SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS ABUSE

Asserting Authority

Using Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to impose gender roles that are abusive or coercive, to assert authority, to reinforce male privilege, to encourage you to submit, to give commands, or to punish you.

Using Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to force you to have sex or unprotected sex, to deny or force family planning, to participate in polygamous marriage or genital mutilation, to have sex or be married at a young age, to be in an arranged or forced marriage.

Controlling

Sexuality and

Reproduction

Using Children

Using Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to arrange and force marriage for teens, to value male over female children, to use girls as commodities for bride prize or dowry, to sell young girls as commodities, to force you to raise children in another faith or no faith.

Restricting Access to or Use of Health Care

Using Scripture, traditions or cultural norms to force you to forego regular check ups, family planning, medications, emergency medical care, or to neglect medical care for your children.

Prolonging Abusive Relationships

Using Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to encourage you to forgive, to keep the relationship together, to sacrifice yourself for the relationship, to excuse or minimize the abuse, to remain silent, or to accept suffering.

Isolation

Isolating you from your faith community by not allowing you to participate in services or events, by silencing you when you are there,

by moving the family from congregation to congregation, or by forcing you to attend services in a different faith community.

Working through clergy or lay leader, or friends

or family from your faith community, to put

Spiritual **And Religious** Abuse

Using Scripture, Traditions, and Cultural Norms to Assert Power and Control

Blaming

defiled.

pressure on you to stay in the relationship or to put up with abuse. Coercion may take The Victim Using Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to blame you and justify abuse because you are female, sinful, and the weaker vessel, estranged from God, not created in

God's image, created to be man's

servant, unclean, polluted,

Using Community Coercion

the form of letters or phone calls on the abuser's behalf, comments in social settings, etc.