



CRIME VICTIMS RESOURCE CENTER

Summer 2026 Newsletter

Serving victims in Mower County since 1977 - To subscribe or unsubscribe, email miller.tori@mayo.edu

Domestic violence commonly targets mental health

In a survey of 2,546 callers to the
National Domestic Violence Hotline:



had experienced at least one type of
mental health coercion, including:



4 in 5

said their partner accused them of
being “crazy”



3 in 4

said their partner deliberately did
things to make them feel like they
were losing their mind



1 in 2

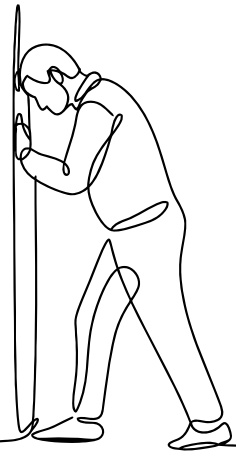
said their partner threatened to report they were
“crazy” to keep them from getting things they wanted
or needed (e.g. protection order or child custody)



1 in 2

sought help due to feeling depressed or upset.
Of those, half said their partner tried to prevent
or discourage them from getting help or taking
prescribed medications

What is Mental Health Coercion?



Mental health coercion occurs when an intimate partner uses a person's mental health—or perceptions about their mental health—to harm, control, manipulate, or isolate them. A person does not need to have a mental health condition to experience mental health coercion. An unsafe partner may use accusations, stereotypes, or assumptions about someone's mental well-being as a tool to gain power and control.

Common Tactics of Mental Health Coercion

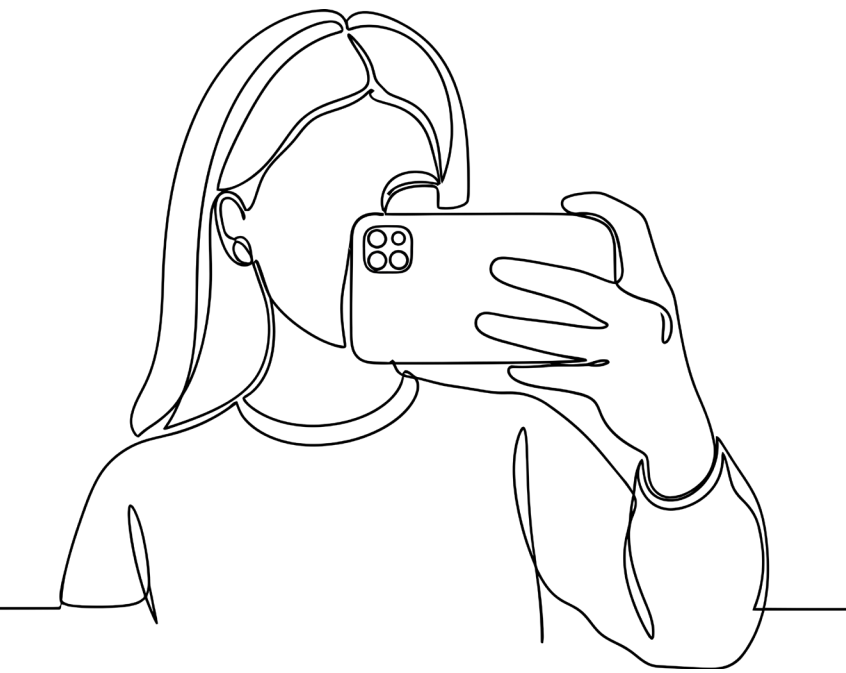
Unsafe partners use mental health coercion to threaten, intimidate, isolate, undermine, or control another person. These tactics can be especially harmful because of the stigma that still exists around mental health. When mental health challenges are misunderstood or judged negatively, abusive behaviors can have even greater impacts. The combination of abuse and social stigma can leave people experiencing shame, self-doubt, discrimination, and isolation, regardless of whether they have a diagnosed mental health condition.

Mental health coercion is a powerful form of abuse that often goes unnoticed or misconstrued. Increasing awareness of these tactics can help individuals, professionals, and communities recognize warning signs earlier and provide more informed, compassionate support to those affected.

Source: National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health

Examples of mental health coercion include:

- Telling someone they are “crazy,” “delusional,” or making things up, or denying that abuse occurred.
- Deliberately engaging in behaviors that cause someone to question their memory, perception, or sense of reality.
- Blaming abusive behavior, including sexual violence, on the victim's mental health.
- Threatening to report, or reporting, someone's mental health to child protection authorities and claiming they are an “unfit parent.”
- Controlling, withholding, stealing, or interfering with someone's medications, or shaming them for taking medication.
- Threatening to disclose, or disclosing, a person's mental health information to police, courts, employers, family members, or others in positions of authority.
- Using a person's mental health history to discredit them during legal proceedings, custody disputes, or interactions with service providers.
- Discouraging or preventing someone from accessing mental health supports, counseling, or medical care.



A GROWING CONERN: AI Tech & Photo Manipulation

Unsettling Cases

You don't have to search far to find stories about the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence. Companies around the world are widely integrating AI into their everyday operations. Most of the articles that you can find are overwhelmingly optimistic about this advancement, especially the positive impact it has had in medical settings.

AI has shown to be a powerful tool and it has the capability to help us create great things. That is if it is in the hands of the right people. The bad actors never seem to waste time, and it didn't take them long to start using AI to wreak havoc and create a type of victimization we never would have considered years ago.

Predators have turned to AI to create sexual abuse material, leaving countless victims in their wake. Take for example a 2024 case in North Carolina where a child psychiatrist, David Tatum, took multiple images of children and used AI to create sexual abuse material. This disturbing case had several victims and even one woman who was 40 years old when the case was sentenced, but David had used a childhood picture of her. In her victim impact statement she said, "It's a very strange and unsettling realization that, as an adult woman in her 40s, I became a victim of child pornography."

Another case that was prosecuted just last year is a little closer to home. William Haslach worked in various roles at several different schools in Ramsey County. While at

work, he took pictures of children in his care and used AI to turn them into child sexual abuse material. Investigators found 100s of images on his devices, and his youngest victim was just 3 years old.

What's Next

Once the true magnitude of the dark side of AI came to light, many states responded as quickly as they could to enact laws so they can prosecute those who use AI in such a horrific way. Minnesota is trying to take this one step further by enacting a bill that shifts the focus to the manufacturers.

Bill H.F. 1606 will take effect on 08/01/26 and it proposes the following: "Prohibits a person who owns or controls a website, application, or program from allowing a user to access, download, or use the app or software to nudy an image or video, other than the exemption in subdivision 3, and prohibits the company from nudifying a video or image on behalf of a user. (b) Prohibits a person from advertising or promoting a website, application, or program that allows a user to access, download, or use the website to nudy an image or video." The bill also opens the door for victims to take civil action and the attorney general can apply a civil penalty not more than \$500,000.

With AI technology advancing at such a rapid pace, we feel that there will be more and more cases like the ones mentioned above.

NEXT STEPS

What can you do if you find someone has used your photo to create sexual abuse material?

STEP 1: Preserve Evidence

If it is safe to do so, save screenshots, links, messages, and other details before the content disappears.

STEP 2: Report to Law Enforcement

Step 3: Report to the Platform

Report the content directly to the platform where it appears.

STEP 4: Secure your accounts

Take steps to protect your accounts, devices and person information from further abuse.

STEP 5: File a Complaint

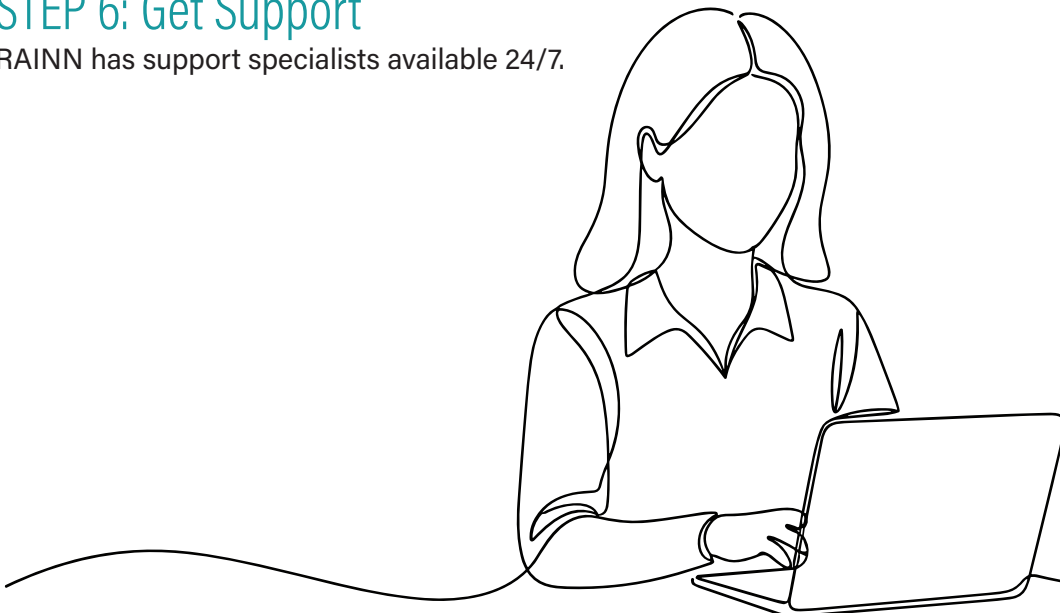
File a formal complaint with the [FTC](#).

STEP 6: Get Support

RAINN has support specialists available 24/7.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- [Ban on nudification technology passes House by wide margin - Session Daily - Minnesota House of Representatives](#)
- [Minnesota Gov. Walz signs first-of-its-kind law to stop AI being used for CSAM - CBS Minnesota](#)
- [Artificial Intelligence and Combatting Online CSEA](#)
- [Report Intimate Images, Deepfakes, & Fake Nudes | RAINN](#)
- [Charlotte Child Pornography Case Shows 'Unsettling' Reach of AI Imagery — FBI](#)
- [AI CSAM: The Growing Digital Threat to Children | Our Rescue](#)
- [The Growing Concerns of Generative AI and Child Sexual Exploitation](#)



Only
about
1 in 4
sexual
assaults
were
reported
to police
in 2024.



Why don't survivors report?

After surviving sexual violence, victim-survivors often feel pressured by others, or even by themselves, to file a report to the police. Survivors are often victim-blamed and not believed when they choose not to report. Sometimes, others even try to suggest that the survivor is responsible if the perpetrator continues to harm others, and survivors may internalize these feelings as well. In reality, it is okay if a survivor chooses not to report, and the only person responsible for sexual violence is the perpetrator themselves.

Survivors may choose not to report for many reasons, or they may simply just not want to report. They also may delay reporting for many of the same reasons. Ultimately, they do not owe anyone an explanation for how they decide to proceed legally. However, to better understand the survivors around us and to effectively combat victim-blaming, here are just a few of the reasons as to why survivors may choose not to report sexual violence to authorities.

Guilt

Even though survivors are never to blame, in an attempt to make sense of what happened, survivors often blame themselves. They may think they did something to “deserve” what happened to them,

or believe they otherwise played a role in the act of violence, even though this isn't ever truly the case. If they think they're partially responsible, they aren't likely to file a report.

Even if they know they aren't responsible for what happened, they may feel guilty knowing that reporting could get the perpetrator in trouble. These fears are especially prominent when the perpetrator is a member of the family, a close friend, or an important member of the community. They may fear they would be responsible for ruining the perpetrator's life, when in reality, it is the perpetrator's own actions that may lead to any consequences. Or, they may worry about the outcome that the perpetrator getting in trouble could lead to, such as a loss of family income.

Fear of Trial/Legal Process

Survivors may fear that if the report is taken seriously, they will have to face trial. During trial, every detail of the sexually violent act can potentially be discussed and dissected. Legal proceedings can drag on for a long time, which can make it difficult for a survivor to move forward. Different aspects of the process, such as cross-examination, can even retraumatize a survivor.

Unaware of Rights

Survivors may not know what their rights look like or whether or not the sexually violent act they experienced violates an existing law and "counts" as a crime. They may believe the statute of limitations has passed when it hasn't. Those who have immigrated, are undocumented, or otherwise have an unstable citizenship status may also not know or understand what their rights are.

Fear of Retaliation

Survivors may be afraid of the perpetrator and worry that if they report, they may experience further abuse or harassment, or that others in their life will be harmed. If the perpetrator learns about the report, this can potentially lead to further harm, especially if the report doesn't result in incarceration or a conviction. This can be especially harmful in small, tight-knit communities.

Fear of Others Finding Out

Survivors may fear that other people in their life or community will find out what happened or that they filed a report. They may not be ready, or ever want, to discuss the

event with other people in their life, and worry that filing a report means that the story is no longer in their control.

Still Caring About the Abuser or Someone Connected

Another reason why survivors may choose not to report is because they still care about the perpetrator. Sexual assault is often, perpetrated by someone the survivor knows, and this can complicate how a survivor processes what happens. They may downplay what happened because they don't want them to get in trouble, or because accepting that someone they know sexually assaulted them is incredibly difficult.

Grooming can further complicate the issue. When someone is groomed, they have been made to believe that they want the relationship. If sexual acts occur via grooming, these are non-consensual and acts of sexual coercion. However, because they have been groomed, survivors do not recognize that what is happening is actually sexual assault.

The Perfect Victim Myth

The Perfect-Victim myth outlines what a survivor "should" or "should not" do in order to deserve support and for their experience to be believable or valid. When the survivor doesn't fit the image of the perfect victim, they are more likely to receive a negative response from those involved in their case.

Overall, survivors may decide that choosing not to report is ultimately more conducive to their healing process. Or survivors may not report out of fear, mental health struggles, or distrust that the authorities and their community will have an appropriate response. There are many, many reasons why a survivor may choose not to report, far too many to list here. All of these reasons are valid, and they do not owe anyone an explanation. Whatever the case may be, it is never anyone's place to pressure a survivor into reporting or to guilt them if they choose not to. No one should ever discourage a survivor from reporting either. The validity of a survivor's experience does not rely on whether or not they filed a report, or whether that report resulted in a conviction.

If you decided to not report, for a reason listed here or another reason entirely, we support you. Visit [Survivors.org](https://www.survivors.org) for more information and additional reasons why individuals may choose not to report.

20 25

CVRC
provided

8,037

services to

712 VICTIMS

Crime Victims Resource Center

1000 First Drive NW, Austin · 507-437-6680

Empowering victims of crime through education, intervention, support and advocacy.

The Crime Victims Resource Center will help individuals who have been victims of many different types of crime. Some of the specific crimes we work with are:

- Accidents involving intoxicated driver
- Assault
- Burglary
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Abuse/Assault
- Elder Abuse
- Harassment
- Sexual Abuse/Assault
- Stalking
- Terroristic Threats
- Theft



Tori Miller
Director



Sasha Border
Victim Advocate



Coleena Snyder
Victim Advocate

Victim Support Services

- 24 hour crisis hotline
- Crisis counseling
- Safety planning
- Arranging emergency shelter
- Support groups
- Referrals to other agencies
- Emergency transportation
- Support during hospital examinations
- Support during police reporting
- Assistance with Orders for Protection and Harassment Restraining Orders
- Assistance with understanding the criminal justice system
- Accompaniment to court proceedings for support
- Updates on the progress of court proceedings
- Notification of victims' rights

Free and confidential service funded by The Hormel Foundation, Minnesota Department of Public Safety-Office of Justice Programs, and United Way of Mower County.