Police Power and Control Wheel

Tactics of Power and Control in Police-Perpetrated Domestic Violence

POWER AND CONTROL

LACK OF OPTIONS
Service providers untrained or unwilling to help. Abuser knows shelter locations; has access to information to track victim if she runs. Order of Protection difficult to get or keep. Remedies depend on police enforcement.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THREATS
Keeps her under his control without physical abuse. She’s afraid he’ll hurt her and anyone who helps her. Afraid he’ll use the system against her: arrest, jail. Knows how to commit the perfect crime. No one will believe her word against “word of an officer.”

TRAINING
Control through intimidation; mere presence, stance, voice, uniform, badge, gun. Knows continuum of force: body as weapon, arm locks, choke holds, handcuffs, other “tools of the trade.” Weapons available and he’s trained to use them. Has investigative skills that enables him to get info about her or her friends.

INSTITUTIONAL POWER
Gun, badge, brotherhood, judicial bias, access to information and equipment (i.e. phone taps, surveillance, tracking devices on car). No one in the system will help her; cops stick together. He knows how to circumvent the law and manipulate the legal system.

POWER

POLICE RESPONSE
He IS the police. She fears police will respond to “officer in distress” instead of her. Colleagues use own discretion. Police report will reflect abuser’s version of story. Police can fail to collect or preserve evidence.

KNOWLEDGE OF LAW & COURT
He knows court procedures and personnel. Presents himself well in court: knows what to say and not to say. His profession confers credibility. Only what can be proven matters.

CREDIBILITY

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Adapted from Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth MN