular aches and pains, worsen asthma, epilepsy and heart conditions.

(Scottish Women's Aid, 2017; Coercive Control: A victim's guide, 2017; Barnardo's, 2025)

SOCIAL IMPACT

- Isolating from friends and family may result in depression.
- Difficulty in trusting others or making new friends.

(Scottish Women's Aid, 2017)

LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

- Increased mental and physical health problems.
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Struggling to build relationships/trust.
- Addiction to substances.

(Welsh Women's Aid, 2017)

CONTENT 3: RECOGNISING THE SIGNS

- Changes in their child's behaviour.
- Signs in their child's relationship.

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR

- Withdraw from family time or family engagements.
- Noticing sudden change appearance. For example, changes in clothing style, weight changes and personal care or hygiene.
- Over thinking, fear, anxiety occurring.

(Welsh Government, 2025)



CHANGES IN RELATIONSHIP

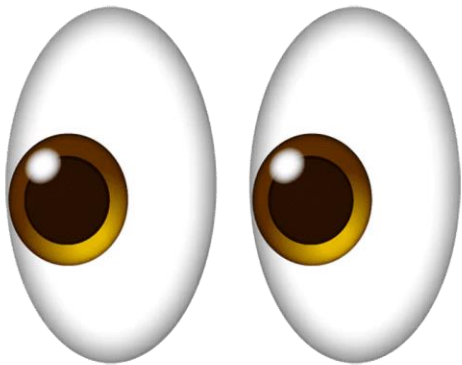
- They become concerned or anxious if they are not responding to messages immediately.
- They express fear about the way their partner might react in a situation.
- They try and excuse their partners behaviour.
- Asking their partner's permission to do anything. For example, going to the shop or meeting up with a friend.

(Australian Government, 2024; Welsh Government, 2025)

EMOJI'S

Netflix series recommendation – Adolescence (2025).

Example from practice:



COMFORT BREAKS



CONTENT 4: THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORKERS

- Early intervention
 - Educate
 - Collaboration
 - Children's rights
 - Support strategies
-

EARLY INTERVENTION

Youth workers = “protective factor” (Hudd, 2025).

How?

- Working with young people multiple times a week.
- Observation and conversation.
- Training

5 PILLARS OF YOUTH WORK

There are 5 pillars that underpin Youth Work

Focusing on "Educative" (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022, p.5)

Youth workers can educate young people on healthy relationships and coercive control:

- Recognise the signs.
- Where and who they can go to for help and support.

Educative

Participative

Expressive

Inclusive

Empowerment

COLLABORATION

"Partnership with young people and others" (CLD standards Council Scotland, 2019, p.5)

For example:

- Counsellors
- Substance misuse teams
- Teachers
- Police

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

- Article 12: "Respect for the views of the child"
- Article 19: "Protection from violence, abuse, neglect"
- Article 39: "Recovery from trauma and reintegration"



Youth workers are aware of all 54 rights of the child and will support them to reach their full potential.

(Unicef, 2025, np)

SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- One-to-one or group work.
- Building trustful relationships.
- Creating safe spaces.
- "Non-formal education" (National Youth Agency, 2025, np).

CONTENT 5: HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

- Open communication
 - Educate
 - Practical advice
 - Helplines
-

COMMUNICATION

- Keep an honest, open and close relationship with their child. Ensuring they know that they can talk to them about anything.
- It's important their children know they are not judging them.
- Acknowledging that it may be difficult for their child to speak to them about unhealthy relationships, if possible, offer them another appropriate adult to talk to.

(Welsh Government, 2025)



EDUCATE

- Make sure their child understands that they have the right to say no and their views should be respected.
- Make sure they know it is never their fault.
- Teaching them to be realistic about body image and that photos they see of celebrities online are often edited and airbrushed.
- Parents to increase their own understanding of unhealthy relationships = knowing the signs and how coercive control can impact their child.
- Not to be afraid to tell their children that they are worried and that they will be there for them when they are ready to talk.

(Welsh Government, 2025)

PRACTICAL ADVICE

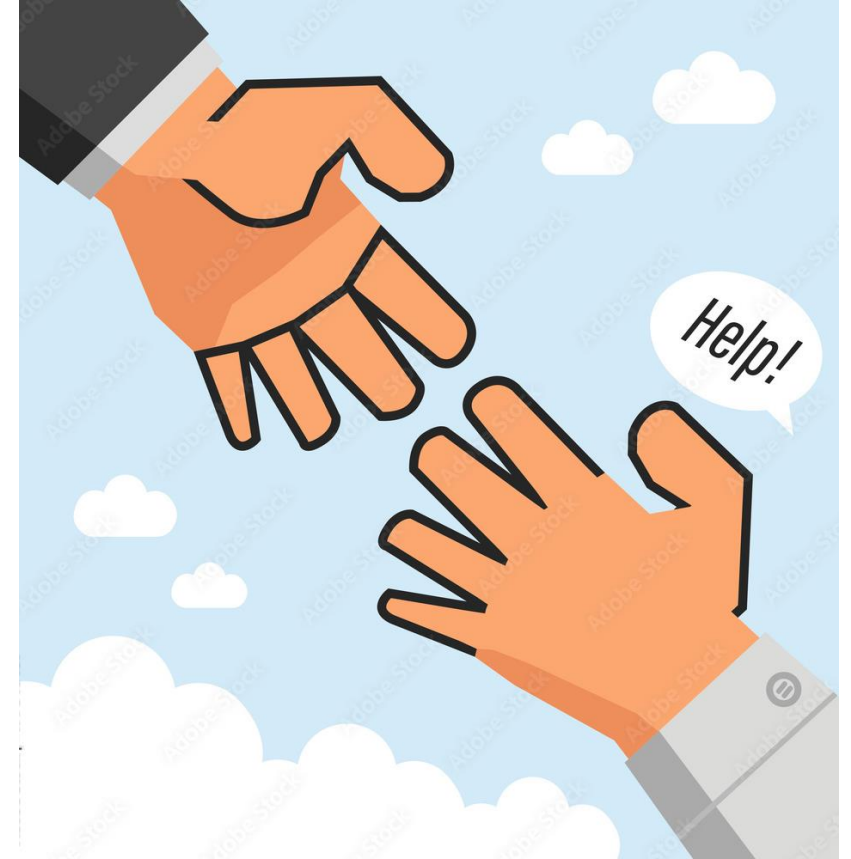
- Help build their self-esteem. Praise them when they are doing things well.
- Encourage their child to build a strong support system of people they can trust.
- Keep a journal or log of any concerning behaviour and patterns of coercive control.
- If they believe their child is at risk of immediate danger or harm, call the police.

(Welsh Government, 2025).

HELPLINES

- **NSPCC Helpline:** Available 24/7 to provide free advice and support for adults concerned about the safety and welfare of children and young people -Telephone: 0808 800 5000. Text: 88858.
- **Childline:** Young people can contact Childline for free and confidential advice – Telephone: 0800 1111.
- **Live fear free:** Available 24 hours to provide advice and support if you or someone are concerned about is in a coercive controlling relationship – Telephone: 0808 8010 800

(Safeguarding Worcestershire, 2013; Welsh Government, 2025).



Activity

SUMMARY

Parents should now understand:

- Coercive control.
- Impact on young people.
- Are now able to recognise the signs.
- How youth workers as a protective factor.
- How they can support child.

Any questions?

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