



CHILD ABDUCTION T.I.P.S. NEWSLETTER

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Los Angeles District Attorney Kids and Teens in Court Program

by Deanne Castorena, Deputy District Attorney
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The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is launching a one-year pilot program called Kids and Teens in Court (KTIC). The KTIC program helps children, teenagers, and their caregivers (who are not suspected of abuse), learn about courtroom procedure. Program goals for the children and teenagers include reducing their stress and anxiety; improving their coping skills by teaching them to manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and increasing their comfort with testifying in court and gaining control of the courtroom experience. Participants will meet a judge, bailiff, victim advocate and prosecutor during the session. Facilities dogs will be available to those who want to engage with a dog. Participants will also practice answering questions from the witness stand that have no relation to their case (e.g.; "Tell me about your last Halloween costume" or "How did you celebrate your last birthday?")

Program goals for the caregivers include increasing caregiver coping skills, and allowing the adults to manage their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in order to fully support their child or teen through the court process and recovery. Absolutely no details of an individual child's case will be discussed during the program at any time and the handling DDA does not attend the session.

The information and activities in the KTIC program draw upon the principles of the trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) model of treatment, while remaining neutral and not directly addressing any details of the trauma/event. TF-CBT is the most well-supported and effective treatment for children who have been abused and traumatized. The components within this model are designed to specifically address PTSD and child traumatic stress, such as issues with safety, fear, anxiety, guilt and shame.

The program is modeled after the Kids and Teens in Court Program facilitated by the Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego, which has successfully run its KTIC program for more than 20 years and helped thousands of children who were required or expected to testify in court.

To download the article, visit: https://cirinc.org/file_download/5d61ed37-4bc5-4a24-9d46-8477203ee9f4

The Complex Intersections of Abuse in Domestic Violence

by Cari Teran, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Founder and CEO of Healing To You

Domestic violence is a multifaceted issue that manifests through various types of abuse, each intersecting and amplifying the effects of the others. **Emotional abuse**, for instance, involves behaviors that harm a person's self-worth or emotional well-being. This can include verbally attacking vulnerabilities, humiliation, name-calling, threats of violence or abduction, isolating the victim from family and friends, lying, silent treatment, and stalking. Each of these tactics aims to undermine the victim's sense of self and security.

Physical abuse involves the use of physical force against a partner, encompassing hitting, punching, scratching, biting, spitting, restraining, strangling, pushing, kicking, throwing objects, property damage, reckless driving, depriving the victim of food, water, or sleep, attacking with a weapon, and even murder. These acts of violence are direct and often leave visible marks, but their impact on the victim's psychological state can be equally devastating.

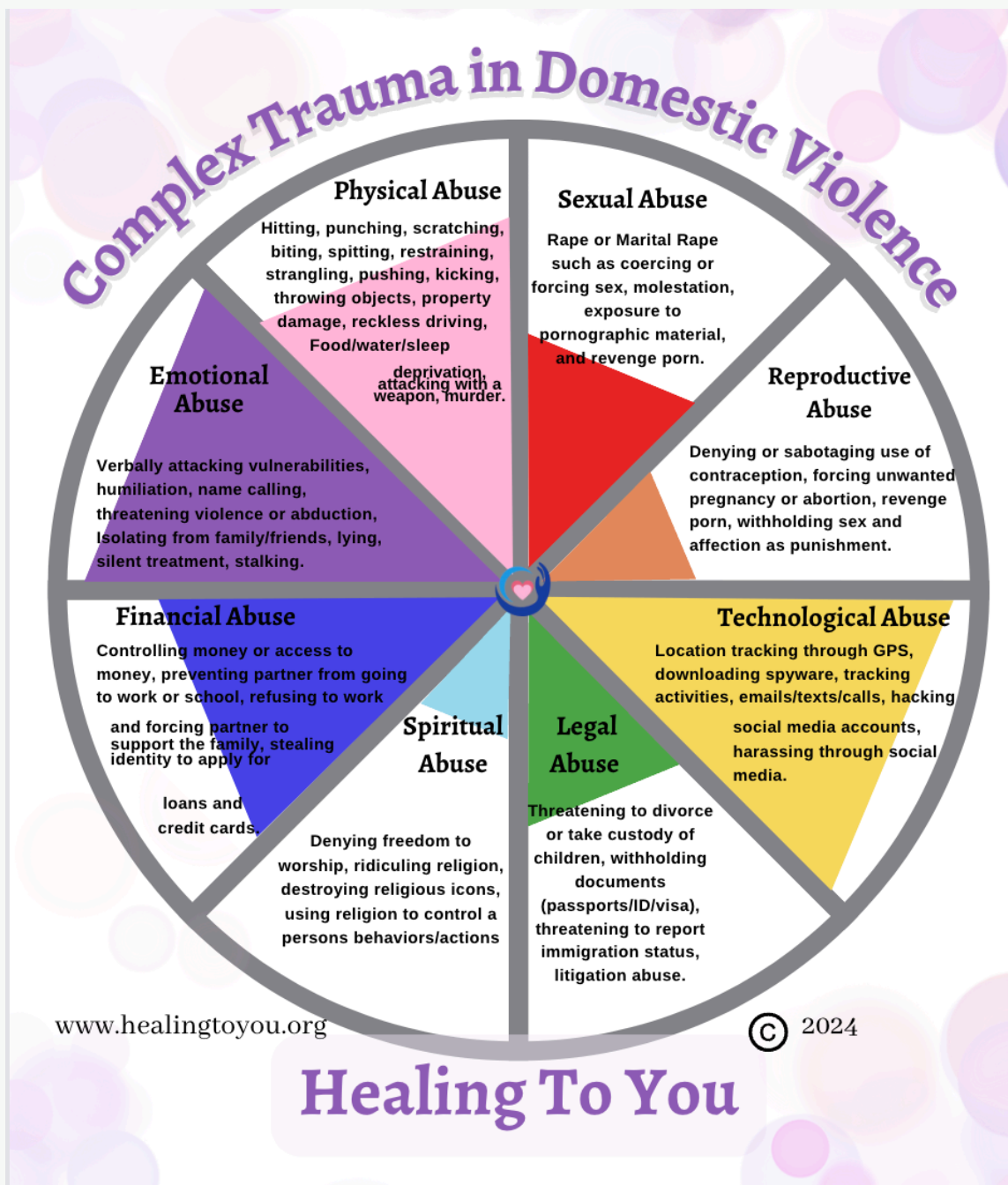
Sexual abuse includes any non-consensual sexual activity, such as rape or marital rape, coercion into sex, molestation, exposure to pornographic material, and revenge porn. Reproductive abuse, closely related, involves controlling a person's reproductive rights, such as denying or sabotaging contraception, forcing unwanted pregnancies or abortions, and withholding sex and affection as punishment.

Technological abuse exploits digital means to control or harass the victim, including location tracking through GPS, downloading spyware, monitoring activities, emails, texts, calls, hacking social media accounts, and online harassment. **Legal abuse** involves manipulating legal systems to control or harm the victim, such as threatening divorce or custody battles, withholding important documents like passports or IDs, threatening to report immigration status, and litigation abuse.

Spiritual abuse restricts or manipulates religious practices, preventing freedom to worship, ridiculing religious beliefs, destroying religious icons, and using religion to control behavior. **Financial abuse** involves controlling economic resources, including money or access to money, preventing the victim from working or attending school, forcing the victim to support the family, and committing identity fraud.

In the info graphic, Complex Trauma in Domestic Violence, we see an example of an abusive relationship that has a high amount of emotional, physical, technological, and financial abuse; moderate levels of sexual and legal abuse; as well as some reproductive and spiritual abuse. Understanding these intersections is crucial for effective intervention and support, as each type of abuse does not exist in isolation but intertwines, creating a pervasive pattern of coercive control and domination. Recognizing these intersections allows for a more comprehensive approach to helping survivors reclaim their autonomy and safety.

To download the article, visit: https://cirinc.org/file_download/4c94bbb0-a093-47d5-bd21-d9bb6de11017



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- **Erin Runnion**, *Vice-Chair, Founder* of The Joyful Child Foundation
- **Bridget Billeter**, *Supervising Deputy Attorney General and Statewide Child Abduction Coordinator*, California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General
- **Deanne Castorena**, *Deputy District Attorney*, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office
- **Marlene Glusing**, *Legal Assistant*, Merced County District Attorney's Office, Child Abduction Unit
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- **Jannell Violi**, *Coordinator*, Orange County Department of Education