



Anyone can experience domestic abuse or sexual violence.

The way it happens to women who have Learning Disabilities and/or who are Neurodivergent is different.

Learning about this can help you get support for yourself or other people.

Coercion and Threats

Saying he is going to hurt her.
Saying he is going to leave her on her own or kill himself.
Stopping or not meeting her care needs.
Making her drop charges with the police.
Making her tell lies for him.
Making her do things that are against the law.
Making her do things she does not want to.

Minimizing, Denying and Blaming

Saying something happened when it didn't.
Telling her the abuse is her fault, she made him do it or is for her own good.
Not listening to how she feels.
Saying its not as bad as it is.
Saying she doesn't understand because of her disability.
Telling her its not abuse.

Isolation

Telling her what she can and can't do, where she is allowed to go and who she can see and talk to.
Checking her phone, diary, social media and bank account.
Not letting her talk for herself.
Not letting her choose who goes to appointments with her or allowing her to speak to professionals.
Stopping her from doing things she wants to do.
Telling her that her disability makes her unlikeable.
Telling lies to keep her away from family and friends.

Using Children

Making children choose a side or pass on horrible messages.
Saying he will hurt the children.
Telling her she is a bad mother because of her disability.
Threatening to report her or making false reports to social services/welfare.
Saying bad things about the children.
Not keeping to arrangements about contact times/places and calls.

Economic Abuse

Taking her money.
Lying about what he is using money for.
Making her ask for and not giving her enough money.
Running up debt and making her take on debt in her name.
Stopping her from getting or keeping a job.
Saying she doesn't know how to handle money because of her disability.

Male Privilege

He is the boss.
He tells her what to do.
He makes all the choices.
He makes and changes the rules.
He treats her like a child.
He makes her do all the housework.
He tells her she can't do things because of her disability.

Using Intimidation

How they act and talk scares her.
Turns professionals against her by using her disability.
Telling her she can't do or understand things because of her disability.
Telling her she should do things she can't because of her disability.
Making her afraid by using scary looks, smashing things, hurting pets or showing her weapons.
Bullying her.
Saying no one will believe her if she reports abuse.

Emotional Abuse

Making her feel bad about herself so she does what she is told.
Calling her names e.g. the R word and using her disability against her.
Putting her down in front of others.
Making her feel everything is her fault so she blames herself.
Telling her something didn't happen to her that did.
Not giving medication, support or care.
Saying no one will believe her because of her disability.

Created by the DIVAS at The Women's Centre Cornwall, UK. The DIVAS are a group of women with learning disabilities and/or neurodivergent women who are survivors of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence. The DIVAS Project is dedicated to improving access to support for women with learning disabilities and neurodivergent women who have experienced domestic abuse and/or sexual violence. Our aim is to create inclusive, trauma-informed services that respond to the needs of our community.