

## Core beliefs (schema) that support family violence

### Schema that supports family violence

Core beliefs are the fixed statements, thoughts or ideas that we have about ourselves. They help us to predict what will happen, and help us to make sense of our world. These core beliefs are formed in childhood, and our early experiences develop them into fairly rigid assumptions about:

- **how we see ourselves and others**
- **how we judge what we and others do**
- **how we view the future**

Over time, these early childhood beliefs become entrenched and unconscious, but can be triggered automatically, i.e., without us being consciously aware of them, by events or interactions with others in our day-to-day lives. In other words, our problem thinking/automatic thoughts echo our core beliefs. The more negative our core beliefs, the more negative our automatic thoughts will be. We tend to interpret events and interactions with others, in a way that confirms our core beliefs.

When someone uses violence and abusive practices and keeps behaving in that way, they strengthen abuse-related beliefs. The beliefs can confirm, in the person's mind at the moment they act abusively, that the behaviour is "right" (when in fact it is not). As we know from the different pathways into abusive behaviour, people can get into the habit of behaving in a particular way. The cycle of abuse continues, and serves to trap the person on the abusive behaviours pathway.

### Some of the more common schema that support family violence include:

- She's irrational
- Violence is appropriate
- She got what was coming
- Need for control
- Women can't be trusted
- Low frustration tolerance

The table below outlines the types of thinking that occur within these schema.

### Partner-specific beliefs

<p><b>She's irrational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She's inadequate</li> <li>• She wants to bust my balls</li> <li>• She disrespects me</li> <li>• She wants to control me</li> </ul>	<p><b>Violence is appropriate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes you gotta stick up for yourself</li> <li>• What men do to keep their women in line is a private matter</li> <li>• It's OK for a man to be violent</li> <li>• As long as no one gets really hurt, hitting a partner can actually do them some good</li> </ul>
<p><b>She got what was coming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She made me do it</li> <li>• If she starts it, then I'm going to finish it</li> <li>• She just needed to shut up</li> <li>• She knows how I am/she should know better</li> <li>• She gave me a good reason</li> <li>• She got what she deserved</li> <li>• She could have prevented it</li> </ul>	<p><b>Need for control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never show weakness</li> <li>• What I say goes</li> <li>• It's my way or the highway</li> <li>• If you cross me, you'll pay for it</li> <li>• I'm no pussy</li> <li>• Nobody walks over me</li> <li>• If you don't like it, then get out</li> </ul>

### General Beliefs supportive of violence

<p><b>Women can't be trusted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women are deceitful</li> <li>• Women like to laugh at men</li> <li>• If you let them, women like to take advantage of men</li> <li>• Women think they're so superior</li> <li>• A woman should know her place</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low frustration tolerance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She made me mad and I just lost it</li> <li>• I can't take any more of her crap</li> <li>• I tried everything, but she wouldn't leave me alone/shut up</li> <li>• I just got so pissed</li> <li>• I can't control myself when I'm really pissed</li> <li>• I just hit my breaking point</li> <li>• It was more than I could handle</li> <li>• I couldn't take it any more</li> </ul>
<p><b>Entitlement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She deserved what she got</li> <li>• I say what goes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Victim Stance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone is against me</li> <li>• This is a beat-up on men</li> <li>• No-one understands me</li> </ul>
<p><b>Righteous anger</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She deserved it</li> <li>• It was the only response I could make</li> <li>• No-one messes with me</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cultural beliefs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's the cultural way</li> <li>• Women should submit to me</li> <li>• She has shamed me</li> </ul>

Get aware and get real about family violence and what you can do to help! Would you like to become more effective when working with family violence offenders and become an advocate for those who need help the most?

**[Click here to discover how we can help you](#)**