

## Batterers' strategies

A women's shelter adapted Amnesty International's Report on Torture (1973) to help us identify strategies used by batterers. Methods of Coercion Method Example

(quotes by battered women) Isolation Deprives victim of all social support for the ability to resist.

Develops an intense concern with self.

Makes victim dependent upon interrogator. "He moved me away from my friends. He didn't want me to go anywhere unless he was with me. He would eavesdrop." Monopolization of Perception Fixes attention upon immediate predicament; fosters introspection.

Eliminates stimuli competing with those controlled by captor.

Frustrates all actions not consistent with compliance. "I was always scared he'd blow up. I had to dress up for him. Give him sex whenever he wanted. I had to control the children so they wouldn't bother him. It was like walking on eggshells."

Induced Debility and Exhaustion Weakens mental and physical ability to resist. He wouldn't let me sleep. He started fights at night. He wouldn't let me see a doctor. Threats Cultivates anxiety and despair. He threatened to kill the cat. He said he'd take the kids. He said he'd have me committed. He said he'd have me committed. He said he'd burn down the house. He said he'd find me if I left. Occasional Indulgences Provides positive motivation for compliance. He took me on vacation. He bought me jewelry. He allowed me sex only when we "made up." Once in awhile he really listened to me and seemed to care. Demonstrating "Omnipotence" Suggests futility of resistance. He beat me up. He had me followed. He called me deluded. Degradation Makes cost of resistance appear more damaging to self-esteem than capitulation.

Reduces prisoner to "animal level" concerns. He told me I'm too fat. He'd call me names and touch me inappropriately in public. He put me down intellectually and sexually and said I was ugly. Enforcing Trivial Demands Develops habit of compliance. The bacon had to be cooked to a particular doneness. I couldn't leave a cup on the bathroom basin.

Source: Amnesty International, Report on Torture (1973), as adapted by the women's shelter of Northampton, Massachusetts and as cited in Ann Jones, Next Time, She'll Be Dead: Battering & How to Stop It, (Boston: Beacon Press), 1994.