

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ABUSE

KEY TERMS

Economic and financial abuse impacts every part of a survivor's life, causing stress, anxiety, depression, and a loss of self-esteem. It often leads to poverty, housing instability, and limited career opportunities. The social impacts can include feeling isolated and becoming financially dependent on their partner/spouse. Legal and financial consequences include coerced debt and legal vulnerabilities.



Economic Abuse

is a broad term that means controlling, sabotaging, or exploiting someone's economic resources and security. More than just about money, it involves actions that impact someone's economic self-sufficiency and stability. Research shows that 99% of intimate partner violence cases involve economic abuse.

Examples: Not allowing a woman build a credit history; sabotaging employment, threatening to cut off financial support if a woman does not comply with demands, not paying his share of household bills and rent.

"I had to move to another city and the impact of his actions caused many lost opportunities that could never be replaced again."
Survivor interview



Financial Abuse

is a form of economic abuse that means taking or controlling someone's money. It includes theft, fraud, and pressuring someone to sell their belongings or change their will – actions that are usually illegal. Lack of financial resources is the number one reason women give for remaining in an abusive situation.

Examples: Cashing cheques in the woman's name; restricting access to money or giving a woman an allowance; using a woman's disability or student loan payment.



Financial Control

includes behaviours used specifically to control how a woman acquires and uses income.

Examples: Demanding a woman hand over her paycheque; controlling and monitoring spending; preventing access to bank accounts

"I didn't have control over my own money, and he would literally take all my money, even my baby bonus, and leave me with very little."
Survivor interview



Coerced Debt

is when an abuser uses threats and deception to force someone into taking on debt. This debt can impact a woman for years after leaving a relationship. It is the most common form of economic exploitation, with 84% of IPV survivors carrying debt incurred by their abusers.

Examples: Signing up for a credit card in a woman's name; asking a woman to lend money and then not repaying the debt; using a woman's credit card without her consent.



Financial Isolation

is when the abuser uses financial control to isolate and manipulate a woman, preventing her from accessing her money and economic resources. This creates dependence and makes it difficult for a woman to leave.

Examples: Hiding financial information; changing banking passwords; interfering with access to financial services and supports, interfering with career progression.



Economic Sabotage

Interfering with someone's ability to gain or maintain employment, such as hiding necessary documentation or sabotaging work environments.

Examples: Repeatedly showing up at someone's workplace, interfering with transportation to work, creating situations at home that prevent someone from going to work.

"If he gets to know where I went for interviews, he would call and threaten them or falsely accuse me of something."
Survivor interview

