

Frequently asked questions

Who can stay at l'Accalmie?

Our services are available for women, with or without children, that experience conjugal or family violence and need shelter. All unclear or irregular requests are subject to a 48-hour evaluation period; either it will be approved, or the person will be referred to another resource.

How long may I stay at l'Accalmie?

The length of your stay will vary according to your needs.

Are there any costs?

All our services are free.

What should I bring with me?

Bring your clothes, personal belongings, medication, prescriptions, medical insurance card, identity cards and all relevant documents needed for different procedures (birth certificate, marriage contract, insurance contract, rental contract, etc....)

Will my stay at l'Accalmie remain confidential?

Your presence at l'Accalmie is confidential. Women here are perfectly safe. The house's address is not public, and the personnel will not reveal your presence or identity to anyone (policemen, lawyers, social workers, etc...) without your personal consent.

Can I stay at l'Accalmie more than once?

Yes, according to your needs and if you have previously respected the rules, the other women, and the personnel during your first stay.

If I stay at l'Accalmie, will my children be able to go to the same school?

Yes, don't worry, we will bring your children to their respective schools.

Can family and friends visit me at l'Accalmie?

No. The reason for this is to ensure confidentiality. Visits will have to take place outside l'Accalmie.

I am experiencing conjugal violence, but I do not wish to stay at l'Accalmie. Can you still help me?

Yes, all our services are also offered to women that do not wish to stay.

My child witnessed violence, can l'Accalmie help them?

Yes, we have personnel that are specifically trained to work with children.

Am I a victim of conjugal violence?

Conjugal violence is expressed in many different forms. It can be physical, psychological, verbal, financial or sexual. In other words, violence is not just being abused physically. Here are a few signs indicating that you may be a victim: intimidation, threats, denigration, manipulation, etc. Bouts of violence is often preceded by extreme tension and followed by a honeymoon period. If you believe you are a victim of conjugal violence, please contact us and we will provide help.

Does my partner have controlling behaviour?

The following checklist demonstrates the wide variety of tactics that are used by partners with controlling behaviours. It will help you identify the ones that may have been used in your relationship.

As you go through the checklist, mark the ones that are familiar to you, then check your answers to see how many elements you have marked. Individually, many of them may seem insignificant, but your answers may reveal important patterns.

Don't forget that this list of controlling behaviours is not a definitive one, covering only a fraction of the tactics that are possible; so please add any that you have experienced that are not on the list. You will also find that some do not apply to you and have nothing to do with your partner.

[Control Through Criticism](#)

[Control Through Moodiness, Anger, and Threats](#)

[Control Through Overprotection and "Caring"](#)

[Control Through Denying Your Perceptions](#)

[Control by Ignoring Your Needs and Opinions](#)

[Control Through Decision Making](#)

[Control Through Money](#)

[Control Through Shifting Responsibility](#)

[Control Through Limiting Contact with Other People](#)

[Control Through Physical Intimidation](#)

[Control Through Sexual Humiliation](#)

[Control Through Physical and Sexual Violence](#)



Control Through Criticism

- My partner thinks that I never do anything right and nothing is ever good enough.
 - My partner says that I'm not supportive and loving enough; he wants all of my attention.
 - My partner is critical of the way I cook, clean, dress, make love, carry myself in public, etc.
 - My partner never gives me any positive support; even compliments are backhanded ("This is the first good dinner you've cooked").
 - When I express and share my insecurities, my partner makes fun of me.
 - My partner calls me names: dummy, whore, cunt, bitch.
 - My partner always corrects things I say or do; only he can do anything right.
 - My partner humiliates me about something I've done in front of family and friends.
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Control Through Moodiness, Anger and Threats

- My partner gets mad if I'm five minutes late and I'm afraid.
 - My partner expects me to read his mind and is furious when I can't or won't.
 - Living with my partner is nerve-wracking because I never know what will set him off.
 - My partner blows up and refuses to speak to me when I do something he considers "wrong".
 - My partner withdraws into silence, and wants me to figure out what's wrong and apologize for it.
 - My partner gets very depressed and expects me to work very hard to cheer him up.
 - If I don't do everything he says, he threatens to call Social Services for being a bad mother.
 - My partner says he'll never let me leave him.
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Control Through Overprotection and "Caring"

- My partner doesn't like it if I'm away from home because he says he worries about me too much.
- My partner is jealous when I talk to new people.
- My partner often phones or unexpectedly comes by the place I work to see if I'm "okay".
- My partner does the shopping so I don't have to go out.
- My partner says I don't have to work because he wants to take care of me.
- My partner picks out my clothes because he loves to have me look a certain way.
- My partner takes me to work and picks me up again so that the men I work with won't get any "ideas".
- My partner encourages me to take drugs with him so we can share the high; he accuses me of not caring if I refuse.

Control Through Denying Your Perceptions

- My partner acts very cruelly and then says I'm too sensitive and can't take a joke.
- My partner promises to do things, breaks his promises, then says he never promised anything in the first place.
- My partner makes a scene in public and at family gatherings, and when I confront him about it, he accuses me of exaggerating or making the whole thing up.
- My partner shows excessive interest in my emotional life and tries to convince me that I need to see a psychiatrist. On the other hand, *he* is fine.
- My partner says I'm always imagining things.
- My partner hits me and then asks how I got hurt later.
- My partner does abusive things and when I become upset, he tells me I'm hysterical. He asks me why I get so upset.
- My partner says he can help me fix my character flaws.
- My partner pressures me and forces me to make lists of what's wrong with myself.

- When I try to have a serious talk with him, my partner says, "There you go again" or to, "Just calm down."
 - He treats me as though I'm upset when I'm not.
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Control by Ignoring Your Needs and Opinions

- My partner never helps me when the kids are sick, or when I'm ill. He promises to help me and then "forgets".
 - My partner expects me to drop my activities whenever he wants my attention, but he never pays that kind of attention to me.
 - When I try to talk, my partner constantly interrupts me, twists my words, or forgets what I just said.
 - When I want to resolve a problem, the subject is changed before I even get a chance.
 - My partner shows up unannounced whenever he wants to, or fails to show up when he said he would, so it's hard for me to make any plans.
 - When my partner wants to go out on his own, he does; but I can't because the kids are my responsibility.
 - When I try to express my opinion about anything my partner doesn't respond, walks away, or makes fun of me.
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Control Through Decision Making

- My partner always has to have the last word.
- When I think we've reached an agreement about something, he goes out and does just the opposite.
- If I bring up some decision he made but didn't consult me about, he asks me why I'm harping on him for something that's already been decided.
- If I try to talk about a problem we've had, he accuses me of hanging onto things and not being forgiving.
- My partner says some subjects are not open for discussion.
- My partner says that it's a man's responsibility to make the decisions for the family.

- I have to ask permission to do something on my own, whereas he does things on his own without consulting me or letting me know.

Control Through Money

- I can't get information about our financial situation, even when I ask. My partner withholds information and/or is patronizing about my worth.
- I have to account for every dime I spend and also figure out how to make ends meet.
- My partner spends money on whatever he wants. He gets angry and blames me when he needs money and there's none left.
- My partner won't give me a household allowance, so whenever I need some money I have to ask him for it.
- My partner says that with all he does for me I ought to be glad to support him financially.
- My partner gives me everything I want, but he always reminds me that I could never live so well without him.
- My partner doesn't work. He takes money out of my wallet or steals my belongings and sells them.

Control Through Shifting Responsibility

- If I tell my partner that he's too bossy and critical, he tells me I'm immature. We just always end up picking apart my personality instead.
- My partner says that he can't stay clean and sober because he lives with a bitch like me.
- My partner says that if I ever leave him, he'll kill himself and I'll be responsible.
- My partner lost his job and blamed me for it. Now he refuses to work.
- My partner says he wouldn't lose his temper if I kept the kids quieter.
- My partner says he wouldn't go after other women if I kept myself up better.
- My partner says he'd take me out more if I weren't so stupid.
- My partner says he's always good-natured with other people, so it must be what I do that makes him lose control of himself.




Control Through Limiting Contact with Other People

- When I want to go out, my partner starts a fight.
- My partner doesn't like me to spend time with my family, with or without him.
- My partner tells me I never give him enough of my time, that I care more for my friends and family than I do for him.
- Although he never says it directly, I think my partner wants me to ask his permission before I go somewhere.
- My partner grills me about what happened whenever I go out.
- My partner accuses me of having affairs.
- My partner makes me late for work or made me miss work so many times that I lost my job.
- When I spend time with women friends, my partner accuses me of being a lesbian.



Control Through Physical Intimidation

- My partner blocks the door so I can't leave during an argument.
 - My partner scares me when he's angry by standing very close to me and clenches his fists.
 - When we argue, I'm sometimes afraid of what he might do, so I stop arguing.
 - My partner drives recklessly whenever he is angry with me, and it scares me to death.
 - My partner throws things around and breaks things.
 - My partner destroys my clothes and my favorite things.
 - My partner refuses to leave when I ask him to.
 - My partner won't let me sleep.
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Control Through Sexual Humiliation

- My partner pressures me to have sex in ways that make me uncomfortable.
- My partner makes sexual jokes about me in front of the children and other people.
- My partner makes fun of my body.
- My partner tries to seduce my friends and family members.
- My partner forces me to dress in ways he thinks are "sexy" but that make me feel uncomfortable.
- My partner compares me to women in pornographic magazines and videos.
- My partner tells dirty jokes that are degrading to me and to women in general.



Control Through Physical and Sexual Violence

- My partner throws things at me.
- My partner pulls my hair.
- My partner beats my head against the wall.
- My partner chokes me.
- My partner kicks me.
- My partner shoves and pushes me.
- My partner restrains me or keeps me from leaving.
- My partner hits me.
- My partner forces me to have sex with others.
- My partner rapes me.
- My partner threatens me with weapons.
- My partner hurts me and then won't let me go to the hospital or to a doctor.



¹ From When Love Goes Wrong, Susan Schechter and Ann Jones, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1992.