People with Disabilities in Partner Relationships

Targets Disability with Physical and Sexual Abuse

and Threats

Threatens to leave or to take children • Says will kill partner, children, pets or service animals

- Threatens to have partner arrested or institutionalized
- Forces use of alcohol or drugs on addicted partner
 - Makes partner steal or buy drugs

(Ableism) Overprotects • Makes decisions alone • Creates physical barriers to getting around (moves furniture, leaves clutter) • Keeps tabs on partner for "safety" reasons because of disability . Takes over tasks to make partner more dependent

Privilege

Support or Treatment

Steals or throws away medication • Doesn't provide medicine or support when needed • Doesn't allow needed medical treatment

 To increase dependence, breaks or does not let partner use assistive devices (phone, wheelchair, cane, walker, etc.)

Emotional Abuse

Insults and shames about disability • Gives conflicting messages by both helping and hurting • Sneaks up to startle • Abuses more as partner becomes independent • Drives dangerously to scare • Disrespects boundaries • Talks down to partner Torments by not letting partner sleep

Power and **Control**

Economic Abuse

Controls all money • Uses partner's disability income for self . Does not share expenses because being partner to person with a disability is a "favor"

 Does not allow partner to work and be economically independent

Isolation

Pressures to give up disability services Confines and restrains to restrict access to others • Exposes disability (AIDS, mental illness, etc.) to others to isolate • Limits contact with others • Threatens friends • Says no one else cares

Sexual Abuse

Forces sex when partner unable to physically resist Humiliates sexually because of disability . Makes decisions about birth control/pregnancy

- Cheats and lies (does not think partner will know because of disability)
- Pressures partner into

Minimize, **Deny and Blame**

Lies about abuse to others (says partner is crazy, fell out of wheelchair, is forgetful, just didn't take medications) • Blames disability for abuse • Twists reality, says abuse did not happen

Targets Disability with Physical and Sexual Abuse

Created by



with in-depth input from people with disabilities.

Adapted with permission from DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT 202 East Superior Street Duluth, MN 55802 218.722.2781 www.theduluthmodel.org