JEWISH WOMEN'S AID

JWA SHABBAT 20-21 NOVEMBER 2026

SEE THE *Unseen*

See the signs. Start a conversation.



what is COERCIVE CONTROL?

Coercive control is rarely one argument or one obvious incident. It is a pattern of behaviour that gradually takes away a person's independence, choices and everyday freedoms.

What seems caring or reasonable at first can, over time, become controlling and abusive.

It is the most common form of abuse we see, yet often the hardest to recognise.

*88%**

of the women we supported last year were experiencing coercive control.

*JWA client data 2025-2026.

"I thought I was just trying to be a better partner. Looking back, I realised I had slowly stopped making my own decisions, stopped seeing my friends and family, and stopped trusting myself. I didn't know it had a name."

HANNAH, JWA CLIENT
AND DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVOR



See THE SIGNS

Coercive control rarely starts with something that looks like abuse. It can begin with behaviour that feels caring or protective. Every relationship is different, but it may include:



LIVING IN FEAR

Walking on eggshells, constantly worrying about saying the wrong thing, and changing what you say and do to avoid upsetting them.
Takes away: Freedom to live without fear



GASLIGHTING

Being told things didn't happen the way you remember, that you're "too sensitive", or that it's always your fault, until you begin doubting your own memory, judgement and instincts.
Takes away: Freedom to trust yourself



ISOLATION

Being discouraged from seeing friends or family, or told they "don't get you" like your partner does, until you see them less and your support network becomes smaller.
Takes away: Freedom to maintain your own relationships



MONITORING AND INVASION OF PRIVACY

Someone checking where you've been, reading your messages, demanding passwords, or tracking your location or online activity, until you feel watched and accountable for your every move.
Takes away: Freedom to move independently



FINANCIAL CONTROL

Someone "taking care of" the money, loans or debts put in your name, or restricting access to accounts, until you lose control over your own money and financial decisions.
Takes away: Freedom to make your own financial choices



CONSTANT CONTACT AND PRESSURE

Constant messages or calls that seem affectionate or romantic, with an expectation of instant replies, until you feel pressured to move faster than feels right for you.
Takes away: Freedom to set the pace of your relationship



It may not look like abuse from the outside, or even from the inside. What matters is the pattern, and what it quietly takes away.

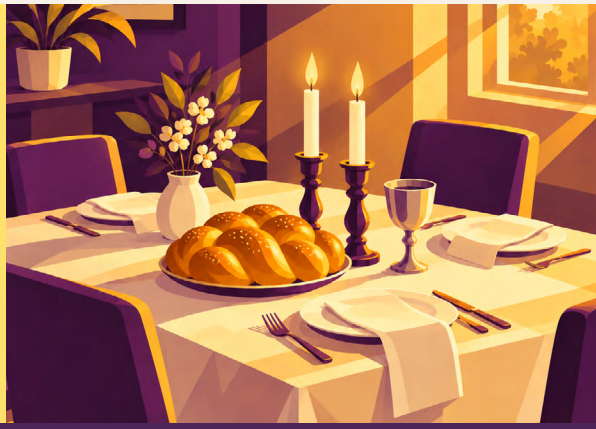
Things to TALK ABOUT

- Did any of the signs seem harmless at first?
- What everyday freedoms do we take for granted?
- What happens when they're taken away?

The difference YOU CAN MAKE

This JWA Shabbat, we invite you to look beyond the behaviour and See the Unseen.

When more of us know the signs, someone living with coercive control is more likely to be believed and supported. One conversation helps build a community where no one faces this alone.



"*Why doesn't* SHE JUST LEAVE?"

Leaving is rarely simple. Coercive control slowly takes away the things someone would need to go: confidence, money, support and trust in her own judgement. She may fear for her children, have nowhere safe to stay, or worry she won't be believed.

For many women, leaving can be the most dangerous time.

So instead of asking why she stays, we can ask why someone chooses to control, and how we can help: by listening, believing her and supporting her at her own pace.

IF SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT

Abuse takes many forms. If something doesn't feel right, for you or someone you care about, you don't need to be certain to reach out.

Jewish Women's Aid is the only specialist UK organisation supporting Jewish women and children affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence. We will listen, believe you, and help you explore your options at your own pace.

For free, confidential and culturally sensitive advice and support contact us:

0808 801 0500 **advice@jwa.org.uk** **jwa.org.uk/webchat**

See the signs. Start a conversation.