

# SPIRITUAL ABUSE IN THE CONTEXT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

SPIRITUAL ABUSE IS WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP ENGAGES IN COERCIVE AND CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR OF OTHERS IN A FAITH CONTEXT. IT CAN BE A FEATURE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE.

Perpetrators may use RELIGION or SCRIPTURE to control

- Clothing
- Behavior
- Sexuality
- Decision making
- Reproductive choices
- Finances

...and to

- COERCE their victim to stay
- CONVINCE the victim to make sacrifices
- JUSTIFY the abuse
- SILENCE the victim
- ASSERT authority
- ENCOURAGE submission
- Make DEMANDS

## ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS INCLUDE

- Shaming
- Public Humiliation
- Preventing victim practising faith
- Dictating children's faith
- Using religious beliefs or texts to justify other abuse (e.g: marital rape)
- Requiring unquestioning obedience
- Claiming divine authority
- Threats of spiritual consequences

CAN BE DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY

VICTIMS MAY NOT RECOGNISE THAT THEY ARE BEING ABUSED

ABUSERS MAY CLAIM THAT ANY CHALLENGE TO THEIR BEHAVIOUR IS AN ASSAULT ON THEIR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

