BECOMING ALLIES...

With Your Partner, Yourself, and Others: Addressing the Abuse and Control in Your Relationships

by Dr. Chris Huffine



Becoming Allies: with your Partner, Yourself, and Others: Addressing the Abuse and Control in Your Relationships

Published by Allies Press Allies in Change 1675 SW Marlow Ave., STE 110 Portland, OR. 97225 www.alliesinchange.org

Copyright 2021 by Allies in Change

All rights reserved. Neither this book, nor any parts within it may be sold or reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from Allies in Change. The only exception is by a reviewer, who may quote short excerpts in a review.

Cover image by James Foss

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021939127

ISBN (paperback): 9781662914515 eISBN: 9781662914522

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	1
A MESSAGE TO THE READER	3
PART ONE: What Abusive and Controlling Behavior	
Looks Like	15
Chapter 1: Abusive Behaviors	17
The difference between hurtful and abusive behaviors	17
Physical abuse	19
Verbal abuse	19
Psychological abuse	20
Property abuse	22
Financial abuse	23
Sexual abuse	23
Collateral abuse	23
Animal abuse	24
Self-abuse	24
Spiritual abuse	25
Relationship neglect	25
Child abuse	27
The key concern: Patterns of abuse	29
Chapter 2: Controlling Behaviors	31
Your patterns of control make you controlling	34

Consent is key	36
There's no such thing as "good control"	39
Keep the focus on you—not your partner or child	40
Chapter 3: Sexual Abuse	53
Forms of sexual abuse	54
Violation of a sexual agreement	59
Seduction vs. coercion	62
The core principle of respectful behavior: Ongoing uncoe	erced
informed consent	65
Sexual abuse in nonsexual relationships	66
Prostitutes and sex workers	69
Pornography and erotica	70
Chapter 4: Financial Abuse	75
Financial self-reliance vs. financial interdependence	75
Forms of financial abuse	78
Imposing financial dependence	87
PART TWO: The Causes of Ongoing Abusive and	
Controlling Behavior	91
Chapter 5: Abusive Thoughts and Beliefs	93
Your self-talk either promotes or discourages abuse	94
Negative self-talk reflects distorted thinking	94
Your beliefs either permit or prohibit abuse	97
Common excuses for being abusive	98
The Power Over mindset	102
Viewing your partner as an opponent promotes abuse	108
Chapter 6: Gender Roles and Abusive Behavior	111
What does it mean to be a man or a woman?	112
Pressure to conform to traditional gender roles	115
The problem with rigid masculinity	118

Chapter 7: Denial	121
The problem with stuffing emotions	123
How denial works	125
Defense mechanisms support denial	127
Denying your problem behaviors causes more problems	131
Denying your abusive behavior encourages more abuse	132
What denial sounds like	132
Chapter 8: Mood-Altering Substances and Experiences	139
Mood-altering experiences	140
Substance use/abuse does not cause abusive behavior	141
Substance use/abuse can interfere with attempts to stop you	ır
abusive behavior.	141
Substance abuse and addiction	142
Problems with casual alcohol and drug use	145
Chapter 9: Addressing Shame	149
The difference between shame and guilt	150
Shame and abusive behavior	153
Common indicators of shame	154
Healing from shame	156
Moving past the shame you feel about your abusive behavio	or 156
PART THREE: The Path to Becoming Nonabusive	159
Chapter 10: Start with Accountability	161
Accepting responsibility for your actions	164
Taking an honest inventory of your actions	167
Accepting primary accountability	168
Shifting from an external to an internal focus	168
Chapter 11: Understanding the Impact of Abuse on	
Your Partner	173
Sympathy, empathy, and compassion	173

Others have suffered from your abuse and control	178
Immediate effects of abuse	179
Delayed effects of abuse	181
Cumulative effects of abuse	182
Chapter 12: Understanding the Impact of Abuse on	
Children	191
Exposure to abuse is abusive	191
How children are exposed to abusive behavior	192
The immediate impact of exposure to abuse	193
The delayed impact of exposure to abuse	195
Cumulative effects of exposure to abuse	198
Chapter 13: Moving from Disconnection to Connection	205
Rigid masculinity conformity	205
Disconnection	206
Connection	212
The change process	215
Chapter 14: Learning to Stop Your Abuse in the	
Moment	217
Use sheer willpower	218
Don't give yourself permission	218
Interrupt it in the moment	218
Zip your lips	218
Put it on the shelf	219
Limit contact	219
Plan a controlled separation	220
Be open to prompts from your partner	221
Take a time-out	222
Other interventions that involve leaving a situation	229
Appropriate ways to leave an unresolved situation	230
How to take a time-out	230

What to do if you have been abusive again	230
What NOT to do after an abusive moment	234
Chapter 15: Becoming Aware of Your Thoughts	237
Noticing and challenging negative self-talk	237
Adopting beliefs that are respectful of others	242
Denying yourself permission to be abusive	244
What would someone who is nonabusive do?	245
Abuse and control are ALWAYS violations of	
personal freedom	245
"But what if the other person is being abusive? Isn't it okay	
then?"	245
Chapter 16: Becoming Aware of Your Emotions	247
Emotions are a form of personal logic	247
All emotions are important	248
Emotions are always justified	248
What matters most is not what happens, but how you feel	
about what happens	249
Emotions help you make the right choices	250
Emotions are a universal language	252
Emotions are often expressed metaphorically	252
Emotions continually shift and change	253
Understanding your emotions	254
Processing emotions with words	260
Chapter 17: Becoming Aware of Your Body	263
Understanding how adrenaline affects your emotions	263
Paying attention to your physical needs	265
Practicing mindfulness	270

	273
Understanding the relationship between chronic	
stress and anger	275
Practicing conscious breathing	275
Practicing progressive relaxation	276
Practicing meditation	276
Doing guided visualization	277
Using positive affirmations	277
Practicing mindfulness	277
Practicing self-compassion	277
Stepping away from distress	279
Practicing acceptance	280
Chapter 19: Learning to Take Care of Yourself	283
Understanding the difference between needs and wants	283
Practicing self-care	284
Chapter 20: The Journal: A Tool for Understanding and	
	299
Changing Your Behavior	299 301
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation	
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity	301
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity	301 301
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions	301 301 302
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions Highest intensity during the situation (1–10)	301301302302
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions Highest intensity during the situation (1–10)	 301 301 302 302 302 303
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions Highest intensity during the situation (1–10) Intensity at the beginning (1–10) How much of my intensity was due to this specific situation?	 301 301 302 302 302 303
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions Highest intensity during the situation (1–10) Intensity at the beginning (1–10) How much of my intensity was due to this specific situation? Negative self-talk	 301 301 302 302 302 303 303
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions Highest intensity during the situation (1–10) Intensity at the beginning (1–10) How much of my intensity was due to this specific situation? Negative self-talk Abusive/controlling behaviors	 301 301 302 302 303 303 303
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions Highest intensity during the situation (1–10) Intensity at the beginning (1–10) How much of my intensity was due to this specific situation? Negative self-talk Abusive/controlling behaviors What did I want to make the other person do, feel, or think?	 301 301 302 302 302 303 303 303 303
Changing Your Behavior Event/Situation Signs of physical intensity Signs of behavioral intensity Emotions Highest intensity during the situation (1–10) Intensity at the beginning (1–10) How much of my intensity was due to this specific situation? Negative self-talk Abusive/controlling behaviors What did I want to make the other person do, feel, or think? Beliefs that justified my abusive/controlling behaviors	 301 301 302 302 302 303 303 303 304

What role did my past abuse/control of that person play?	305
What did I gain from my behavior?	305
What did I lose from my behavior?	305
What did I want in this situation?	305
What did other people want?	306
Positive self-talk	306
Nonabusive/noncontrolling beliefs	306
How did I appropriately meet my needs?	306
How did I consider the needs of others?	307
My experience of the situation	307
PART FOUR: Improving Your Relationships	309
Chapter 21: Learning to Regard Others	311
Practicing being relational	312
Practicing humility	316
Respecting others' priorities and perspectives	317
Challenging your egotistical assumptions	324
Being mindful of your power and privilege	325
Acknowledging, including, and consulting with your partne	er 326
Chapter 22: Learning to Make Things Right	329
Types of amends	333
Examples of direct amends	333
Examples of indirect amends	336
Indirect amends must be focused on domestic violence	337
Understanding your abused partner's recovery process	337
Chapter 23: Learning to Communicate Effectively	347
Techniques for effective communication	348
Techniques for better understanding	355
Chapter 24: Practicing Conflict-Resolution Skills	361
Conflict can be a path to intimacy	362

The three components of conflict resolution	364
The three types of advocacy	365
Climbing the staircase of assertiveness	366
Learning to set good boundaries	368
Learning to respect other people's boundaries	370
Learning to navigate conflicting boundaries	371
Learning to negotiate solutions	375
PART FIVE: Living in Recovery	379
Chapter 25: The Qualities of Healthy Relationships	381
Practicing sexual intimacy	387
Developing and practicing intimacy	390
Chapter 26: Learning to Sustain Your Positive Changes	395
Working your program	396
Practicing recovery	397
Paying attention to signs of relapse	398
Understanding the difference between recovery and relapse	399
Learning to recognize the stages of relapse	400
Stopping yourself from falling further into relapse	405
Getting out of relapse	409
Keeping a Relapse Journal	411
Chapter 27: Sustaining Your Changes	415
Writing an Accountability Statement	415
Writing letters of accountability	420
Learning how to stay out of trouble	423
Creating a Continuing Accountability Plan	426

AFTERWORD: Moving Forward	429
Appendix A: 12 Reasons Couples Counseling is Not	
Recommended When Domestic Violence is Present	433
Appendix B: Controlling Behaviors	437
Appendix C: Power Orientation in Relationships	441
Appendix D: Controlled Separation	443
Appendix E: Emotions	449
Appendix F: Self-Care Plan	455
Appendix G: Journal	459
Appendix H: Annotated Journal	463
Appendix I: Relapse Warning Signs	469
Appendix J: Relapse Journal	471
Appendix K: Continuing Accountability Plan	477
Acknowledgments	479
About the Author	481