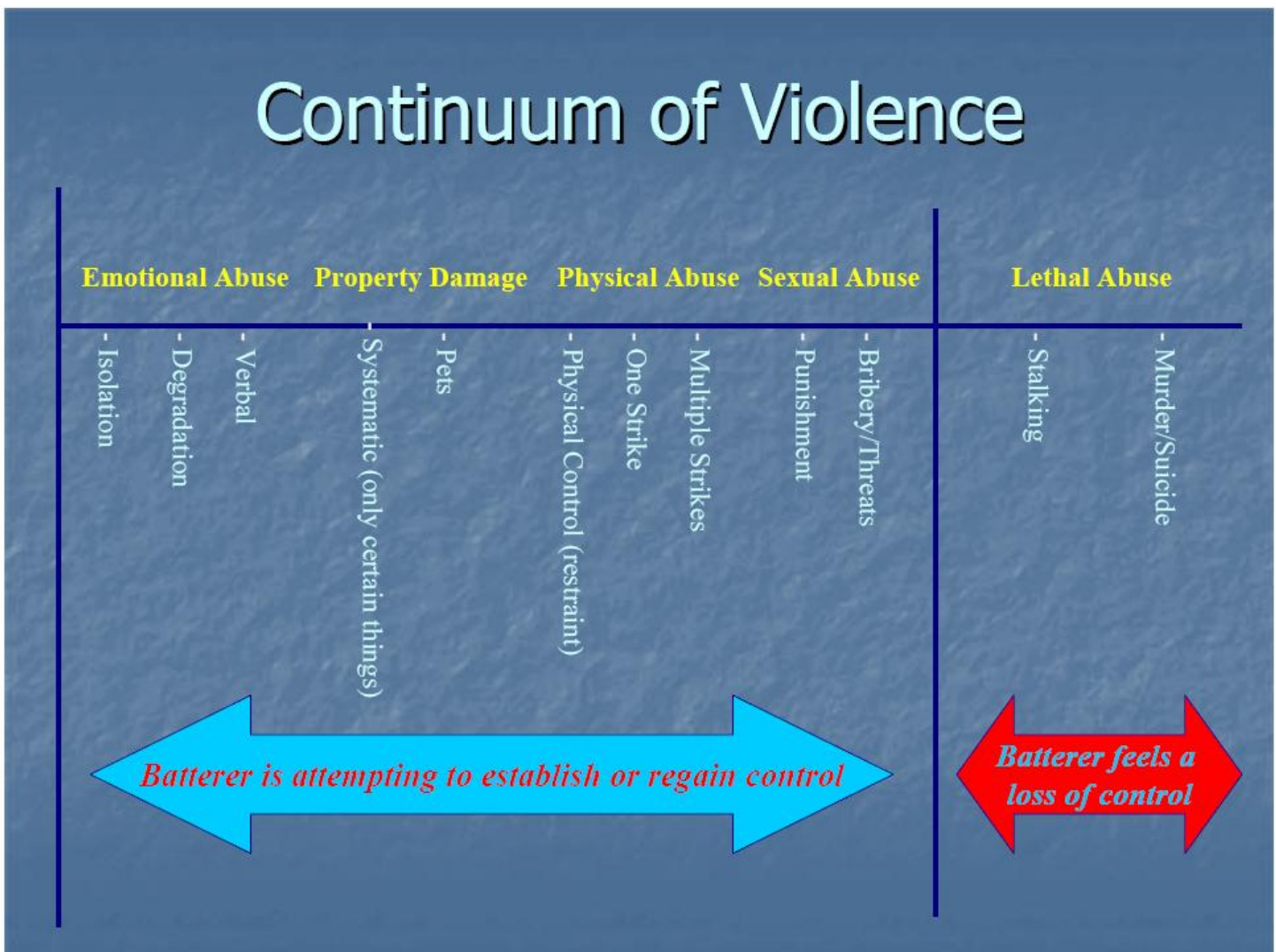


DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

(Adapted from presentations by Derek Marchman on Domestic Violence Training for Law Enforcement, 2002. Used with permission by Marchman Consulting, Inc. 2005)

Abuse is a choice. It is not something that occurs because a batterer “lost control.” If this was the case, co-workers, friends, family, and the general public would witness or be victims of the violent behavior. The batterer is selective about when the behavior occurs, meaning the batterer is in control of it. The batterer will use various degrees of violence to retain or recover control. Using a broad definition of violence from extremely physical to extremely subtle forms of violence, the batterer must read what behavior will produce the desired results. If the stare doesn’t work, maybe a slap in the face will. Then, maybe the batterer will send a letter that says how the two will always be together and if that doesn’t work, maybe the batterer will rip the phone away from the victim while she is talking to her family.

These are some ways a batterer keeps control and power over a victim. The emotional roller coaster experienced by the victim is driven by the batterer’s behavior not the victim’s, contrary to what the batterer might say. The Continuum of Violence below is an example of how a batterer might move between the various types of abuse to maintain control in any given situation, keeping the victim on guard and fearful.



Brief Explanation Of The Above Types of Abuse

Emotional Abuse:

1. Isolation – from relationships the batterer believes are a threat.
2. Degradation – used to humiliate the victim by making the victim feel worthless.
3. Verbal Abuse – a form of degradation that includes violent language, tone, or threats.

Property Damage:

1. Systematic - property that specifically chosen to damage that typically had meaning to the victim.
2. Pets – typically of the victim's/child's beloved pet.

Physical Abuse:

1. Physical Control – a means to restrain a victim, usually by holding, grabbing, shoving, and strangulating.
2. One Strike – typically with a hand or object.
3. Multiple Strikes – used interchangeably with the one strike method, whichever works to control the victim at the moment. This may be when law enforcement is first called.

Sexual Abuse:

1. Punishment – used as payback for anything the batterer believes is owed to him and/or friends.
2. Bribery – typically an overt threat is implied such as “...submit and I won't call DFACS on you”.

Lethal Abuse:

1. Stalking – following, sending letters, subtle threats, sitting outside home/work, hang up calls, peeping, or anything used to harass and/or place the victim in fear of the unknown.
2. Murder/Suicide – to take the life of the victim/self is the ultimate act of control.