Coercive Control and Its Relation to IPV

in a National U.S. Self-Report Survey

N. Zoe Hilton & Dana L. Radatz

Waypoint Talks, September 26, 2023

Coercive Control

Pattern of controlling behaviors over time
Entraps partner in an intimate relationship
Akin to hostage taking or POW tactics

Stark (2007)

Primarily nonphysical forms of abuse
Leads to feeling constrained in relationship

Crossman & Hardesty (2018)

Associated with physical IPV
Especially intimate terrorism

e.g., Graham-Kevan & Archer (2008)

Is coercive control…

A risk factor for physical IPV in both men and women?

- most studies of abused women (e.g., Crossman & Hardesty, 2018; Hardesty et al., 2015; Lehman et al., 2012; Nevala, 2017)
- related to IPV in men and women (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2008; Conroy & Crowley, 2022)

An indicator of general aggression?

- coercive control in non-intimates (e.g., Dryburgh et al., 2022)
- relation to physical violence in non-intimates?

A predictor of subsequent physical IPV?

- possible risk of femicide (e.g., Myhill & Hohl, 2019)
- post-coercive control IPV?

Secondary analysis

Dataset from the Interpersonal Conflict and Resolution (iCOR) Study (Mumford et al., 2019)

Nationally representative sample of young adults (18-32 years) in the United States

Self-report survey of conflict and conflict management styles in intimate relationships; and with friends/acquaintances or strangers (non-intimates)

Wave 1 Aug 2016 - Apr 2017
N = 2284, 37% men 63% women
Wave 2 Dec 2016 – Sep 2017
N = 1629, 36% men 64% women

Coercive Control

Threaten to physically harm

Threaten to use information to control

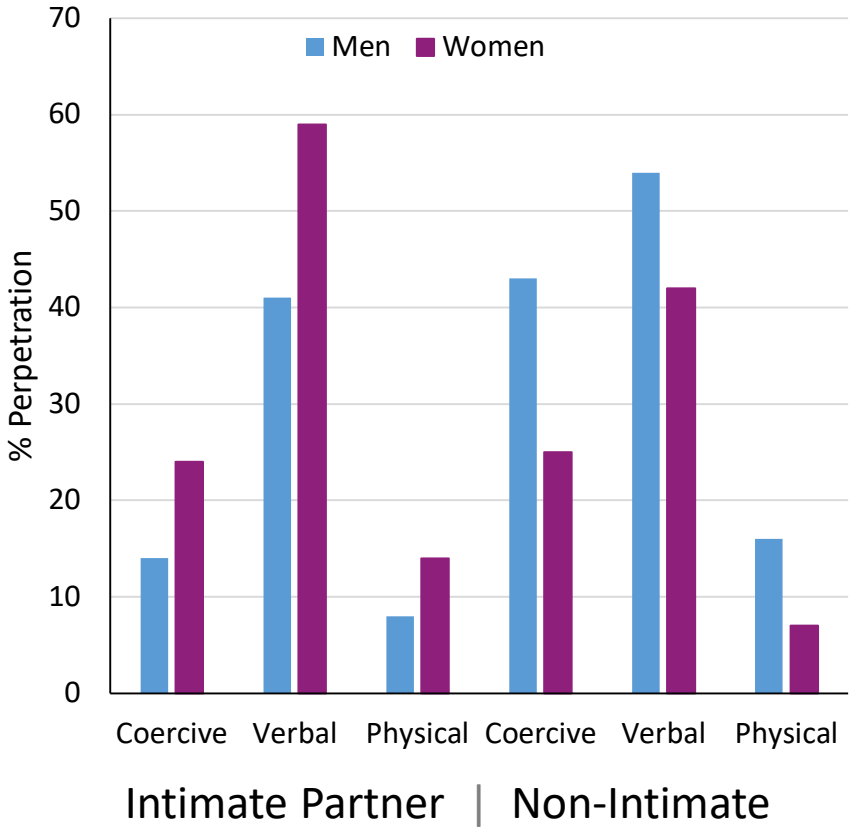
Put down, disrespect

Physical
Push, slap, shove, punch, kick, beat up (intimate, non-intimate)

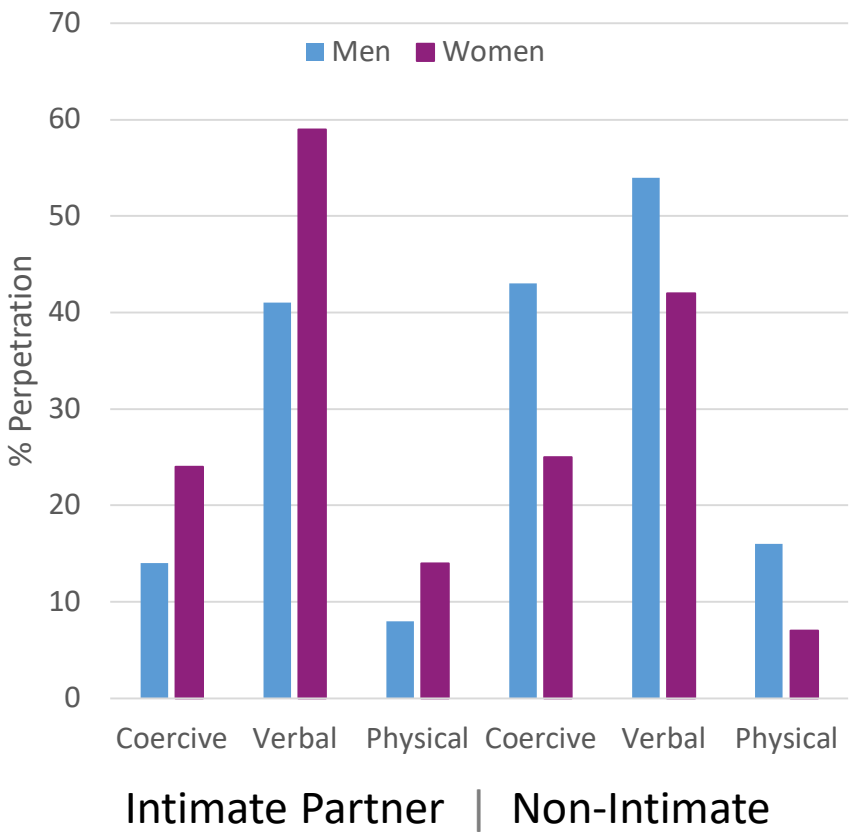
Purposefully physically hurt/ forced to do sexual things (intimate only)

Verbal
shouted at,
angrily accused of doing something wrong,
accused of disrespect

Coercive control perpetration

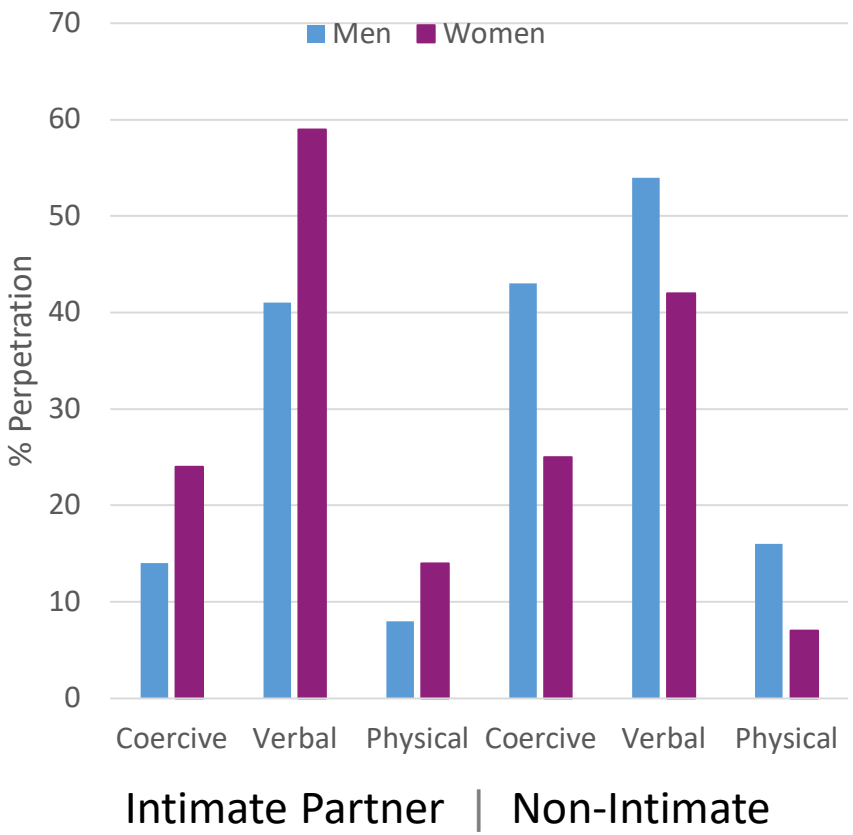


Coercive control is correlated with physical IPV



Variable	Correlations in Total Sample				
Wave 1	1	2	3	4	5
Intimate partner					
1. Coercive control	-				.
2. Verbal abuse	.462***	-			
3. Physical violence	.360***	.178***	-		
Nonintimate victim					
4. Coercive control	.179***	-.014	.215***	-	
5. Verbal abuse	.057**	-.006	.136***	.384***	-
6. Physical violence	.079***	-.034	.306***	.430***	.238***

Coercive control is correlated with physical IPV



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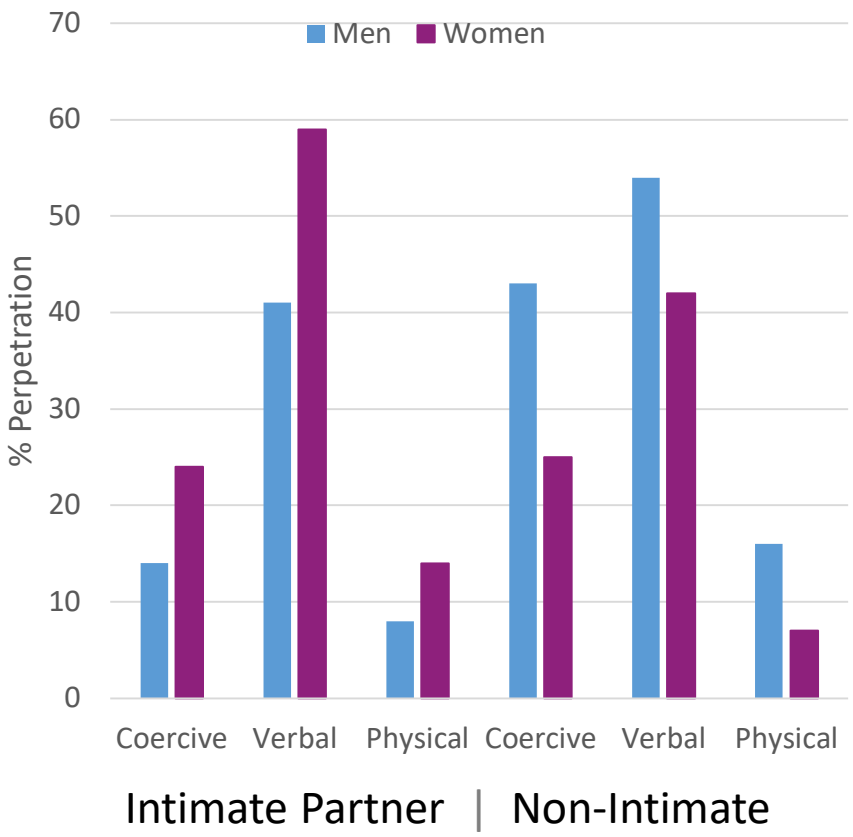
…verbal abuse is a weaker correlate of IPV



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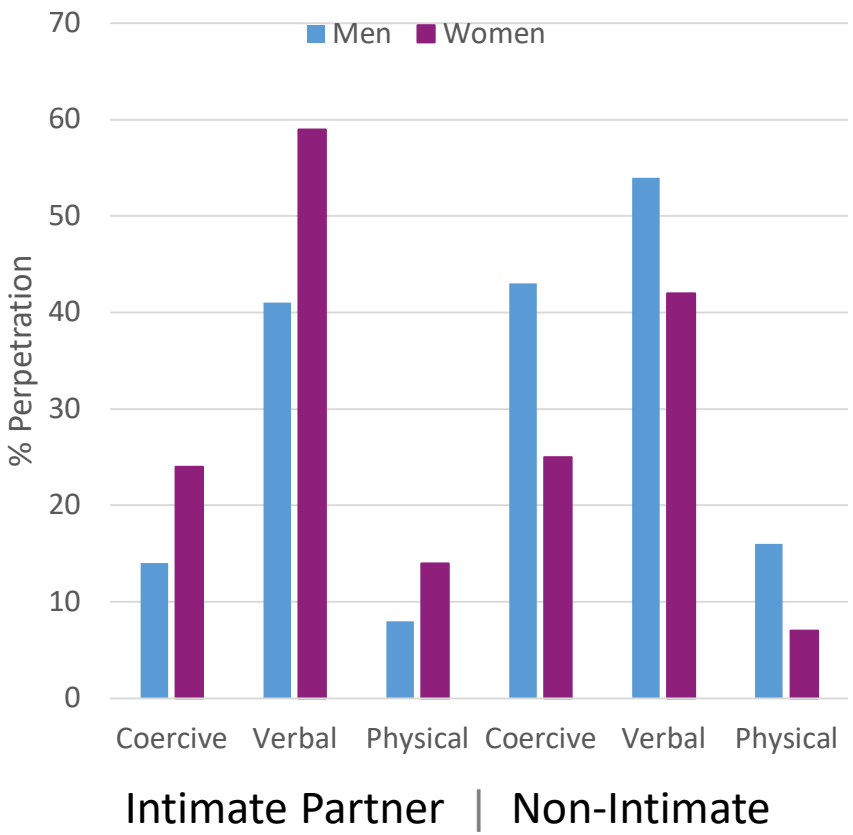
Coercive control correlated with general aggression



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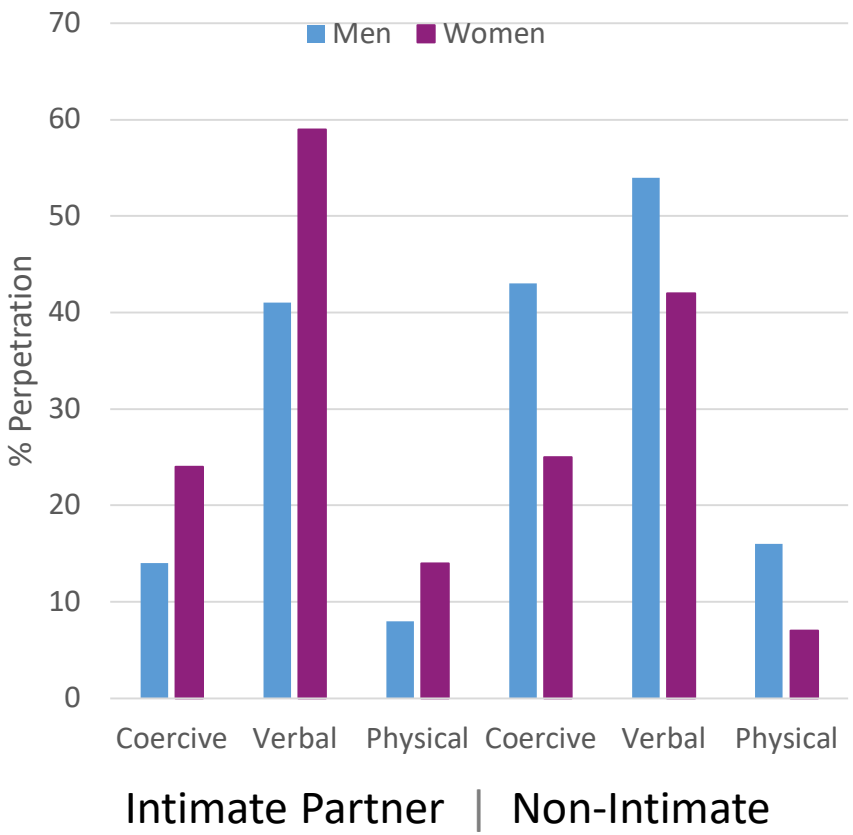
… but verbal abuse only related to IPV



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Coercive control predicts Wave 2 IPV

Variable	B	SE B	Exp (B)	95% CI (B)		*p*	Cox & Snell R^2	Nagelkerke R^2
				LL	UL			
Step 1							.072	.149
Constant	-2.685	0.108	0.068			< .001		
Wave 1 physical IPV	2.100	0.182	8.169	5.720	11.667	< .001		
Step 2							.079	.166
Constant	-2.839	0.120	0.059			< .001		
Wave 1 physical IPV	1.772	0.201	5.884	3.968	8.726	< .001		
Wave 1 coercive control	0.741	0.195	2.099	1.432	3.077	< .001		

Coercive control predicts Wave 2 IPV

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Findings

- Coercive control is a risk factor for physical IPV
- Coercive control an indicator of general physical aggression
- Coercive control is a predictor of subsequent physical IPV

Limitations

- Examined perpetration only
- Small regression model effect sizes
- Coercive control measure (disrespect, info control, threats)

Is coercive control…

A feature of general antisociality?

- not unique to intimate partner relationships
- relation to psychopathy (manipulative), instrumental aggression (controlling partner)?

A predictor of IPV recidivism, and IPV severity?

- next step – examine prediction of IPV recidivism in police reports

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Thank you! Questions?

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Intimate Partner Violence

Coercive Control in Police Reports

Hilton, N. Z., Eke, A. W., Kim, S., & Ham, E. (2022). Coercive control in police reports of intimate partner violence: Conceptual definition and association with recidivism. *Psychology of Violence, 13*(4), 277–285. https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000457

Table Of Content

- Background
- Research Aim
- Current Study
  - Methods
  - Results/Conclusion
- Qand A

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Physical and Sexual Violence

Burczycka, 2019; Klein, 2009

Coercive Control

Pattern of behaviors and attitudes designed to control and dominate a partner

Bishop & Bettinson, 2018; Myhill & Hohl, 2019

Coercive Control

Power and Control Wheel

- Physical and sexual violence
- Coercion and threats
- Use of male privilege
- Intimidation
- Isolation
- Emotional abuse
- Economic abuse
- Minimizing and denying responsibility

https://www.theduluthmodel.org/

Coercive Control

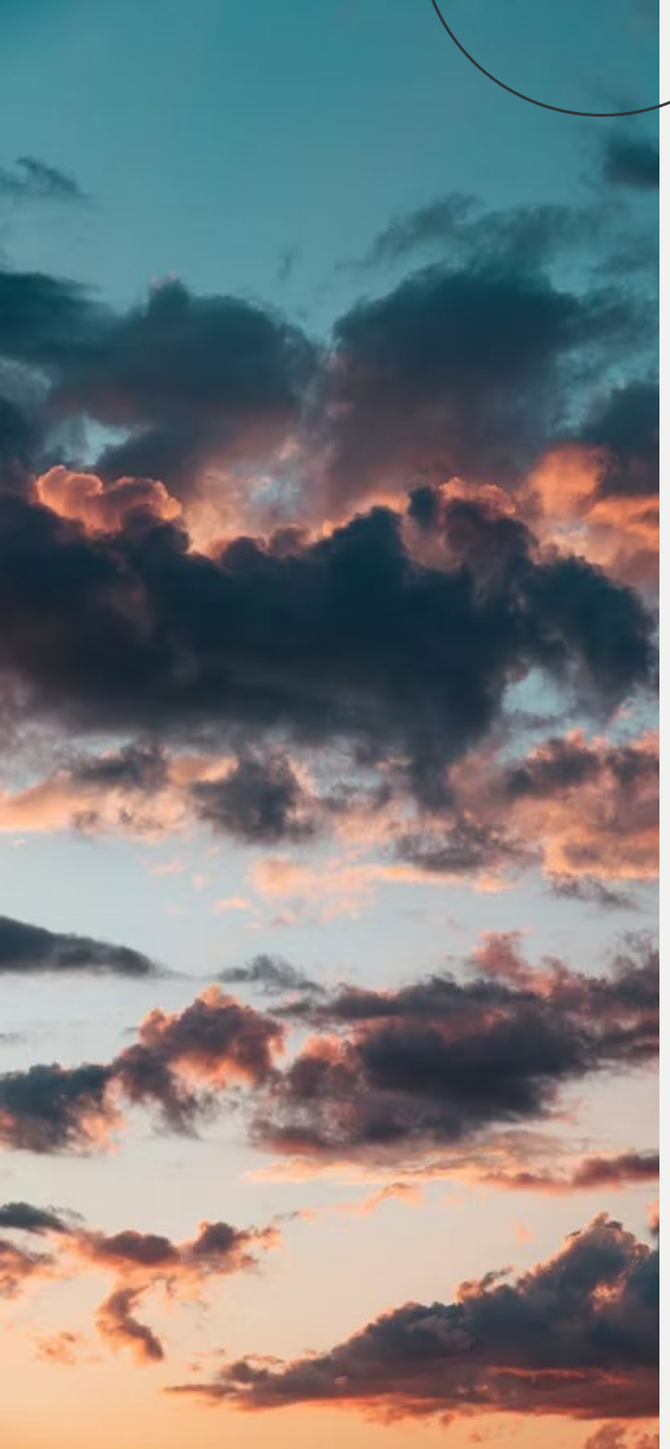
Patriarchal Terrorism

Systematic pattern of abuse by men for the control of women

M. P. Johnson (1995)

Female Perpetrators

2SLGBTQQIA+ Relationships

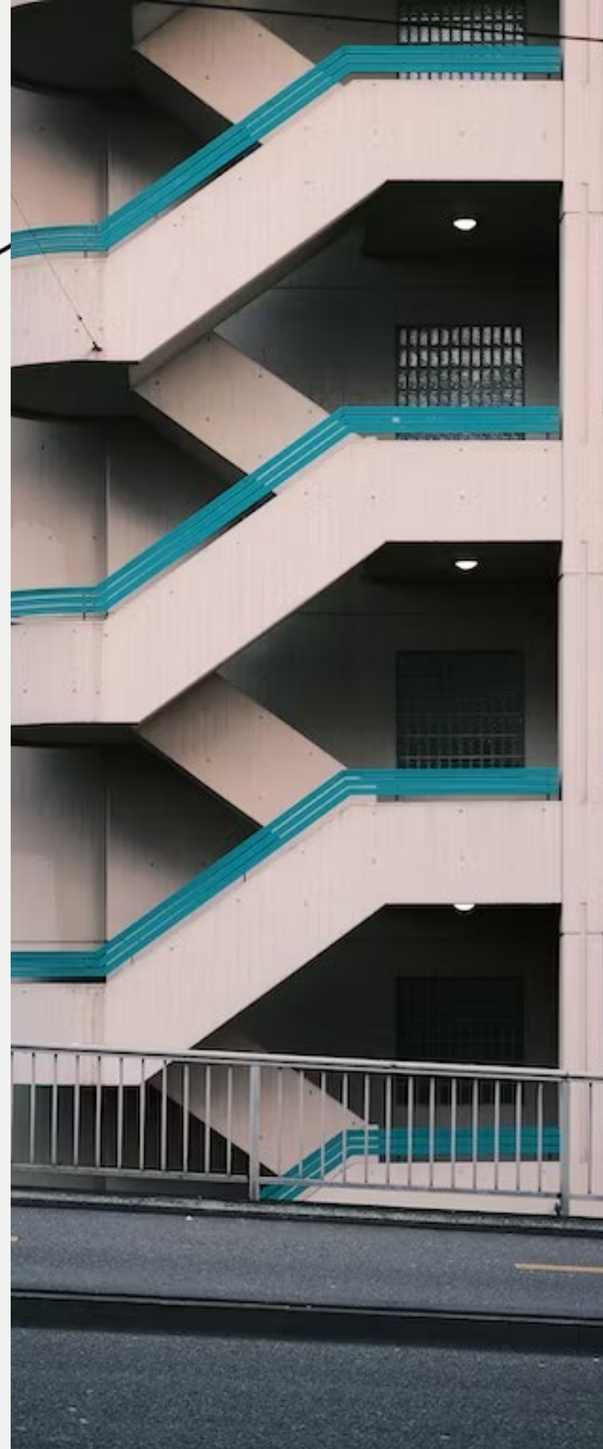


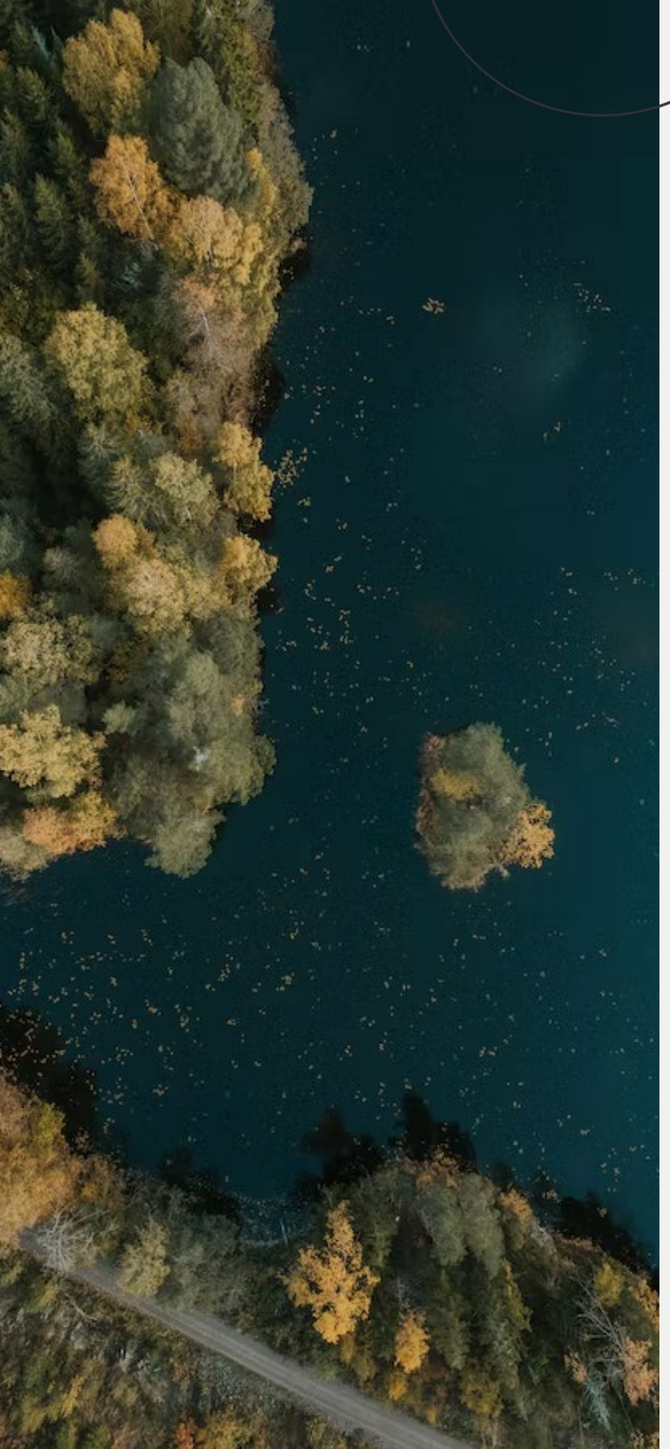
Research Gap

- Construct of Coercive Control
- Operationalization of Coercive Control
- Coercive Control and IPV Recidivism

Research Aim

- Examine indicators of coercive behaviours and attitudes, as an underlying construct of coercive control
- Test the association between coercive control and severity of physical intimate partner violence at index
- Understand the relationship between coercive control & future IPV recidivism and it's severity





Methods

Participants

- 1,421 men with a police record for physical assault against a female partner in Ontario, average 5 year follow-up
- 37.27 years (SD = 11.07)
- 83% living with a partner at the time of index
- 68% charged at index

Methods

Variables - Coercive Control

- Controlling activities
- Attitudes that support or condone IPV
- Extreme minimization or denial of IPV history
- Psychological abuse
- Jealousy
- Stalking
- Suicide threats

Methods

- Variables – Index physical violence
  - Assault severity (CTS2)
  - Level of injury
- Variables – IPV recidivism
  - Any post index IPV
  - Post index severity (CTS2)
  - Post index CLCH score

Analytical Plan

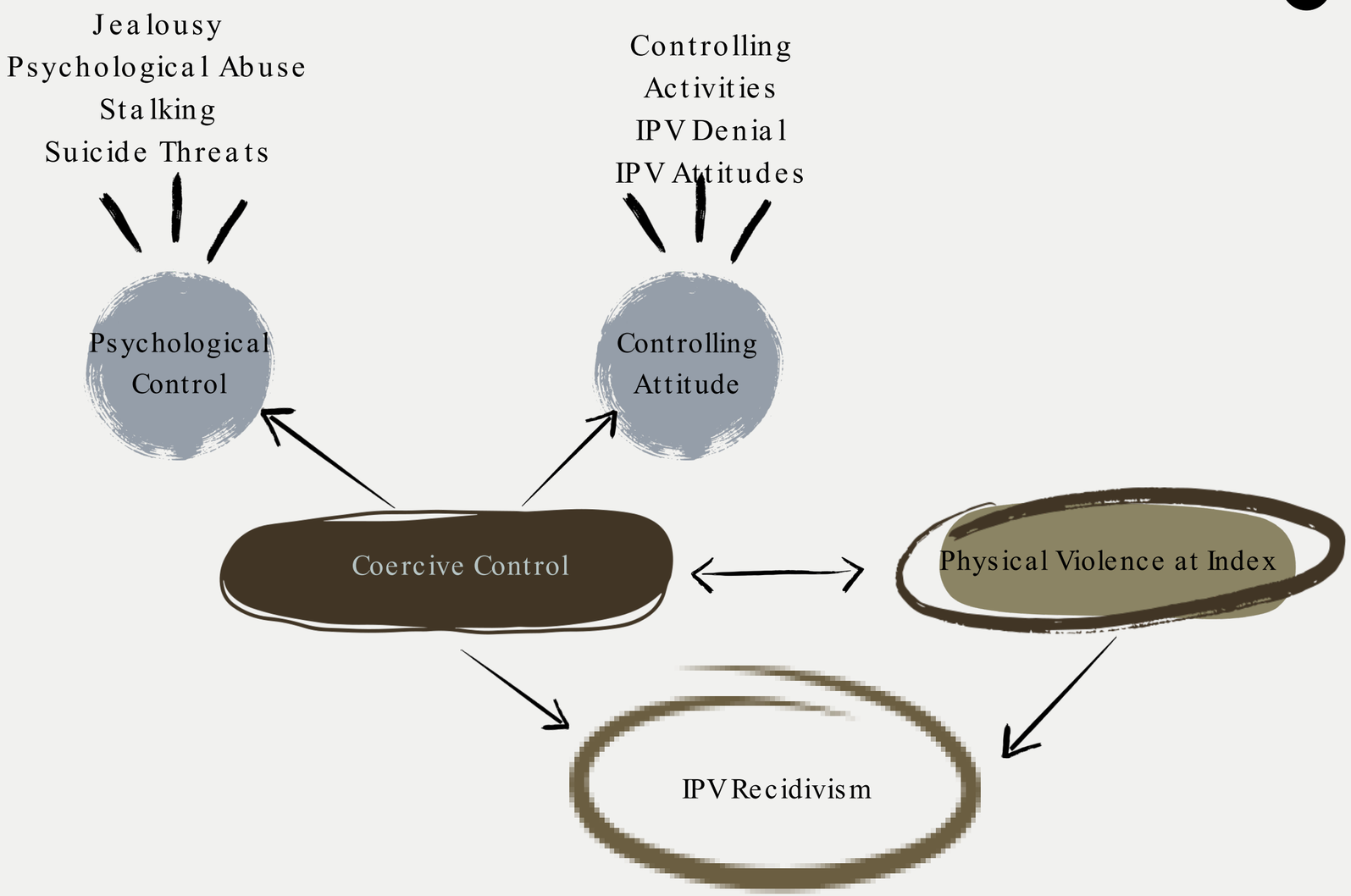
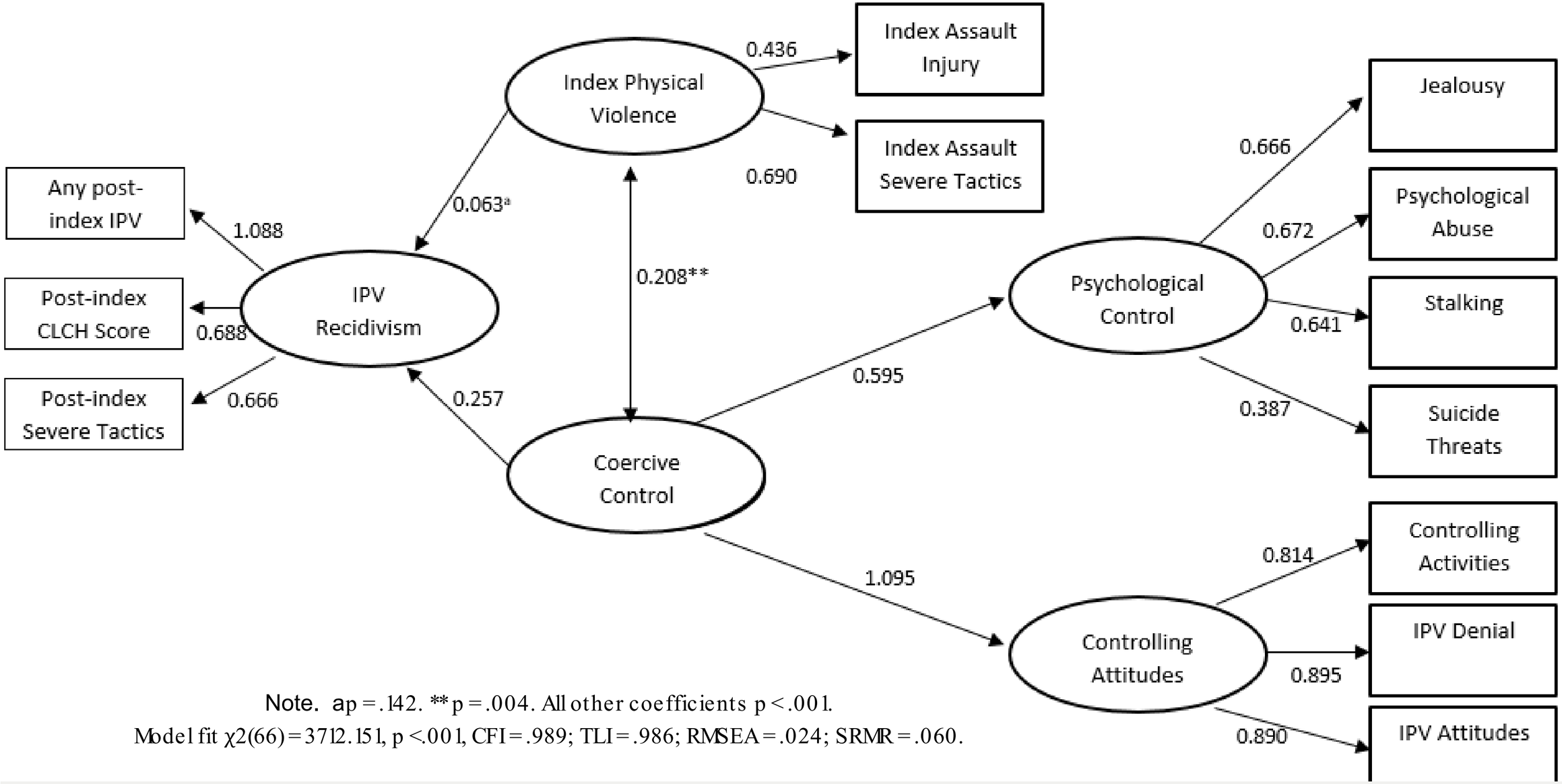


Figure 1

Full Structural Equation Model Showing Direct Paths of Psychological Control and Controlling Attitudes on Coercive Control, and Direct Paths of Index Physical Violence and Coercive Control on IPV Recidivism



Note. a p = .142. ** p = .004. All other coefficients p < .001.
Model fit $\chi 2(66) = 3712.151$, p <.001, CFI = .989; TLI = .986; RMSEA = .024; SRMR = .060.

Conclusion/ future studies

- Coercive control is a distinctive concept comprising a variety of behaviors and attitudes (e.g., psychological control and controlling attitude).
- Coercive control is an important component for the assessment of physical assault risk in IPV and should be documented during police domestic dispute investigations.
- Research with more comprehensive measures of coercive control and IPV is recommended, using multiple data sources and gender-inclusive samples.

Coercive Control in Police Resports

Any Questions?

Thank You!

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Measuring Coercive and Controlling Behaviour from Simulated Police Incident Reports of IPV

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Measuring Coercive Control

- **Coercive control (CC):** A pattern of behavior used to dominate, control, and manipulate an intimate partner
  - Significant impact on victim well-being; associated with IPV risk and severity

- Multiple existing CC measures in the current literature
  - Substantial variability in some respects…
    - E.g., breadth of measure, reliability/validity testing
  - Little variation in other respects…
    - E.g., victim self-report format (~90%), Likert scale format (~95%)

Current Study

Rationale:

- Importance of reliable measurement of CC
- Existing measures not suited for use by third-party (e.g., researchers, LE officers)
- Not known whether CC is measurable at time of police response to an IPV incident

Goal:

- Develop and validate tool to assess for the presence of CC behaviour in police incident reports of IPV incidents
  - Pilot study; for use in larger study regarding evidence-based police risk appraisal for IPV (CELIA)

Phase 1: Measure Development

- Identification of existing measures for inclusion/adaptation
  - Literature review of existing measures
  - Selection criteria:
    - Breadth of CC behaviours
    - Established reliability/validity
- Development of current measure
  - Subscales → items → examples
  - First- to third-person language
  - Yes/no response format
  - Instructions

	FINAL MEASURES	
	Coercive Behaviour Scale – Revised (CBS-R)	**Checklist of Controlling Behaviour (CCB)**
Reference	*Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2005*	*Lehmann, Simmons, & Pillai, 2012*
No. Items	24	84
Subscales	(1) Economic control (2) Threatening control (3) Intimidating control (4) Emotional control (5) Isolating control	(1) Physical abuse (2) Sexual abuse (3) Emotional abuse (4) Economic abuse (5) Intimidation (6) Use of threats (7) Minimizing/denying (8) Victim blaming (9) Isolation (10) Entitlement/male privilege
Resp. Format	5-point Likert scale (freq.)	5-point Likert scale (freq.)
Cronbach's α	.73-.91	.80 - .94

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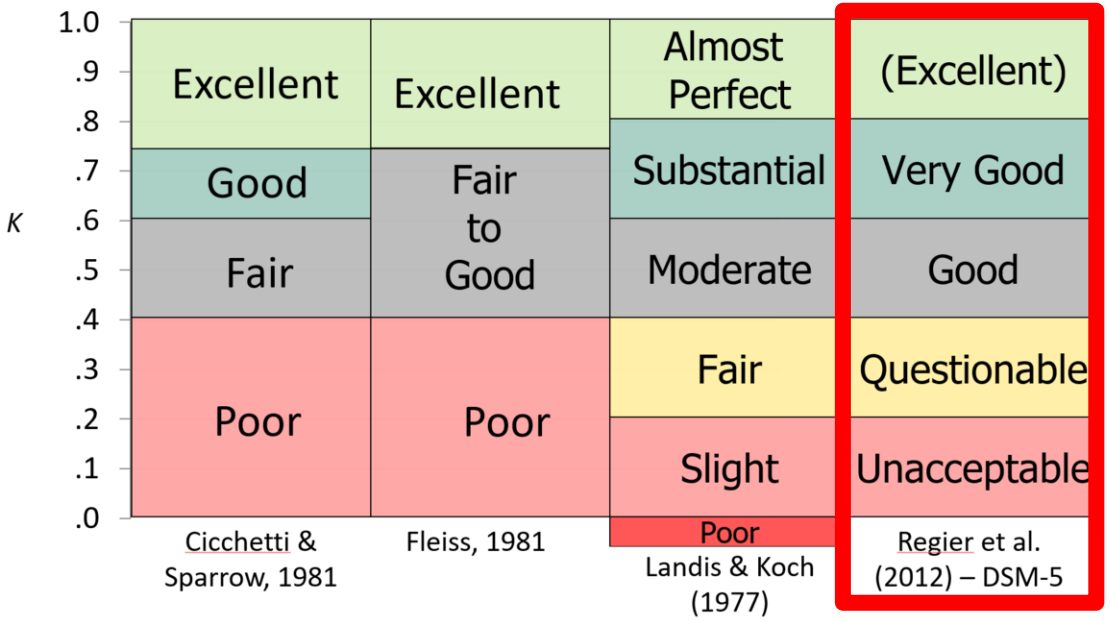
Phase 2: Inter-Rater Reliability Testing

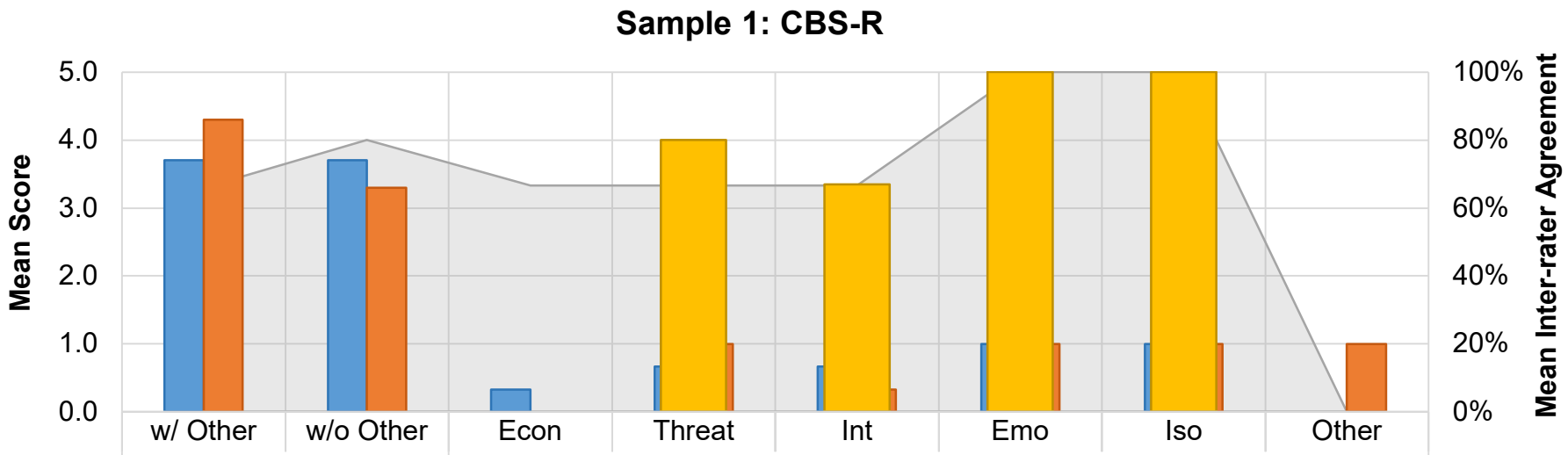
- Sample 1:
  - Simulated police reports (2 coders, 3 cases)
- Sample 2:
  - ODARA 101 police reports (2 coders, 20 cases)

- Data analyses:
  - Total- and item-level score descriptive statistics
  - Inter-rater agreement (IRA)
  - Fleiss' kappa
    - Probability of response agreement between raters
  - Overall level of agreement and item response tendency

Recommendations for interpreting level of inter-rater agreement



Sample 1: CBS-R

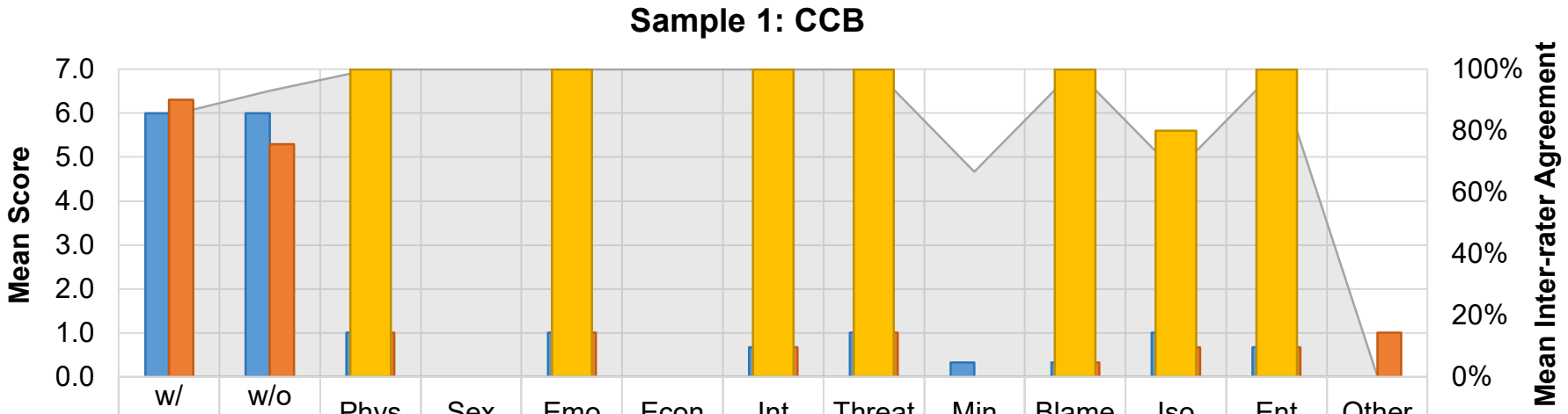


	TOTAL		ITEM					
	w/ Other	w/o Other	Econ	Threat	Int	Emo	Iso	Other
IRA	66%	80%	67%	67%	67%	100%	100%	0%
Coder 1	3.70	3.70	0.33	0.67	0.67	1.00	1.00	0.00
Coder 2	4.30	3.30	0.00	1.00	0.33	1.00	1.00	1.00
P(1|2): Yes			0%	80%	67%	100%	100%	0%

	TOTAL		ITEM					
	w/ Other	**w/o Other**	**Econ**	**Threat**	**Int**	**Emo**	**Iso**	**Other**
Level of Agree.	3	4	3-4	3-4	3	4	4	0
Resp. Tendency	—	—	No	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	—

0 = unacceptable (.00 - .20)
1 = questionable (.20 - .40)
2 = good (.40 - .60)
3 = very good (.60 - .80)
4 = excellent (.80 - 1.00)

Sample 1: CCB



	TOTAL		ITEM										
	w/ Other	w/o Other	Phys	Sex	Emo	Econ	Int	Threat	Min	Blame	Iso	Ent	Other
IRA	85%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%	67%	100%	0%
Coder 1	6.00	6.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.67	1.00	0.33	0.33	1.00	0.67	0.00
Coder 2	6.30	5.30	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.67	1.00	0.00	0.33	0.67	0.67	1.00
P(1|2): Yes			100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	80%	100%	0%

	TOTAL		ITEM										
	w/ Other	w/o Other	Phys	Sex	Emo	Econ	Int	Threat	Min	Blame	Iso	Ent	Other
Level of Agree.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3-4	4	3-4	4	0
Resp. Tendency	—	—	Yes	No	Yes	No	~Yes	Yes	~No	~No	~Yes	~Yes	—

0 = unacceptable (.00 - .20)
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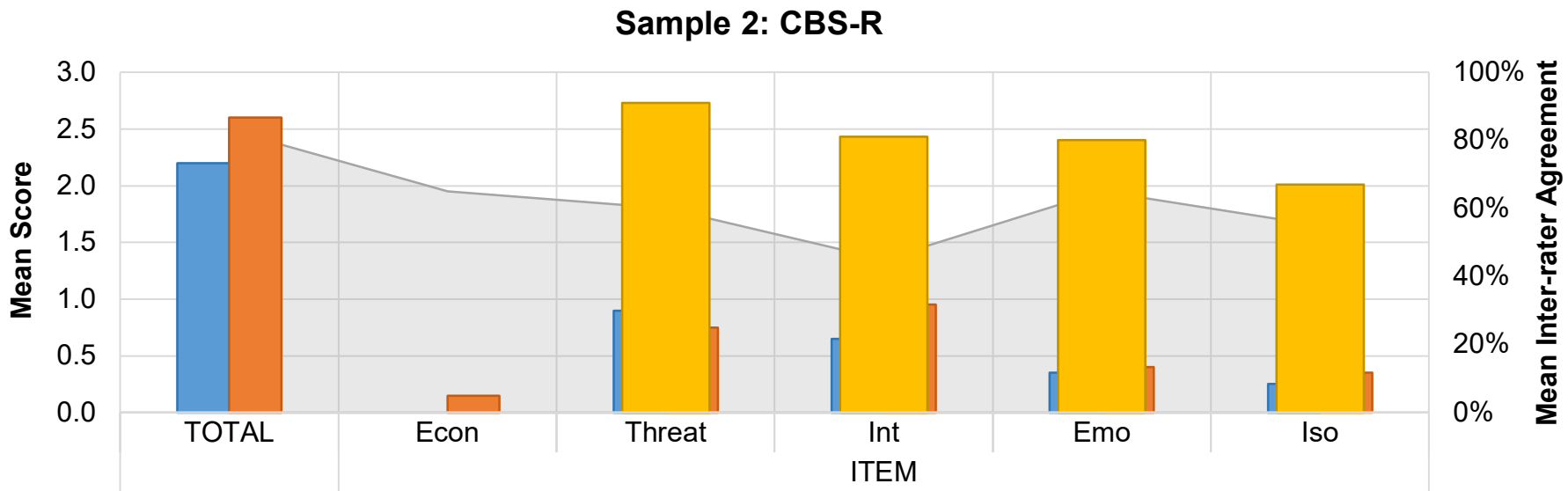
Sample 2: CBS-R



	TOTAL	Econ	Threat	Int	Emo	Iso
IRA	83%	65%	60%	45%	65%	55%
Coder 1	2.20	0.00	0.90	0.65	0.35	0.25
Coder 2	2.60	0.15	0.75	0.95	0.40	0.35
P(1|2): Yes		0%	91%	81%	80%	67%

		ITEM				
	TOTAL	**Econ**	**Threat**	**Int**	**Emo**	**Iso**
Level of Agree.	4	3-4	3	2	3	3
Resp. Tendency	—	No	Yes	Yes	~No	No

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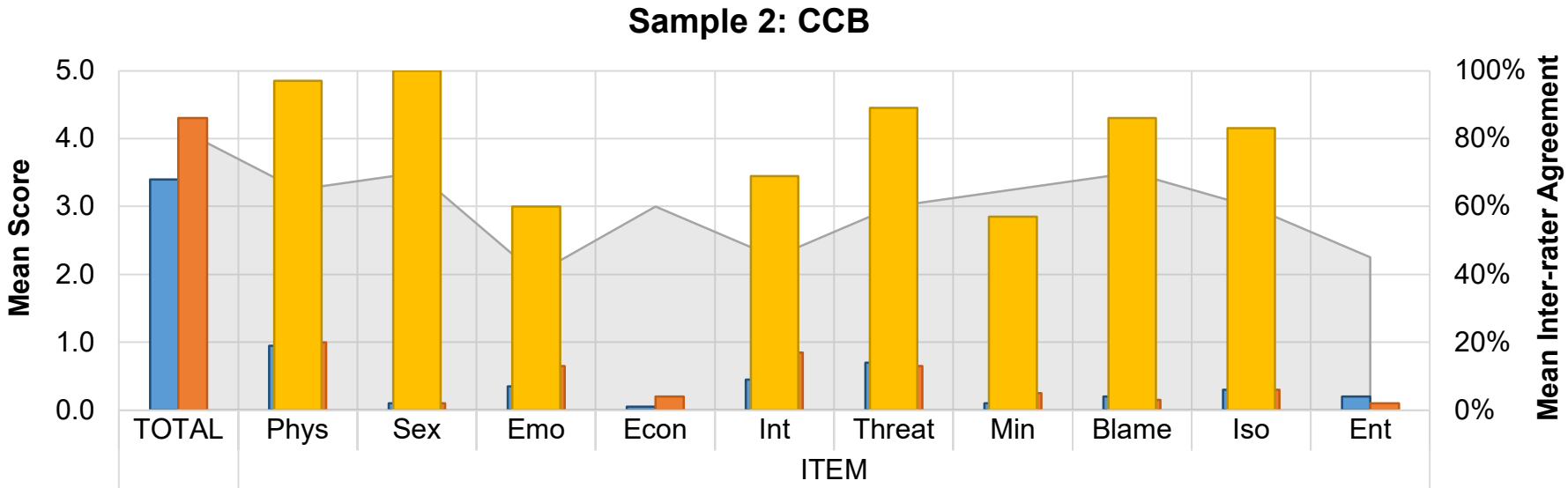
Sample 2: CCB



	TOTAL	Phys	Sex	Emo	Econ	Int	Threat	Min	Blame	Iso	Ent
IRA	83%	65%	70%	40%	60%	45%	60%	65%	70%	60%	45%
Coder 1	3.40	0.95	0.10	0.35	0.05	0.45	0.70	0.10	0.20	0.30	0.20
Coder 2	4.30	1.00	0.10	0.65	0.20	0.85	0.65	0.25	0.15	0.30	0.10
P(1|2): Yes		97%	100%	60%	0%	69%	89%	57%	86%	83%	0%

		ITEM									
	TOTAL	**Phys**	**Sex**	**Emo**	**Econ**	**Int**	**Threat**	**Min**	**Blame**	**Iso**	**Ent**
Level of Agree.	4	3-4	3-4	2	3-4	2	3	3	3-4	3	2-3
Resp. Tendency	—	Yes	No	—	No	~Yes	~Yes	No	No	No	No

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Conclusions

- CBS-R and CCB performed well as third-party measures of CC in (simulated) police reports
  - CCB performed better than CBS-R initially, *BUT* difference disappeared after "Other" excluded
  - Categorical ID of CC behaviour not as effective, specific behaviours are better (less subjective)

- Some forms of CC are more likely to be identified in (simulated) police reports than others

Present	Agreement	Absent	Agreement
• Physical abuse*	Very good – Excellent	• Sexual control	Very good – Excellent
• Threatening control	Very good – Excellent	• Economic control	Very good – Excellent
• Intimidating control	Good – Excellent	• Minimization	Very good – Excellent
• Emotional Control	Good – Excellent	• Victim blaming	Very good – Excellent
• Isolating control	Very good – Excellent	• Entitlement	Good – Excellent

Future Directions & Next Steps

- CELIA Project
  - Combined modified items from BOTH measures into checklist format
    - Code for presence/absence of specific behaviours, not category of behaviour
  - Added items to assess for CC behaviours not captured in included measures
    - E.g., animal cruelty, technological surveillance, counselling suicide
  - Currently in use for data collection!

- Continuing research to better understand how CC may present during LE contact for IPV
  - Incorporation into existing IPV tools used by LE

Thank you for listening!

Questions?

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A scoping review of the lived experience, measurement, and policing of coercive control in 2SLGBTQQIA+ relationships

Project team

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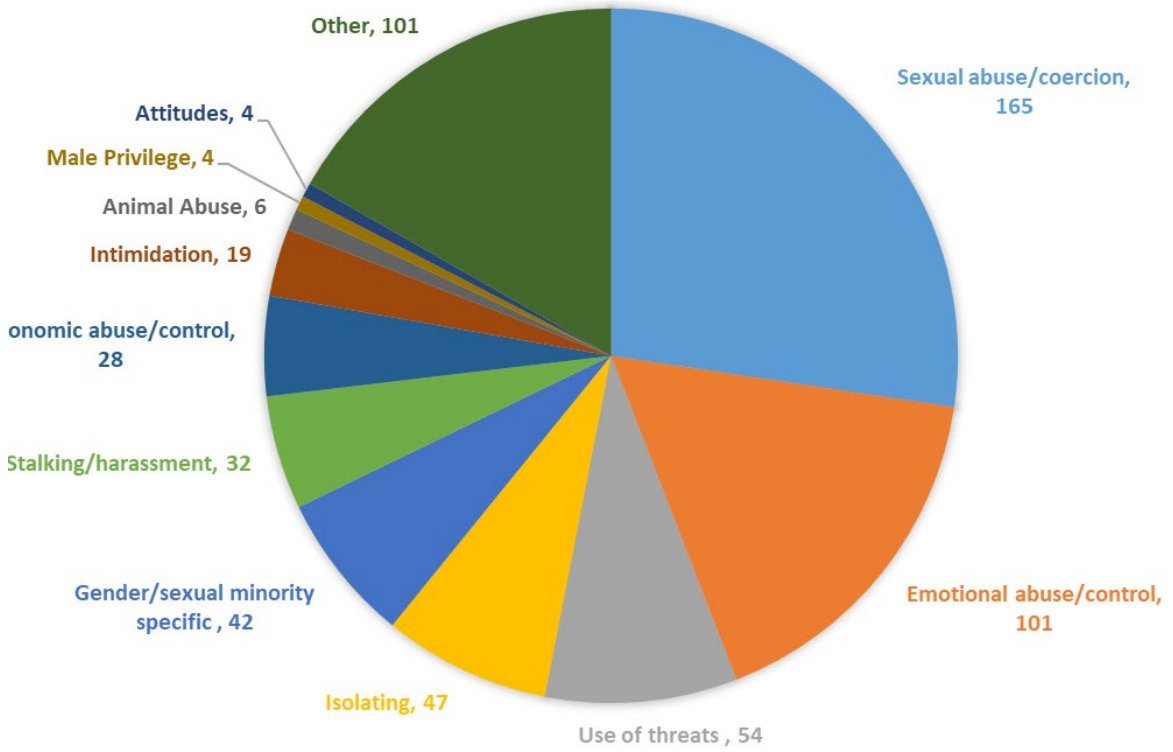
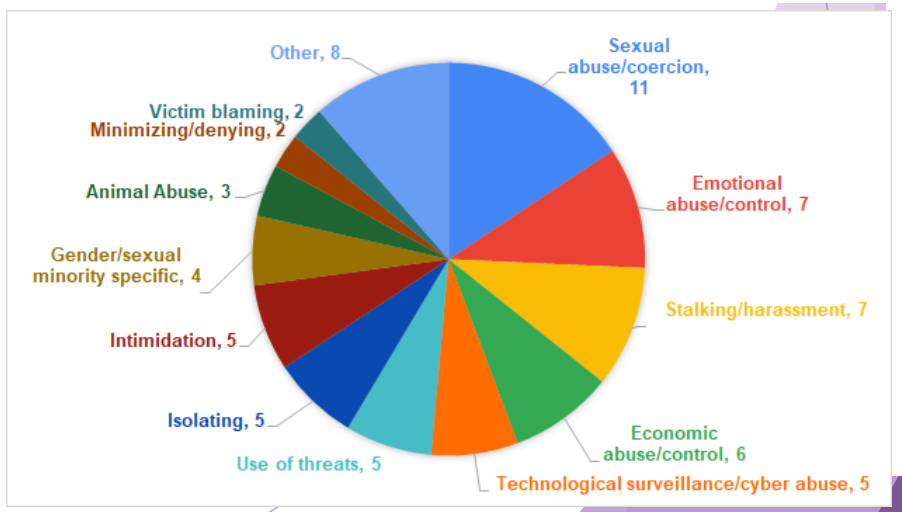
Coercive Control and “Male Privilege”?



Types of coercive control reported in 2SLGBTQQIA+ relationships

Academic (264) and grey (13) studies



https://www.newportinstitute.com

Gender- and sexual-minority specific acts in the context of coercive control

- identity abuse
  (e.g., pejorative names, questioning identity)
- threats to “out”
- deliberate misgendering
- deadnaming
- gender belittling
- pressure to de-transition
- controlling hormone use
- being told to “act straight”
- etc.

Policing Context

- Individuals are reluctant to report to police
  - But generally have positive experiences with police

- Dual arrest more likely in same-gender couples (US context)
- Difficulty distinguishing perpetrator and victim (vignettes)

Protocol, reports, summaries online
https://celiaproject.squarespace.com/coercive-control-2slgbtqqia

Coercive Control: Research and Practice Implications

Defining and measuring coercive control

Violence

- Breadth vs precision
- Violence prediction

Effects

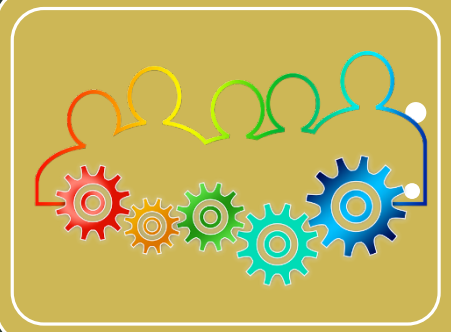
- Self-report
- Clinical tools

Documents

- Bill C-332
- Police reports

Implications for clinical practice

Screen for coercive control
Risk factor: IPV and general



Responsivity: engagement, delivery
Trauma-informed care

Coercion in therapy setting
Therapist training, support

Implications for policing & criminal justice

Recognizing the behaviour
Identifying the aggressor

Acknowledging identities
Using preferred language

Documenting coercive control
Assessing IPV risk

Thank you! Questions?

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Find publications, presentations, and more at:

https://celiaproject.squarespace.com/