Source: Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. *This diagram is based on the Power and Control/Equality Wheels developed by the Domestic Violence Intervention Project, Duluth, MN*
IDENTIFIERS OF CAREGIVER ABUSE

Coercion and Threats:  ■ Threatening to: hurt the individual, their child(ren), pet, or service animal; withhold basic support and rights; terminate relationship and leave the person unattended; report noncompliance with a service program; use more intrusive equipment; institutionalize the individual; take children away; or medicate the person
■ Coercing the person to have sex without consent
■ Using consequences and punishments to gain compliant behavior

Intimidation:  ■ Raising a hand or using other looks, actions, gestures to create fear
■ Destroying property
■ Mistreating service animal(s) and/or abusing pet(s)
■ Displaying weapons
■ Providing personal care in a rough manner
■ Driving recklessly

Emotional Abuse:  ■ Punishing or swearing at the person
■ Refusing to speak and ignoring requests
■ Ridiculing the person's culture, traditions, religion, size and/or personal tastes
■ Enforcing negative reinforcement program or any behavior program without the person's consent
■ Keeping the individual awake
■ Treating the person like a child or servant
Isolation:
- Controlling access to friends, family, neighbors, telephone, television and/or other forms of media
- Limiting employment or educational opportunities
- Discouraging contact with a case manager, advocate or other service providers
- Determining living arrangements
- Locking the person in a room

Minimize, Justify and Blame:
- Denying physical and/or emotional pain of people with disabilities
- Denying or making light of abuse
- Justifying rules that limit autonomy, dignity and relationships
- Excusing abuse as behavior management or caregiver stress
- Blaming the disability for the abuse
- Saying the person is not credible
- Justifying that no one else would want to have sex with the individual or be willing to take care of the individual

Withhold, Misuse or Delay Needed Supports:
- Using medication to sedate the person for convenience
- Ignoring equipment safety requirements
- Breaking or not fixing adaptive equipment or assistive technology
- Refusing to use or destroying communication devices
- Using equipment to torture an individual
- Showing sensitivity to the person’s vulnerability when providing care
Economic Abuse:

- Using person's property and money without their permission
- Stealing money or personal items
- Using property and/or money as a reward or punishment program
- Making financial decisions based for the person without their consent or permission
- Limiting access to financial information and resources

Caregiver Privilege:

- Taking action without the individual's consent
- Making unilateral decisions
- Defining narrow, limiting roles and responsibilities
- Providing care in a ways to accentuate the person's dependence and vulnerability
- Giving an opinion as if it were that person's opinion
- Denying the right to privacy
- Ignoring, discouraging, or prohibiting the exercise of full capabilities
STATISTICS AND RISKS

Risks:

While an authoritative census describing the numbers and characteristics of people with disabilities who are victims of crime does not currently exist (Office of Victims of Crime Bulletin, September, 1998) there are many studies that have shown us the following:

- People who have some degree of intellectual impairment are at the highest risk of abuse.

- Some studies show that more than 90 percent of people with developmental disabilities will experience sexual abuse at some point in their lives. (Leigh Ann Davis, *ARC Fact Sheet*) Forty-nine percent will experience 10 or more abusive incidents. (Valenti-Hein & Schwartz, 1995) Other studies estimate percentages of 80 percent of the women and 60 percent of the men.

- The risk of being physically or sexually assaulted for adults with developmental disabilities is likely 4 to 10 times as high as it is for adults without such disabilities. (Sobsey, 1994)

- Children with any kind of disability are more than twice as likely as children without disabilities to be physically abused and almost twice as likely to be sexually abused. (Office of Victims of Crime Bulletin, September 1998)
Offenses:

- People with disabilities who are sexually or physically abused typically experience severe and chronic forms of abuse.

Offenders:

- Just as for people without disabilities, most offenders are known to the victim, such as: family members, acquaintances, residential care staff, transportation providers and personal care staff.

- Most studies agree that sexual abuse offenders against people with disabilities are predominately male.

Abused Individuals:

- May not realize that sexual abuse is abusive, unusual and illegal; thus, they may never tell anyone about sexually abusive situations.

- Have emotions and do experience psychological trauma, but often are unable to access support services.

- Many times, especially those with developmental disabilities, do not understand privacy as a result of having lived in environments where this is not a priority or has been taught.

- Often times are fearful of reporting abuse.

- Violence in the lives of people often results in acquired disabilities.
**POWER and CONTROL**

**Coercion and Threats**
- Threatening to: hurt the person; withhold basic support and rights; terminate relationship and leave the person unattended; report noncompliance with the program; use more intrusive equipment
- Using consequences and punishments to gain compliant behavior
- Pressuring the person to engage in fraud or other crimes

**Intimidation**
- Raising a hand or using other looks, actions, gestures to create fear
- Destroying property and abusing pets
- Mistreating service animals
- Displaying weapons

**Emotional Abuse**
- Punishing or ridiculing
- Refusing to speak and ignoring requests
- Ridiculing the person's culture, traditions, religion and personal tastes
- Enforcing a negative reinforcement program or any behavior program the person doesn't consent to

**Isolation**
- Controlling access to friends, family and neighbors
- Controlling access to phone, TV, news
- Limiting employment possibilities because of caregiver schedule
- Discouraging contact with the case manager or advocate

**Economic Abuse**
- Using person's property and money for staff's benefit
- Stealing
- Using property and/or money as a reward or punishment in a behavior program
- Making financial decisions based on agency or family needs
- Limiting access to financial information and resources resulting in unnecessary impoverishment

**Withhold, Misuse, or Delay Needed Supports**
- Using medication to stunt the person for agency convenience
- Ignoring equipment safety requirements
- Breaking or not fixing adaptive equipment
- Refusing to use or destroying communication devices
- Withdrawing care or equipment to immobilize the person
- Using equipment to torture people

**Minimize, Justify, and Blame**
- Denying or making light of abuse
- Denying physical and emotional pain of people with disabilities
- Justifying rules that limit autonomy, dignity, and relationships for program's operational efficiency
- Excusing abuse as behavior management or caregiver stress
- Blaming the disability for abuse
- Saying the person is not a "good reporter" of abuse

**Coercion Privilege**
- Treating person as a child, servant
- Making unilateral decisions
- Defining narrow, limiting roles and responsibilities
- Providing care in a way to accentuate the person's dependence and vulnerability
- Giving an opinion as if it were the person's opinion
- Denying the right to privacy
- Ignoring, discouraging, or prohibiting the exercise of full capabilities
Included Resource Material

- *Working with Crime Victims with Disabilities* - Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice (24 Pages)