Exercise

Professional Version | US English

Coercive Methods For Enforcing Compliance



Description

Abusers use a variety of techniques in order to coerce others into behaving the way they want. In 1956 the psychologist Albert Biderman developed a framework for understanding the methods foreign armies used to extract false confessions from prisoners of war.

Psychologists now believe that abusers in many different situations use the same methods to achieve control over their victims. For example, victims of domestic violence or childhood abuse often report having experienced similar treatment. These methods include:

- 1. Isolation
- 2. Monopolization of perception
- 3. Induced exhaustion / debilitation
- 4. Threats
- 5. Occasional indulgences
- 6. Demonstrating 'omnipotence' and 'omniscience'
- 7. Degradation
- 8. Enforcing trivial demands

Instructions

This is a Psychology Tools exercise. Suggested uses include:

- Client handout use as a psychoeducation resource.
- Discussion point use to provoke a discussion and explore client beliefs.
- Therapist learning tool improve your familiarity with a psychological construct.
- Teaching resource use as a learning tool during training.

This information sheet gives details of methods of coercive control used by abusers. A checklist allows clients to report what methods of control they were subject to. These can be used as an assessment measure, or are helpful as starting points for therapeutic conversations.

References

Biderman, A. D. (1957). Communist attempts to elicit false confessions from Air Force prisoners of war. *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 33(9), 616-625

Coercive Methods For Enforcing Compliance

Abusers use a variety of techniques in order to coerce others into behaving the way they want. Use the checklist below to record whether you have been subjected to any of these methods of coercive control.

Method	 [] Cut off from my family or friends [] Methods of communication controlled (e.g. phone, email, internet) [] Encouraged not to see people [] Encouraged not to work 	
Isolation		
Monopolization of perceptions] Physically isolated] Freedoms restricted / not encouraged] Behavior controlled by mixture of charm, seduction, and hostility] Encouraged to focus on abuser's wants / needs instead of your own	
Induced debilitation / exhaustion	 [] Given drugs and alcohol [] Sleep deprived (e.g. not allowed to go to bed, woken in night) [] Diet controlled (e.g. starvation) [] Over-worked (e.g. kept busy, given many jobs, made physically tired) 	
Threats	[]Threats of death []Threats of injury []Threats of suicide if you don't comply []Threats to loved ones []Vague threats	
Occasional indulgences	[] Occasional favors [] Fluctuation of behavior - sometimes pleasant, other times punishing [] Promises (e.g. "I will change") [] Rewards for partial compliance (e.g. "I like this but stop doing that")	
Demonstrating 'omnipotence' and 'omniscience'] Starting confrontations] Taking compliance for granted (e.g. acting 'as if' you would never rebel)] Demonstrating complete control	
Degradation	[] Humiliating treatment (e.g. humiliated infront of others, punishments) [] Sexual degradation (e.g. encouraged to engage in humiliating sexual behavior) [] Controlling or preventing personal hygiene [] Insults and taunts [] Denial of privacy	
Enforcing trivial demands	 [] Demanding things be done a certain way [] Making little requests [] Habits that must be adhered to 	

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Abusers use a variety of techniques in order to coerce others into behaving the way they want. In 1956 the psychologist Albert Biderman developed a framework for understanding the methods foreign armies used to extract false confessions from prisoners of war. Psychologists now think that abusers in many different situations use the same methods to achieve control over their victims. For example, victims of domestic violence or childhood abuse often report having experienced similar

Method	Effect / Purpose	Examples
Isolation	 Deprives the victim of social support for their ability to resist Makes victim dependent upon the abuser 	 Complete isolation Cut off from family or friends (sometimes gradually) Encouraged to stop work
Monopolization of perceptions	 Fixes attention upon immediate situation Fosters introspection Eliminates information not consistent with the abuser's message Punishes non-compliance 	 Physical isolation Barren environment Restricted freedom Use of charm / seduction mixed with hostility to control behavior
Induced debilitation / exhaustion	Weakens physical and mental ability to resist ("I'm tired, so I'll go along with it for now")	Administer drugs and alcoholSleep deprivationSemi-starvationOver-exertion
Threats	 Cultivates anxiety and despair Makes clear what the victim can expect for non-compliance 	 Threats of death or injury Threats to loved ones Vague threats Mysterious changes of treatment
Occasional indulgences	 Provides positive motivation for compliance Encourages victim to work to 'earn' indulgences ("He's not all bad") 	 Occasional favors Fluctuation of behavior Promises Rewards for partial compliance
Demonstrating 'omnipotence' and 'omniscience'	Suggests futility of resistance ("He will know") ("There's no point, he always gets what he wants")	 Confrontations Taking compliance for granted (e.g. acting 'as if' victim would never rebel) Demonstrating complete control
Degradation	 Lowers self-esteem Reduces victim to 'animal level' concerns Makes cost of resistance appear more damaging than capitulation ("I'm worthless", "I'm disgusting") 	 Physical or sexual degradation Preventing personal hygiene Demeaning punishments Insults and taunts Denial of privacy
Enforcing trivial demands	Develops a habit of compliance Reinforces who is in control	Demanding things be done a certain way

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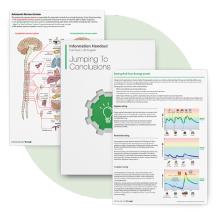


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