BUILDING WORKFORCE CAPACITY:
JEALOUSY PRESENTATION



Facilitator: Donna Chung and Tori Cooke

Copyright © Pandora Enterprise Projects – permission required before distribution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this unceded land.

We acknowledge their deep and profound connections to country, rivers, waterways, oceans, family and community.

We pay respect to Elders past and present as well as emerging community leaders and those here with us today.



Artist: Lorretta Egan, “Home”

VICTIM SURVIVOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the terrible impact of family violence on individuals, families, and communities, and the strength and resilience of the children and adults who have experienced family violence.



COERCIVE CONTROL

Definition – includes monopolisation of perception, distortion of realities and strategic narrative of the person using violence

JEALOUSY AS A COERCIVE CONTROL STRATEGY

Jealousy is often invoked (implicitly or explicitly) in abusive relationships as a justification for surveillance, restricting interactions with others, controlling and monitoring communication, or persistently accusing the partner of infidelity.

INTERROGATING THE CONCEPT OF JEALOUSY

- Often viewed as a 'typical' or understandable part of intimate relationships
- One party's **perception** of a sexual and/or emotional attraction between their partner and another person,
- Sits across a continuum in its level of harm and danger
- Jealousy includes three broad elements :
  - Thoughts
  - Feelings
  - Actions

JEALOUSY IN SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

Jealousy is the most common reason for partner homicide committed by young people

The normalising of jealousy - historically used to obscure male violence

Crime of passion

Jealous rage

Strong links to honour where patriarchal norms are embedded

- Individual
- Family
- Community

JEALOUSY IN SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

Ongoing role of Romantic Cultural Scripts for relationships

Explanations dominated by psychology – attachment and evolutionary

Individualised psychological explanations do not help with explaining honour-based violence

Such approaches also ignore social and cultural institutions and discourses

Early in relationships control and surveillance tactics can be conflated with growing attachment & affection

Beginning

Middle

Separation

Post separation

JEALOUSY STRATEGIES ACROSS THE RELATIONSHIP CONTINUUM

SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING



Constantly checking their partner's phone, messages, social media, or call logs "because they can't be trusted."



Installing tracking apps, sharing locations, or demanding passwords under the guise of "honesty" or "openness.



Monitoring social media likes, comments, or followers and confronting their partner over perceived threats.

ISOLATION FROM OTHERS

Accusing their partner of flirting or being unfaithful when they spend time with friends, family, or colleagues.

Discouraging or forbidding them from socialising, especially with people of a certain gender.

Creating tension with friends or family so the partner withdraws from them to avoid conflict.

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

Framing control as love — “I only get jealous because I love you so much.”

Using jealousy to make the partner responsible for their feelings — “If you didn’t talk to him, I wouldn’t get angry.”

Demanding constant reassurance or “proof” of loyalty.

Turning ordinary interactions into loyalty tests (“If you cared about me, you wouldn’t go out without me.”).

SEXUAL AND INTIMATE CONTROL

Interrogating their partner about past relationships or sexual history, then using this information to shame or humiliate them.

Demanding sex as reassurance that the partner still wants them or isn't cheating.

Controlling what the partner wears or how they present themselves in public.

PUBLIC HUMILIATION – DISPLAYS OF ANGER/DISAPPROVAL

Making scenes in public or social settings, accusing the partner of “looking” at someone.

Using jealousy-fuelled outbursts to intimidate, shame, or punish.

REALITY DISTORTION AND BLAME SHIFTING

Claiming their jealousy is the partner's fault ("You make me jealous on purpose").

Trust is invoked - "She cannot be trusted"

Minimising or denying the controlling behaviour ("Everyone gets jealous; you're overreacting").

Redefining abuse as "just being protective."

TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED JEALOUSY

Early in relationship - false romantic gestures such as a ‘joint email account’ to show the world we are together

Victim- survivor has mobile as part of joint account or family/partner’s business account

Cyberstalking, reviewing message histories, or controlling access to digital accounts.

Demanding that partners delete contacts, block friends, or post couple photos to “prove loyalty.”

ENTITLEMENT, POSSESSION, OWNERSHIP, THREAT

Entitlement	Possession	Ownership	Threat	Emotional Punishment
• Believes they have the right to know where their partner is, who they speak to, and what they do — positioning themselves as the authority in the relationship.	• Treats the partner as an extension of themselves, not a separate person with autonomy — "you belong to me" becomes the implicit or explicit message.	• Uses jealousy to justify control over the partner's body, choices, and interactions — policing clothing, friendships, or professional relationships.	• Uses anger, intimidation, or implied harm to maintain dominance — threats of leaving, self-harm, or violence if the partner "provokes jealousy."	• Withdraws affection, gives the silent treatment, or escalates conflict to punish the partner for perceived disloyalty, reinforcing fear and compliance.

JEALOUSY AS SOCIETAL ROMANTIC TROPE

- Cultural normalisation
- Gendered messaging
- Romantic idealisation
- Minimising harm
- Barrier to recognition of tactic

JEALOUSY – TRANSITORY TO HARMFUL

Individualised Perspectives

Individuals may have transitory or occasional feelings of jealousy if someone is flirting with their partner, or closely connected to another (emotional jealousy) – transitory, often situational, not obsessive or leading to controlling actions

Morbid or pathological jealousy – continuing, ruminating, perceived sexual infidelity is constant leading to surveillance and control tactics

- in established relationships this now often gets labelled as 'coercive control' and sexual jealousy is not spoken about

JEALOUSY – SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Hegemonic Masculinity

Monogamy as heteronormative

Hierarchical gender roles – privilege and entitlement

Shame and Dishonour of the individual man, family

- Humiliation with female sexuality & freedoms

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AT THE SOCIAL-INDIVIDUAL NEXUS

Three Aspects

Cognitive: persistent thoughts, ruminating and constant suspicion about a partner.

Emotional feelings: anger, anxiety.

Behaviours: consequent actions focused on surveillance, isolation and control of partner, confronting or threatening other parties.

Cultural drivers which reproduce, normalise and minimise

Jealousy signifies love

Strict gendered roles including control of women's sexuality

Patriarchal norms and privilege – masculine pride

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Many controlling and coercive behaviours are responses to jealousy and the fear of being shamed by a woman's actions

Jealousy is a commonly understood term which can be unpacked in programs with people using violence

Coercive control is now a well used term but it is a technical/professional concept compared with jealousy

It is an accessible way of talking about and linking thoughts, feeling and behaviours which can be done in a culturally responsive context

Risk and Safety Perspective – can signify to practitioners those posing risk of continuing harm post separation

QUESTIONS