JEWISH WOMEN'S AID

20-21 NOVEMBER 2026

SEE THE *Unseen*

See the signs.
Start a conversation.

This JWA Shabbat we invite you to look beyond what is visible and understand more about coercive control.



WELCOME
To JWA Shabbat

We all want to believe that we would recognise abuse if we saw it. But the reality is that some of the most harmful forms of domestic abuse are also the hardest to see.

At Jewish Women's Aid, we know that abuse doesn't always leave visible marks. It can hide in everyday conversations, seemingly thoughtful gestures or behaviours that, on their own, might appear perfectly ordinary. But over time, these behaviours can become a pattern of control that slowly takes away someone's confidence, independence and freedom.

Last year, 88% of the women we supported were experiencing coercive control. Behind that statistic are hundreds of women in our own communities, our friends, neighbours, colleagues and family members, whose experiences may be invisible to those around them.

This JWA Shabbat, we are inviting communities across the UK to See the Unseen.

Through the activity in this leaflet, we hope to encourage you to look a little closer, to question what might be happening beneath the surface and start a conversation about how easily controlling behaviour can be mistaken for care.

When we understand what abuse can look like, we are better able to listen without judgement, offer support and help someone find their way to safety.

Thank you for joining us this JWA Shabbat and for helping to create a Jewish community where abuse cannot hide in plain sight, where women feel heard and believed, and where everyone knows that support is available.

See the signs. Start a conversation. Together, we can See the Unseen.

Shabbat Shalom.

Sam

Sam Clifford
Chief Executive, Jewish Women's Aid

SEE THE *Unseen*

See the Unseen. See the signs. Start a conversation.

Abuse isn't always obvious. Sometimes, behaviours that seem caring, loving or reasonable at first can gradually become controlling.

This is known as **coercive control**.

It isn't about one argument or incident, but a pattern of behaviour that slowly takes away someone's independence, confidence, choices and everyday freedoms.

On this year's JWA Shabbat, we're inviting you to look a little closer at the things we might not immediately recognise as abuse, and understand the impact they can have.

For someone experiencing coercive control, it can feel like:



Feeling afraid of what you say or do



Constantly second-guessing yourself



Having your finances controlled



Feeling watched or monitored



Being isolated from friends or family



Being overwhelmed by intense affection early on

HOW TO *Use the cards*

01. **Read a scenario together**

02. **Talk about what might be happening beneath the surface**

03. **Match it to the freedom that has been taken away**



THE DIFFERENCE *You can make*

88% of the women we supported last year were experiencing coercive control. It is the most common form of abuse, yet often the hardest to recognise.

When more of us know the signs, someone living with coercive control is more likely to be believed and supported.

Starting a conversation helps build a community where no one faces this alone.

Using the cards

Read a scenario together, talk about what might be happening beneath the surface, then match it to the freedom that has been taken away.

Things to talk about

- **Did anything seem harmless at first?**
- **What everyday freedoms do we take for granted?**
- **What happens when they're taken away?**

JEWISH WOMEN'S AID

Using the resource to start a conversation?
Hosting a JWA Shabbat meal?

Post a photo and tag us @jewishwomensaid
#jwashabbat

Download the JWA Shabbat toolkit
jwa.org.uk/shabbat-toolkit

JWA Shabbat Partners

jlc jewish leadership council
BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS ADVOCACY | DEMOCRACY | COMMUNITY
LEEDS JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL
Jewish Small Communities Network
jrc Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester & Region Est 1919
The United Synagogue
MASORTI JUDAISM
The Movement for Progressive Judaism
the SEPHARDI community
Office of The CHIEF RABBI

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. For free, confidential advice and support:

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

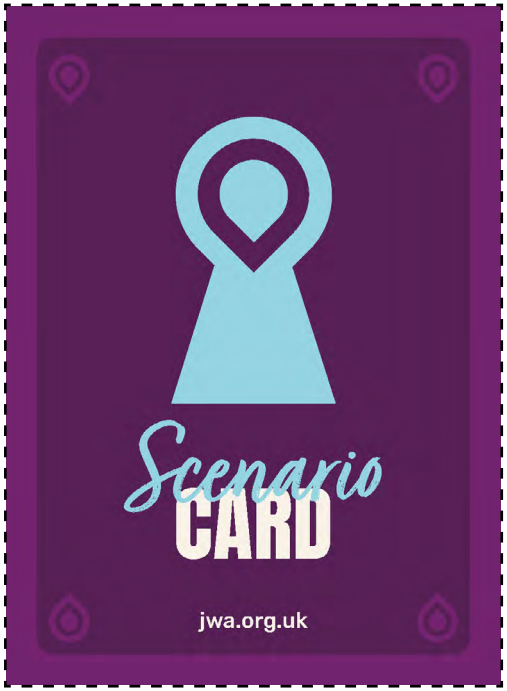
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Charity Registration No. 1047045


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It may seem like...

Someone explaining their behaviour, making it seem understandable.



It may seem like...

Someone taking care of the finances to be helpful.



It may seem like...

Someone caring for your wellbeing or someone wanting to spend more time together.



It may seem like...

Someone checking in because they care.



It may seem like...

Someone being affectionate or romantic.



It may seem like...

An ordinary disagreement about something that has happened.


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Matches with

Freedom to live without fear.

Over time...

You begin changing what you say and do to avoid upsetting them.

Intimidation is a form of coercive control that leaves someone feeling afraid in their own home.



Matches with

Freedom to make your own financial choices.

Over time...

You lose control over your own money and financial decisions.

Controlling someone's money, so they can't make their own choices, is a form of coercive control.



Matches with

Freedom to maintain your own relationships.

Over time...

You see friends & family less until your support network becomes smaller.

Isolation cuts someone off from friends, family and support, so they depend more on the person controlling them.



Matches with

Freedom to trust yourself.

Over time...

You begin doubting your own memory, judgement and instincts.

When one person is left feeling like it's always their fault and is second-guessing themself, they could be experiencing gaslighting. This is a form of coercive control.



Matches with

Freedom to move independently.

Over time...

You feel watched and accountable for your every move.

Monitoring is a form of coercive control that tracks someone's movements, messages or online activity, leaving them no privacy.



Matches with

Freedom to set the pace of your relationship.

Over time...

You feel pressured to move the relationship faster than feels right for you.

Constant contact is a form of coercive control that demands instant replies, leaving someone pressured and unable to set boundaries.