

IPV Pile sort

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Who: Providers/Staff/Residents/Other Learners. Break into small groups (no more than five people per group; ideally fewer), or one group if group is already small.

Prep time: 20 mins to make cards

Time for activity: 30 minutes if doing activity only; preferably 60 minutes total combined with talk on IPV prevalence, screening, resources.

- 1) Print out one-sided (preferably on card stock), cut out, and scramble cards on pages 4 through 8.
- 2) Print out one sided (preferably on card stock) and cut out larger panels on page 10. You need a set of “Healthy,” “Abusive,” and “Needs context” panels for each small group.
- 3) Break individuals into small groups of four or five at most. Pairs are also great.
- 4) Give each small group/pair a handful of cards to talk through and sort onto the “Healthy,” “Abusive,” and “Needs context” panels.
- 5) Ask individuals to sort cards based on **whether they think the behavior is indicative of a “healthy” or “abusive” relationship, or if the behavior needs context to determine this.**
- 6) Remind individuals to answer this question from the perspective of the partner who would be receiving the behavior in question. When the terms “partner” or “them/their/themselves” are used, this refers to the potential victim/survivor of

the behavior. The job of the groups/pairs is to determine if a partner is in a healthy or abusive relationship, or if more context is needed to determine this.

- 7) Give groups/pairs 10-15 minutes to talk through their cards together and decide how to sort them (more time is needed if you are doing the whole deck with a single small group/pair)
- 8) **Come back together as a group and debrief** (note, I do this in a dyad with two residents at a time, so there is no spitting off into small groups. We sort all the cards together and then jump to Step 10)
- 9) If you have time, you also might consider coming back as a big group and combining the small groups' "Healthy," "Abusive," and "Needs context" piles into three big piles. Draw a card out of any of the three big piles and discuss large group's agreement/disagreement with a classification.
- 10) Questions to help stimulate group discussion:
 - a) How did you decide how to sort the cards?
 - b) Were there particular cards/behaviors that were more difficult to classify than others? What made those particular cards more difficult?
 - c) What kind of context did you need to determine if a card/behavior was indicative of a healthy or abusive relationship?
 - d) What did this activity bring up for you or make you think about?
 - e) Does this activity have any implications for the way you think about patient care? Personal relationships?
- 11) **Here's the punch line:** When we are in a relationship, the health of which we are questioning, or when we are questioning the health of a patients' or friends'/family members' relationship, we are consciously or unconsciously "sorting cards." What is normal? What is not? Are certain behaviors okay, or are they unhealthy or even abusive? What if it happened only once? Abusive behaviors may leave physical injury or they may not. Many behaviors that are

emotionally, psychologically, or sexually abusive do not leave physical injury, but that does not make them any less harmful or abusive. Often behaviors that add up to a pattern of abuse in a relationship may not be perceived by outsiders, or even the person experiencing that behavior, as abusive in isolation.

Those who are deciding to stay or go in a relationship are sorting cards. Providers who are concerned something is amiss in a patient's relationship/home life are sorting cards. There is no simple algorithm. There is awareness to patterns of power and control. There is asking questions and listening to and trusting your and others' ongoing experience.

Making partner drop charges	Making partner think they're crazy
Yelling at partner	Using visitation (w/ children) to harass partner
Acting like master of home	Controlling partner's friendships
Preventing partner from getting or keeping a job	Threatening suicide
Making partner do illegal things	Not letting partner know about or have access to family income

Being the one to define gender roles	Using children to relay messages to partner
Playing mind games	Controlling partner's behavior
Threatening to leave partner	Making all the big decisions
Treating partner like servant	Not taking partner's concerns about relationship seriously
Threatening to take children away from partner	Criticizing partner

Making threats against partner	Gaslighting
Threatening to harm oneself	Making partner feel guilty about caring for children
Extramarital sexual activity	Making partner feel bad about themselves
Put downs	Picking out partners clothing
Humiliation	Namecalling

Fighting	Partner biting tongue (not speaking up)
Calling/texting to check in with partner	Giving partner gifts
Partner making sacrifices for relationship	Joking around/teasing with partner
Giving partner an allowance	Practical jokes on partner
Partner making compromises for a relationship	Being Head of Household

Engaging in BDSM	Supporting partners' goals in life
Expressing preferences for partner's physical appearance	Communicating openly and truthfully
Admitting being wrong	Accepting responsibility for self
Acknowledging past use of violence	Seeking mutually satisfying conflict resolutions
Valuing partner's opinions	Making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements

Healthy

Abusive

**Needs
context**

