

SHALOM TASK FORCE DOMESTIC ABUSE AWARENESS GUIDE

Disclaimer: *The following packet includes guidelines pertaining to domestic abuse in the general population and examples specific to the Orthodox Jewish community. Each circumstance should be addressed on a case-to-case basis and consultation with a domestic-abuse organization or provider is recommended.*

Disclaimer- *For the purpose of this article, masculine pronouns will be used when referring to perpetrators of domestic violence, while feminine pronouns will be used in reference to victims. This should not detract from the fact that there are many male victims and female perpetrators.*

WHAT IS "DOMESTIC ABUSE?"

- Domestic violence or abuse refers to a pattern of coercive behavior used to establish power and control over a partner in an intimate relationship.
- The abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, or economic.
- It may be frequent or infrequent, severe or subtle.
- Domestic abuse can result in physical injury, psychological trauma, and sometimes death.
- The effect of domestic abuse is that people may feel afraid, threatened, depressed, and anxious; people may also be physically or sexually harmed.

WHAT CAUSES DOMESTIC ABUSE?

- Domestic abuse is a learned behavior. Historically, violence against women and children has largely been ignored or condoned by society.

WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO BE AN ABUSER OR A SURVIVOR?

- Both abusers and survivors come from all walks of life.
- They can be from any community, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, race, religion, nationality, or educational background.
- According to the Center for Disease Control, the research reflects that nearly 1 in 4 women (22.3%) and 1 in 7 men (14.0%) aged 18 and older in the United States have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- Studies indicate that domestic abuse occurs in Jewish communities (within all streams of Judaism) at a rate similar to the general population.

- Some abusers have learned and chosen to use tactics of domestic violence because of abuse they experienced or witnessed as a child; some have not experienced abuse as a child but learned and chose abusive behaviors elsewhere.
- Similarly, some individuals who are survivors in abusive relationships may have witnessed or experienced abuse as a child, but many others did not grow up in violent households.

“Why doesn’t the survivor just leave the relationship?”

- For someone who has never experienced domestic violence, the question of why a survivor stays with an abusive partner can be very difficult to understand. There are many reasons why it might be hard to leave an abusive relationship. The reasons for staying vary from one survivor to the next, and they usually involve several factors.

The following list includes just some of the reasons why women don’t come forward:

- Belief that the abusive partner will change because of their remorse and promises to stop battering
- Lack of emotional support
- *Shidduch* related pressure
- Feeling responsible to uphold the *shalom bayis*
- Guilt or shame over the failure of the relationship
- Love for the abuser
- Feeling responsible for the abuse
- Fear of emotional damage to the Children over the loss of a parent, even if that parent is abusive
- Low self-esteem, which may be reinforced by the abuser
- Fear of physical harm to self or children
- Economic dependence on the abuser



- Fear of losing custody of the children because the abuser threatens to take the children if survivor tries to leave
 - Lack of information regarding domestic violence resources
 - Family pressure to stay in the relationship
 - Social status that comes with being with the abuser
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When Supporting the Victim:

- **Believe the person** telling you they are being abused. Let them know that you are available to help whenever they may need it. What they need most is someone who will believe and listen.
- **Acknowledge and validate** that they are in a very difficult and scary situation. Their abuser may have them convinced that they are at fault or don't deserve better treatment. Let them know that the abuse is not their fault. If she is blaming herself, try to reframe: "I don't care if you did prepare a meal late or forgot to fill the car with gas, that is no reason for him to be violent with you. This is his problem."
- **Be Non-Judgmental:** respect their decisions. There are many reasons why victims stay in abusive relationships. They may leave and return to the relationship many times. Do not criticize their decisions or try to guilt them.
- **Reassure them** that they are not alone and that there is help and support out there.
- **Be a trusted confidant.** Keep all information entrusted to you confidential (exception: contacting an organization or law enforcement).
- **Gently guide the victim to find help.** Urge the victim to seek consultation about a safety plan.
- **Remember** that it takes an average of seven attempts for a survivor to leave a domestic violence relationship. Supporting a survivor to achieve safety and healing can be a long-term effort.

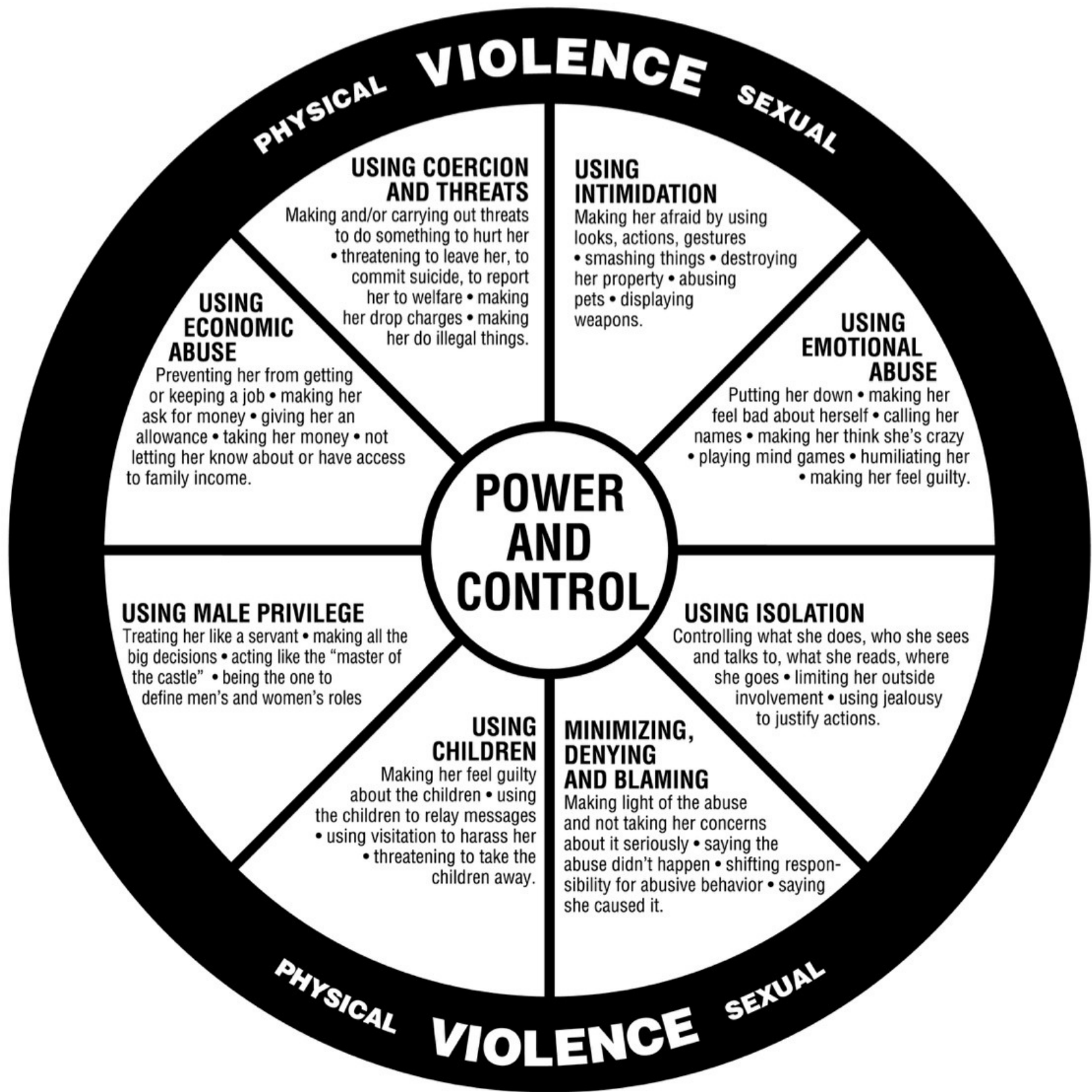


- **Call us** on the Shalom Task Force Hotline (**1-718-337-3700**) for guidance on supporting the victim and next steps.
 - **Don't try to fix the problem or become a counselor.** Your local domestic violence agency is staffed with trained personnel to counsel victims and help to ensure their safety. Don't put yourself in harm's way or increase the danger for the victim by getting in the middle.
 - **Remember that you cannot "rescue" them.** Although it is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt, ultimately they are the one who has to make the decisions about what they want to do. It's important for you to support them no matter what they decide, and help them find a way to safety and peace.
 - **Don't give up hope.** Be patient and go at the survivor's pace, not yours.
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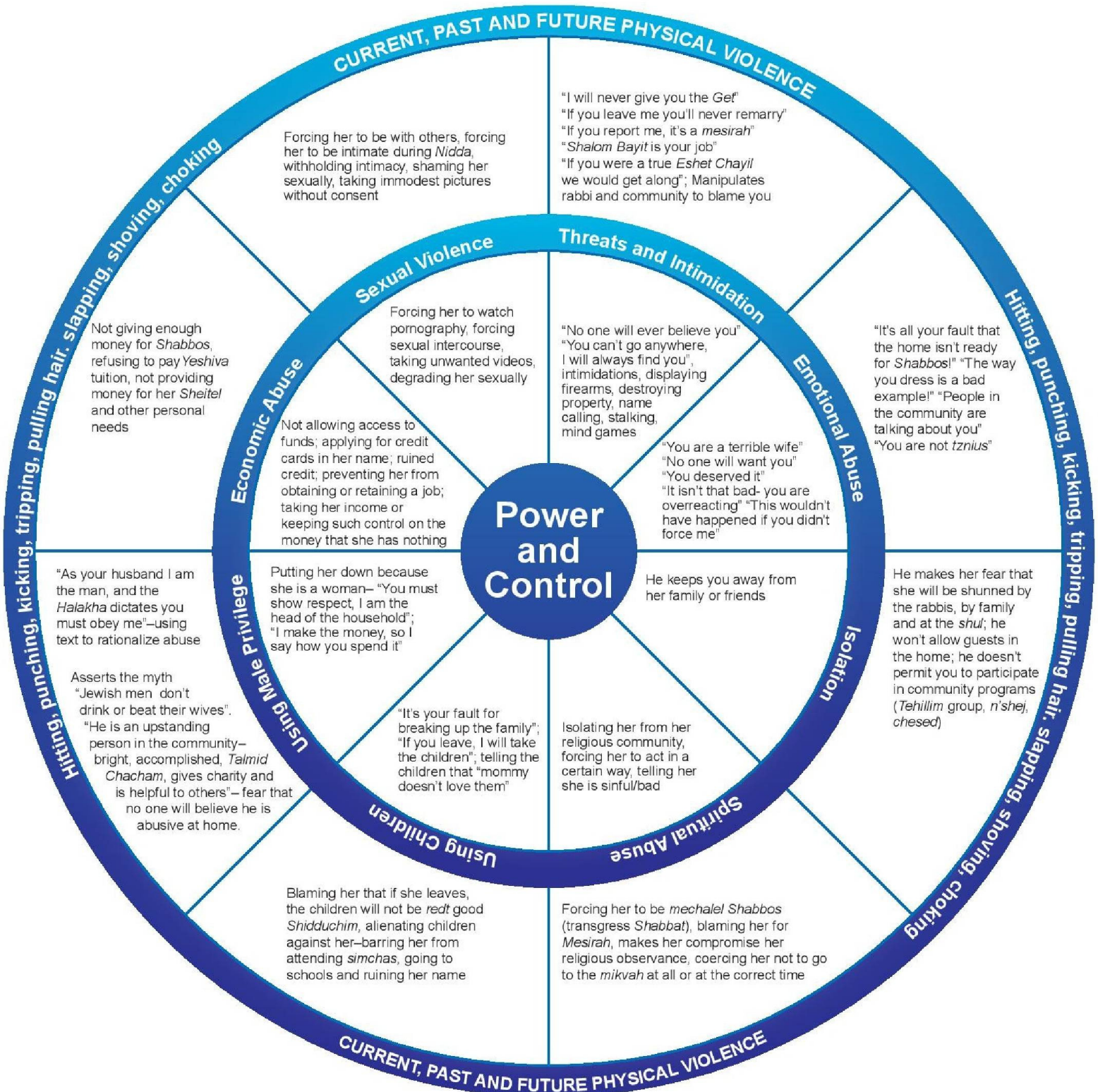
Statements of Support and Validation for Survivors of Domestic Violence:

- "This sounds like a difficult experience."
- "I'm really sorry to hear this has happened to you."
- "This was not your fault."
- "Are there things we can do to help you feel safe?"
- "Are you okay? Do you need medical attention?"
- "I know this must be uncomfortable."
- "If you want to talk about this again, you can talk to me."





Power and Control Wheel for the Jewish Woman



Adapted from original wheel by:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
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Different Types of Domestic Abuse:

Emotional Abuse

She may be in an emotionally abusive relationship if her partner exerts control through:

- Calling her names, insulting her or continually criticizing her
- Refusing to trust her and acting jealous or possessive
- Trying to isolate her from family or friends
- Monitoring where she goes go, who she can call and who she spends time with.
- Demanding to know where she is every minute
- Punishing her by withholding affection.
- Threatening to hurt her, the children, her family or her pets
- Damaging her property when he's angry (throwing objects, punching walls, kicking doors)
- Accusing her of cheating and being often jealous of her outside relationships
- Cheating on her intentionally to hurt her and then threatening to cheat again

- Attempting to control her appearance: what she wears, how much/little makeup she wears, etc.
- Telling her that she will never find anyone better, or that she is lucky to be with a person like him

Physical Abuse

She may be experiencing physical abuse if her partner has done or repeatedly does any of the following tactics of abuse:

- Pulling her hair, punching, slapping, kicking, biting or choking her Forbidding her from eating or sleeping Hurting her with weapons
- Preventing her from calling the police or seeking medical attention
- Harming her children
- Abandoning her in unfamiliar places
- Driving recklessly or dangerously when she is in the car with him Forcing her to use drugs or alcohol (especially if she's had a substance abuse problem in the past)
- Trapping her in her home or preventing her from leaving



Economic or Financial Abuse - When an abusive partner extends their power and control into the area of finances. This abuse can take different forms, including an abusive partner:

- Giving an allowance and closely watching how she spends it or demanding receipts for purchases
- Placing her paycheck in their bank account and denying her access to it
Preventing her from viewing or having access to bank accounts
- Forbidding her to work or limiting the hours that she can work
- Maxing out credit cards in her name without permission or not paying the bills on credit cards, which could ruin her credit score
- Stealing money from her or her family and friends
- Using funds from children's savings accounts without her permission
- Living in her home but refusing to work or contribute to the household
Forcing her to give him her tax returns or confiscating joint tax returns
- Refusing to give her money to pay for necessities/shared expenses like food, clothing, transportation, or medical care and medicine

Minimizing, Denying and Blaming:

- Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously.
- Saying the abuse didn't happen.
- Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior.
- Saying she caused it.

Male Privilege:

- Uses halachah to justify his mistreatment of her whether or not it is a true interpretation of the halachic authority.
- Refuses to let her or discourages her from speaking to a *rav*.
- Lies to the *rav* in order to get an answer he likes.
- Treating her like a servant
- Making all the big decisions
- Being the one to define men's and women's roles



Digital Abuse

The use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behavior is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online. She may be experiencing digital abuse if her partner:

- Tells her who she can or can't be friends with on Facebook and other sites.
- Sends her negative, insulting or even threatening emails, Facebook messages, tweets, DMs or other messages online. Puts her down in his status updates.
- Steals or insists to be given her passwords.
- Sends her unwanted, explicit pictures or videos and demands she send some in return.
- Steals or insists to be given her passwords.
- Constantly texts her and makes her feel like she can't be separated from her phone for fear that she will be punished.
- Looks through her phone frequently, checks up on her pictures, texts and outgoing calls.

Using Children:

- Making her feel guilty about the children
- Using the children to relay messages.
- Using visitation to harass her.
- Threatening to take the children

Using Coercion and Threats:

- Threatening and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her.
- Threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare.
- Pressuring her to drop charges.
- Pressuring her to do illegal things.

