

Partner Abuse and Control Inventory

This exploratory questionnaire describes forms of psychological abuse and coercive control in the current or most recent intimate relationship: belittling, control and isolation, monitoring, intimidation, manipulation, and sexual pressure, as well as the fear and self-doubt they produce. It helps put words to a pattern of control that the person does not always name themselves and steer the interview toward assessing their safety.

Number of questions	28 questions
Estimated duration	7 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Partner Abuse and Control Inventory
Target audience	Adults
Category	Couple issues, Interpersonal issues

Preview of the 28 questions

In your current or most recent relationship, how often has this been true for you?

My partner criticizes my appearance, my body, or the way I dress.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

In your current or most recent relationship, how often has this been true for you?

My partner gets angry when I see my family or friends.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

In your current or most recent relationship, how often has this been true for you?

My partner goes through my phone or my messages without my permission.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

In your current or most recent relationship, how often has this been true for you?

My partner breaks or throws things when they get angry.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

In your current or most recent relationship, how often has this been true for you?

My partner tells me it's my fault when they lose their temper.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Administer your questionnaires online

Send your patient a link: they answer from their phone or computer, and you receive the scored results by email.

View the questionnaire on mentaal.org ›

Scoring & interpretation

Scoring

Each statement is scored from 0 (never) to 4 (very often) based on its frequency in the current or most recent relationship. Each domain combines 4 statements spread throughout the questionnaire, giving a score from 0 to 16.

Reading the profile

There is no total score. Domains are ranked from most to least elevated, each with a description of what it covers and points to explore in the interview. The profile distinguishes what the partner does from what the person feels as a result ("Effects on oneself"). Elevated "Control and isolation," "Monitoring and jealousy," and "Intimidation and threats" domains together suggest coercive control rather than mutual couple conflict. Marked effects when the behaviors are rated low may reflect minimization, which is common under coercive control.

Clinical cautions

Before sending it, check that the partner does not have access to the person's phone or email: the link, the name, and the introduction of the questionnaire could put them at risk. The questionnaire does not cover physical violence; threats, physical violence, or fear for one's safety call for a danger assessment in the interview (recent escalation, death threats, strangulation, a weapon, a separation under way or being considered). It should not be offered in couples therapy, where the partner could see the answers. The introduction reminds the person to fill it out alone.

Limitations

This exploratory questionnaire has not undergone psychometric validation and has no cutoffs. It supports the clinical interview and does not provide a diagnosis.

Scoring example

Scoring

Intimidation and threats 16 / 16

Frightening behavior: breaking things, threatening gestures, threats toward the person or their loved ones, threats of revenge in the event of a separation.

Areas to explore: the threats made (toward the person, the children, loved ones, pets), access to a weapon, any physical violence, fear for one's safety.

Monitoring and jealousy 10 / 16

Checking, demands to account for oneself, and jealousy that place the person under surveillance.

Areas to explore: the partner's access to the phone, email, and accounts, location tracking, accusations of infidelity, what the person does to avoid suspicion.

Manipulation 10 / 16

Guilt-tripping, denial of facts, reversal of blame, and blackmail, which lead the person to doubt their own perception.

Areas to explore: facts denied or rewritten, situations in which the person ends up apologizing, blackmail (emotional, through the children, threats of suicide), the alternation of tender moments and moments of abuse.

Belittling and humiliation 8 / 16

Criticism, mockery, insults, and hurtful remarks, in private or in front of others, that damage self-esteem.

Areas to explore: the words used and the situations, whether there are witnesses, what the person has come to think of themselves.

Sexual pressure 8 / 16

Insistence, blame, or pressure to obtain unwanted sex or sexual acts.

Areas to explore: consent to sex, acts imposed, contraception, intimate images, any sexual violence, with tact and without pressing if the person is not ready to talk about it.

Control and isolation 7 / 16

Restrictions on relationships, going out, and money that reduce the person's independence and cut them off from loved ones.

Areas to explore: the people the person still sees, access to money, documents, work, and health care, the decisions they make on their own.

See also: CCSS.

Effects on oneself 7 / 16

What the relationship produces in the person: fear, self-censorship, doubt about their own judgment, silence toward loved ones.

Areas to explore: fear for their own safety and that of the children, health (sleep, anxiety, mood), what the person stops themselves from saying or doing, available support and possible next steps.

See also: PCL-5, ITQ.

No validated clinical or psychometric cutoffs have been established for this test yet. The results should therefore be considered exploratory indicators, meant to support the clinical interview, not diagnostic findings.

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 Emily T. - Online CBT Psychologist