

The 'Post-Separation Economic Power and Control' Wheel (Glinski, 2021)

The 'Post-Separation Economic Abuse Power and Control' wheel is an adaptation of the original Duluth 'Power and Control Wheel' (1984). The adaptation is based on PhD research which included 30 in-depth interviews with female victim-survivors of domestic abuse and focus groups with 51 support workers across Scotland, UK. The participants' narratives revealed three stages of economic abuse: 1) economic abuse experienced throughout their relationship; 2) the consequences of the economic abuse from the relationship, and 3) post-separation economic abuse. All victim-survivors detailed how despite physically separating from their abusive partners, the economic abuse they experienced continued, and in most cases escalated, post-separation. The wheel was adapted in close collaboration with the research participants and is a representation of the second and third stages of economic abuse that the victim-survivors experienced. The tactics included in the wheel are those most commonly experienced by the victim-survivors.

The outermost rim highlights how, despite being physically separated, the victim-survivors were still fearful of their (ex)partners. The term (ex)partner was purposely utilised to represent the women's views/feelings towards their previous partner, with some reluctant to label them as 'ex-partners', the brackets allow for a dual reading of the wheel covering both 'partners' and 'expartners'. The victim-survivors highlighted how, after physically separating from their abusive partners, they were not able to predict and manage the abusive behaviours to the extent that they had done whilst living together. Therefore, despite having attained physical safety, the women still feared the unpredictability of their (ex)partners and their abusive tactics. The continuous fear the women lived with post-separation, therefore, holds the wheel together.

The following rim represents the second stage of economic abuse – the consequences, or aftermath, of the economic abuse the victim-survivors, were subjected to in their relationships. In this stage, the women were confronted with coerced or unknown debts, bankruptcy, damaged credit files and inhibited employment and educational opportunities as a direct result of the economic abuse they experienced from their former partners. The victim-survivors were often made aware of these consequences whilst trying to rebuild their lives separate from their partner. These consequences, and debt in particular, directly impacted the women's financial autonomy and wellbeing - resulting in serious barriers to the victim-survivors' ability to establish themselves financially and move forward with their lives.

The eight spokes in the centre of the wheel detail the new economic abuse tactics the women experienced post-separation. As with the original 'Power and Control' wheel (1984), the tactics presented in the adapted wheel are not mutually exclusive, but instead, reinforce one another to assert continued power and control over the victim-survivors' lives. In a departure from the original wheel, the victim-survivors' narratives highlighted how post-separation economic abuse was not just initiated and carried out by their (ex)partners but often reinforced and facilitated by the state and state processes. Therefore, three new spokes entitled 'Banking', 'Manipulating Institutions', and '(Ab)Using Court Processes' have replaced three of the original spokes of the Power and Control Wheel to reflect how perpetrators were able to manipulate institutions, systems, and processes to their

advantage. Perpetrators still utilised tactics from the original spokes, such as 'male privilege' and 'minimising, denying, and blaming', however, the women's experiences indicated that these elements were woven throughout all of the new tactics to achieve the perpetrator's aims. This was particularly apparent in how institutions such as courts, banks and child maintenance services privileged the male perpetrator's financial autonomy and decision-making over the financial independence and needs of the female victim-survivors and their children.

The other spokes remain the same as the ones provided in the original wheel. The victim-survivors detailed how coercion, threats and intimidation around finances were commonly enacted to get the women to comply with their (ex)partner's demands and/or to continuously punish them for having left the relationship. Emotionally abusive tactics around finances were present throughout all the other spokes and had a particularly negative impact on the victim-survivors mental health and wellbeing. Threats, coercion and intimidation, especially with regards to the removal of children or threatening to take the victim-survivor to court, were particularly effective because of the women's experiences of their (ex)partners manipulating institutions and court processes – resulting in further losses and increased financial hardship for the victim-survivors.

All of the women in the research had physically separated from their abusive partners in hopes of providing a better life for themselves and their children – a life free from abuse. However, the financial challenges they were faced with, and the continued post-separation economic abuse, from both - their (ex)partner as well as institutions – left many victim-survivors struggling to rebuild their lives. The adapted wheel provides a visual representation of how the abuse does not end because the relationship has ended. Furthermore, it highlights how state and institutional processes can be complicit in facilitating economic abuse, resulting in further traumatisation and ongoing financial disadvantage for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

The wheel is intended as a resource for victim-survivors, those who support them as well as an informative tool for any institution/organisation which may interact with, or have decision-making power over, a victim-survivor's life. This necessary adaptation is aimed at increasing our understanding of the financial challenges that victim-survivors face post-separation. Further, in crucially highlighting the systemic disadvantages, the adapted wheel offers a starting place for organisations and institutions to begin to address these challenges.

About Jenn

Jenn is a PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow, Scotland and an economic abuse expert. She has spent over 10 years working in research, policy and educational roles in the field of violence against women and girls. Jenn holds an LL.M. in International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex and a MRes in Public Policy Research from the University of Glasgow. Her PhD research examines economic abuse, the costs of separation and support available for victim-survivors in Scotland.

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