

Addressing Reproductive Coercion in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): A Guide for Survivors & Advocates

Content warning: This document provides information about difficult subjects, including intimate partner violence (IPV) and abuse. While the content was developed with concern for reader sensitivity, discretion is still advised.

People experiencing IPV often lose control of the ability to make decisions about their own lives and bodies, including in matters related to reproductive health. This guide compiles information to improve education, support, and access to services for survivors of IPV, with the aim of enhancing reproductive autonomy and control, as well as overall health, safety, and wellbeing.



What is reproductive coercion?

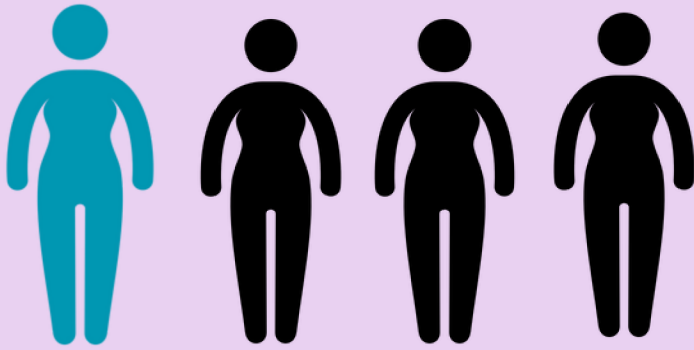
Reproductive coercion is an umbrella term for any behavior that seeks to maintain power and control over someone's reproductive health. It often takes place in the context of other forms of violence or abuse. Reproductive coercion includes attempts to interfere with contraceptive use, pregnancy decision-making, and protection from sexually transmitted infections. It may involve use of **force, verbal threats, pestering, tampering with birth control methods, or other actions.** Reproductive coercion may or may not involve explicit violence or force, but **all forms of reproductive coercion are abuse.**



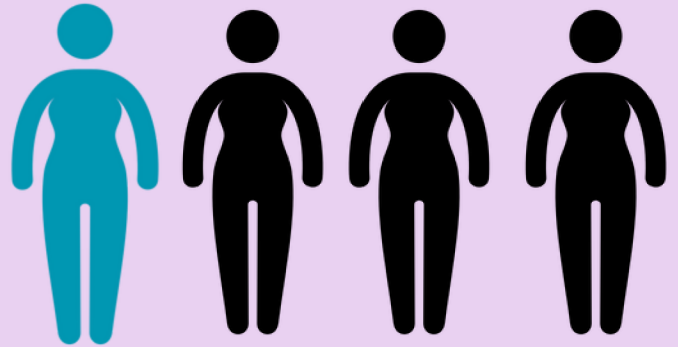
USC Institute on Inequalities in Global Health



How common is reproductive coercion?



1 in 8 individuals ages 16-29 have experienced reproductive coercion



1 in 4 callers to the National Domestic Violence Hotline experienced reproductive coercion

Reproductive coercion can take many forms. This can sound like:

"I don't want you to use birth control"

"If you have an abortion, I'll leave you"

"If you don't have an abortion, I'll leave you"

"If you love me, you'll have a baby with me"

What are some examples of reproductive coercion?

Reproductive coercion can take many forms.

This can look like:

Birth control sabotage:

Interfering with a partner's birth control without their consent.

Some examples include:

- Refusing to wear a condom,
- Removing a condom without partner's consent ("stealthling")
- Destroying or tampering with birth control pills, rings, patches, intrauterine contraception, etc.
- Withholding money for birth control purchase
- Failing "to pull out" after previously agreeing to do so ("pulling out" refers to the removal of the penis from the vagina before ejaculation occurs).

Pregnancy pressure:

An attempt to control the outcome of a pregnancy, by coercing the victim into or out of a pregnancy.

One partner influences the other's reproductive choices by instilling a sense of fear, powerlessness or hopelessness.

Reproductive coercion may also involve attempts to **block access to reproductive health care.**





Safety Planning for survivors:

What do I do if I am experiencing reproductive coercion?

- Develop a safety plan using the [myPlan Safety app](#), available in English and Spanish.
- After sharing anonymous, general information about yourself and answering some questions regarding your relationship, the app will develop personalized safety recommendations based on your needs.

Discuss your situation with a domestic violence advocate.

Ask your advocate how you can obtain the reproductive health care you need to regain control over your own body.

Resources for survivors:

What do I do if I am experiencing reproductive coercion?



All of the following resources are available 24 hours, 7 days a week:

- **The Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Hotline** is a confidential, multilingual hotline where you will enter your zip code, then be transferred to an operator at an agency near you. **800-978-3600**
- **The National Domestic Violence Hotline** provides expert support for anyone experiencing unhealthy or abusive behavior or seeking information. Call **1-800-799-7233 (for TTY 1-800-787-3224)**, text **(text "START" to 88788)**, or chat at their website (thehotline.org). Phone and chat services available in Spanish.



USC Institute on Inequalities in Global Health



Resources for survivors:

What do I do if I am experiencing reproductive coercion?



- **The National Deaf Hotline** is available via video phone to communicate in American Sign Language (**1-855-812-1001**), via email (hotline@adwas.org) and via live chat (thedeafhotline.org).
- **Love Is Respect:** Teens and young adults can reach a peer advocate.
 - **Call 1-866-331-9474 or text “LOVEIS” to 2522, or chat on their website www.loveisrespect.org.** Phone line and chat are also available in Spanish.
 - A peer advocate will ask you if you are in a safe place to talk. Once safe, they will ask you to explain your situation, provide support and education, and help you find solutions to your situation.
- For other local domestic violence resources, please see these links:
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dvcouncil/about/about.htm>
 - Helpful resources for victims of violence

Access available mental health resources.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has a 24/7 help line at 1-800-854-7771 (Extension 1).

Staff on this line provide crisis counseling, mental health screenings, and field deployments in times of need ([LA County](http://LACounty.org)).



USC Institute on Inequalities in Global Health





Healthcare information for survivors

Talking about sensitive and painful topics like IPV and reproductive coercion may be difficult. While it might feel frightening or embarrassing, sharing your experience is an important step toward improving your overall health and wellbeing. Communicate your concerns to a healthcare professional – they are here to help you, and can be an important resource in reducing the impact of IPV and reproductive coercion.

Protecting Your Privacy in Healthcare

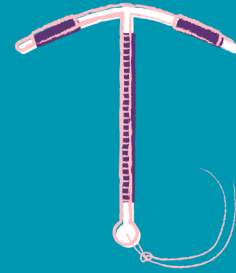
- **People of any age in CA** can access birth control or pregnancy-related care, including abortion, without parental consent.
- **People age 12+ in CA** can also receive care for testing, treatment, or prevention of STDs/HIV, including vaccines for HPV & Hepatitis B, without parental consent.
- CA healthcare providers are banned from releasing medical records of people seeking abortion care to law enforcement (Office of Governor).
- **Ask your healthcare provider what steps can be taken** to protect and maintain the privacy of your medical history.
- **California's Confidential Health Information Act (CHIA)** allows you to protect your health information even if you are insured under your partner's health plan.
 - Through CHIA, you can submit a confidential communications request form to ensure that all communications regarding your sensitive health information occur *solely with you*.
- For more information on your rights as a patient, refer to the following resource: Rights & Confidentiality.



Contraception information for survivors

Ask your healthcare provider about birth control methods.

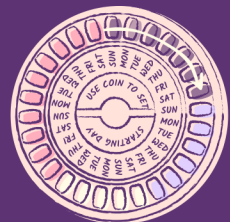
If you are experiencing birth control sabotage, you may consider using discreet and longer-acting forms of birth control, such as an intrauterine device (IUD), also known as intrauterine contraception (IUC).



Your clinician can make it easier for you to hide your birth control from your partner. For example, they can cut IUC strings short or provide emergency contraception in a plain envelope. Find more information at [Pregnant Survivors](#) and the [Take Control Initiative](#).



- **Medi-Cal** covers various forms of prescription and over-the-counter contraceptives, including IUC, the implant, sterilization, pills, condoms, & emergency contraception (birth control taken AFTER unprotected sex), among others.
- **Family PACT** is a confidential program for individuals with low incomes that covers various birth control methods (prescription and over-the-counter contraception, including emergency contraception), STI testing & treatment, HIV testing & more.
- If you are unable to maintain confidentiality in your current health insurance plan, Family PACT is a helpful alternative for your reproductive health needs.



Abortion information for survivors



Reproductive Coercion can lead to unintended pregnancy, defined as pregnancy that is unwanted or mistimed. People with unintended pregnancies may seek abortion. Individuals often cite their partner's abuse as the reason for seeking an abortion and describe not wanting to expose children to violence, or feeling that a baby will bind them to an abusive partner.

While the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision in 2022 eliminated access to abortion services for many people in the U.S., abortion remains legal and protected in California and in Los Angeles County. However, many people, including individuals who experience intimate partner violence (IPV), face significant barriers to accessing abortion information and services.

The County of Los Angeles and the Department of Public Health are committed to ensuring people can receive all the health and mental health services they need and deserve to live full and healthy lives, including abortion care.

The **Abortion Safe Haven Project** website offers information and a resource guide for Los Angeles County for anyone who needs abortion care, family planning care, or related services at:

<http://abortionsafehaven.lacounty.gov>

If you or someone you know needs additional assistance in accessing abortion care, you can email AbortionLAC@ph.lacounty.gov



SAVE THE DATE

MONDAY ———
OCTOBER 2
————— 12-3 PM

Join us for a
co-hosted training on
Gun Violence Restraining
Orders (GVROs) led by
the Office of the
San Diego City Attorney.



* Lunch will be provided *



St. Anne's
Family Services

155 N. Occidental Blvd.,
Los Angeles CA 90026



We invite you to learn more about Gun Violence Restraining Orders (GVROs) at a half day training for:

- County staff
- Mental health practitioners
- Legal aid workers
- Crisis hotline staff
- Others interested in GVROs
- Community-based organizations
- Teachers
- School administrators

Supervisor Janice Hahn, the Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), the Office of County Counsel, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, are committed to reducing gun violence in LA County and as part of that commitment, we will be co-hosting a training on Gun Violence Restraining Orders (GVROs).

GVROs are a legal tool that allow family members, household members, some employers, colleagues, teachers, and law enforcement to take action to prevent a person who poses a significant risk of harming themselves or others from having or purchasing a gun, ammunition, or magazine for a specified length of time, between 21 days and five years. This training will provide members of the community with important information about GVROs as a means for violence prevention, as well as an open question and answer session.



Scan here to sign up or visit:
https://bit.ly/GVRO_OCT2

For more information, email:
ISTERNFELD@ph.lacounty.gov



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES SUPERVISOR
FOURTH DISTRICT
JANICE HAHN




Los Angeles County
Sheriff's Department

 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

You're Invited...

BEYOND SILOS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIPS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2023

9:00am to 4:30pm PST

**IN PERSON AT THE
CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT
1000 N. ALAMEDA ST.
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012**

Hosted by the DVHC Leadership Council and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health and Domestic Violence Council



**CLICK OR SCAN
TO REGISTER**

For more info, visit
www.dvhcla.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

blue  of california
foundation

Blue Shield of California Foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Shield Association

NATIONAL
HEALTH
RESOURCE
CENTER
ON DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE