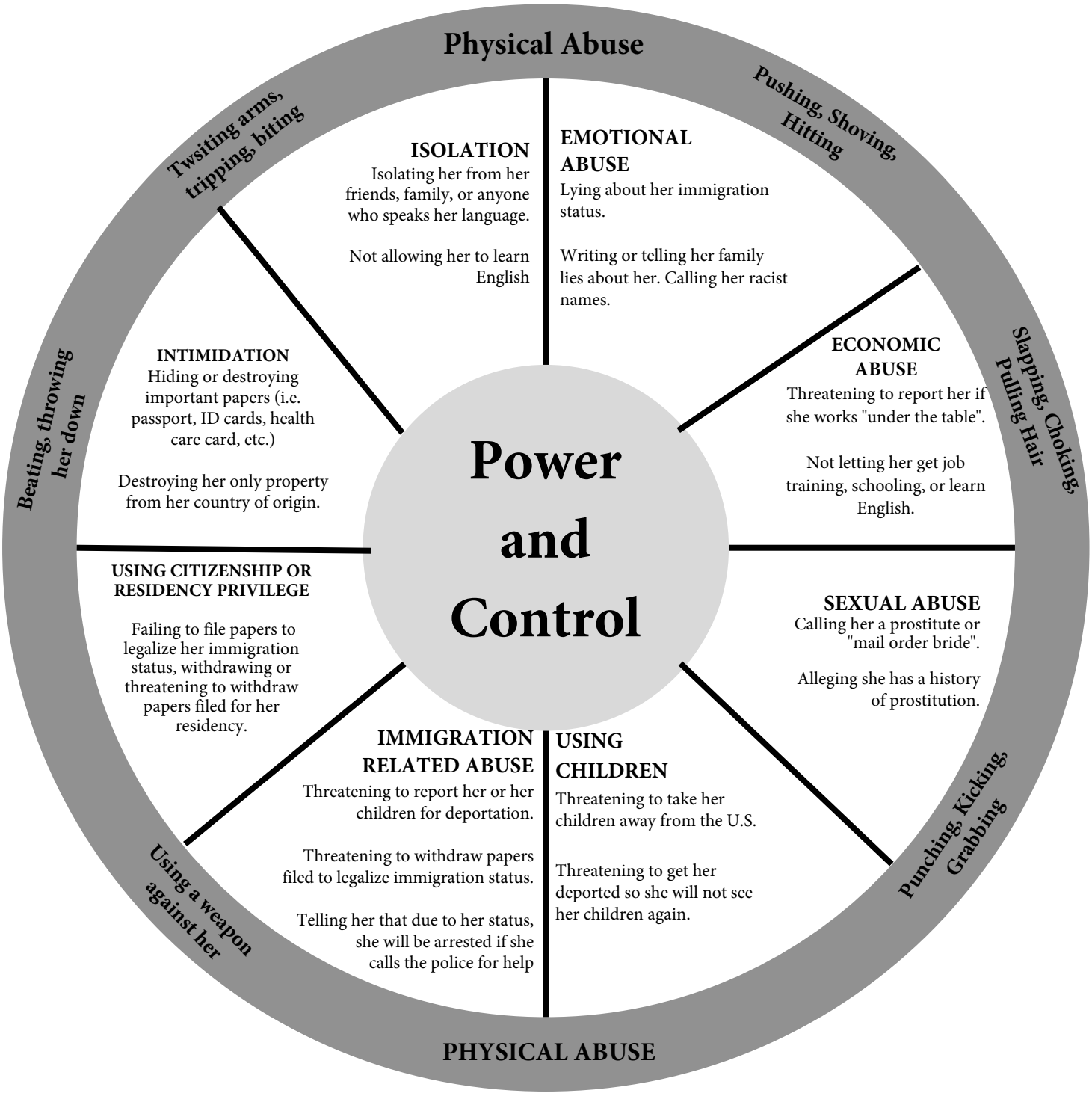
Power and Control Tactics Used Against Immigrant Women

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This version of the Power and Control wheel, adapted with permission from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Deluth, Minnesota, focuses on some of the many ways battered immigrant women can be abused.

Adapted by Futures Without Violence www.futureswithoutviolence.org, Ayuda Inc., and NIWAP Project American University Washington College of Law

Power and Control Tactics Used Against Immigrant Women

By Leslye E. Orloff, Ayuda Inc. & NIWAP American University Washington College of Law
April 13, 1996 (Updated December 7, 2024) This chart supplements and is to be read in conjunction with the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Deluth, Minnesota's "Power and Control" Wheel and the adaptation of that Wheel in the Future Without Violence publication "Working With Battered Immigrant Women: A Handbook to Make Services Accessible." The following describes some of the ways in which immigrant women are abused, although the experiences of individual victims will vary from case to case.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

- Lying about her immigration status.
- Telling her family lies about her.
- Calling her racist names.
- Belittling and embarrassing her in front of family and friends.
- Causing her to lose face.
- Telling her that he has abandoned her culture and become "white," or "American."
- Preventing her from visiting sick or dying relatives.
- Lying about his ability to have the immigration status of his lawful permanent resident abuse victims changed.

ECONOMIC ABUSE:

- Forcing her to work "illegally" when she does not have a work permit.
- Threatening to report her to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) if she works "under the table."
- Not letting her get job training or schooling.
- Taking the money her family back home were depending upon her to send them.
- Forcing her to sign papers in English that she does not understand -- court papers, IRS forms, immigration papers.
- Harassing her at the only job she can work at legally in the U.S., so that she loses that job and is forced to work "illegally."

SEXUAL ABUSE:

- Calling her a prostitute or a "mail order bride."
- Accusing her of trying to attract other men when she puts on make-up to go to work.
- Accusing her of sleeping with other men.
- Alleging that she has a history of prostitution on legal papers.
- Telling her that "as a matter of law" in the United States that she must continue to have sex with him whenever he wants until they are divorced.

USING COERCION AND THREATS:

- Threatening to report her to the ICE and get her deported.
- Threatening that he will not file immigration papers to legalize her immigration status.
- Threatening to withdraw the petition he filed to legalize her immigration status.
- Telling her that he will harm someone in her family.
- Telling her that he will have someone harm her family members

- Threatening to harm or harass her employer or co-workers.

USING CHILDREN:

- Threatening to remove her children from the United States.
- Threatening to report her children to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- Taking the money she was to send to support her children in her home country.
- Telling her he will have her deported and he will keep the children with him in the U.S.
- Convincing her that if she seeks help from the courts or the police the U.S. legal system will give him custody of the children. (In many countries men are given legal control over the children and he convinces her that the same thing will occur here.)

USING CITIZENSHIP OR RESIDENCY PRIVILEGE:

- Failing to file papers to legalize her immigration status.
- Withdrawing or threatening to withdraw immigration papers filed for her residency.
- Controlling her ability to work.
- Using the fact of her undocumented immigration status to keep her from reporting abuse or leaving with the children.
- Telling her that the police will arrest her for being undocumented if she calls the police for help because of the abuse.

INTIMIDATION:

- Hiding or destroying important papers (i.e. her passport, her children's passports, ID cards, health care cards, etc.)
- Destroying the only property that she brought with her from her home country.
- Destroying photographs of her family members.
- Threatening persons who serve as a source of support for her.
- Threatening to do or say something that will shame her family or cause them to lose face.
- Threatening to divulge family secrets.

ISOLATION:

- Isolating her from friends, or family members.
- Isolating her from persons who speak her language.
- Not allowing her to learn English or not allowing her to communicate in a language she is fluent in.
- Being the only person through whom she can communicat in English.
- Reading her mail and not allowing her to use the telephone.
- Strictly timing all her grocery trips and other travel times.
- Not allowing her to continue to meet with social workers and other support persons.
- Cutting off her subscriptions to or destroying newspapers and other support magazines.
- Not allowing her to meet with people who speak her language or who are from her community, culture, or country.

MINIMIZING, DENYING, BLAMING:

- Convincing her that his violent actions are not criminal unless they occur in public.
- Telling her that he is allowed to physically punish her because he is the "man."
- Blaming her for the breakup of the family, if she leaves him because of the violence.
- Telling her that she is responsible for the violence because she did not do as he wished.