

Control Log Guidance

The following is a guide to filling out control logs in groups and developing this through discussion and/or role play. The idea is to get a comprehensive picture of an incident as possible in order to help the client reflect, understand and ultimately change their abusive behaviour.

You might use this in whole group discussion/check-in, or role play. Use the headings to help!

Actions – This is where you want to get as much detail as possible about *how* the man behaved and list it in the group.

- Piece together incremental steps towards the point of abuse and how things were left
- Where did the incident take place? In what location?
- How did the man move within this space from A to B etc?
- Ask about specific actions the man took. E.G grabbing, pulling, throwing objects etc.
- Ask about the man’s tone of voice, facial expression and language used as a means to building a fuller picture of what happened
- Men can often struggle with this so sometimes it’s worth making suggestions that the client can “come down” from – E.g.
 - ❖ “Did you strike her with a weapon?”
 - ❖ “Did you hit her 20 times?”
 - ❖ “Did you call her a c***t?”
- *The man will often want to provide context and talk at length about his partner’s behaviour. Broadly, this needs to be discouraged – emphasise that the point of the log is to focus on his behaviour to improve his own understanding. However, sometimes it can be useful to spend a little time discovering the specifics about what’s taken place – particularly when the man is using generalisations to describe his partner’s behaviour such as “she just flipped out” or “she began nagging me”. It can be useful to ask “What exactly did (partners name) say?” As this often elicits how well the man was actually listening, what precisely he reacted to and used to justify his abusive behaviour and why his partner was upset/angry; obviously you should use the information you gain to challenge his behaviour and not condone it.*

Feelings – The aim is to help the man identify not only what his feelings were at the time of the incident but how these relate to his actions.

- His feelings will have often changed at certain points during the incident he described so spend some time trying to find out what feelings came when.
- If there appears to be a particular feeling that triggered an escalation of abusive behaviour it is worth looking more closely at this. E.g.
 - ❖ If a man describes himself as having felt “weak” it is sometimes useful to ask questions such as “What exactly does being weak mean for you?”
 - ❖ If they answer “I’d be powerless” again it’s worth following up with “...and what would being powerless mean?”

- ❖ Continue this process until you get to the essence of what it is the man is describing. E.g. “Being weak means getting walked all over and that reminds me of my dad”
- Try to link his difficult feelings with his abusive actions where appropriate
- Underline that part of the process of acting non-abusively is building up his emotional resilience so that he can withstand moments of feeling emotionally uncomfortable.

Thoughts – this is a helpful route into the often trickier “intents” which comes next. Thoughts are often the script running through his head “here we go again”, “fucking bitch”, “why now/me?”. Encourage them to remember their internal script – can ask other men to help.

Intents – What you want to understand here is how the man intended his partner to behave or feel when he was abusive to her E.g.

- ❖ To shut her up
 - ❖ Stop her going out or
 - ❖ Punish her for something she has or has not done
- These can often be difficult for the man to understand and it is not uncommon for a man to describe his intentions within an “honourable” context. E.g. “I just wanted her to show me some respect.”
 - Focus his intentions back to how he tried to make his partner feel or behave
 - In the example just given (aside from exploring exactly what respect is and how it is demonstrated) – it would be worth asking
 - ❖ “How would you know if you’re partner was respecting you at the time? What would she be doing differently?”
 - ❖ Very often the reply will be something akin to
 - ❖ “She’d stop shouting” or “She’d agree with me” and from this we could surmise that the intention of being abusive was actually to shut the partner up/stop her shouting or make he agree with his point of view
 - *Note that this can take time for the man to understand and often requires repetition of “How did you want your partner to behave/feel differently?” before he is able to focus on his intents properly.*

Beliefs – This part of the log is about trying to extract what underlying beliefs the man holds which support his abusive behaviour

- It is worth noting that this can often be difficult as many of these beliefs will be quite archaic and difficult to admit too
- Consequently, as with intents men will often try and place their beliefs within the context of an “honourable” response E.g. “I believe that she should be a good mother.”
- Facilitators want to find out is more about what the man believes his partner *should* or *should not* do. E.g.

- ❖ “She *should* always agree with me.”
- ❖ “She *should* put my feelings first.”
- ❖ “She *should not* answer me back”
- ❖ “She *should not* expect me to discipline the children”
- Often simply asking “What did you believe your partner should or should not do at that time?” is enough to get the process started

Effects – Here you want the man to reflect on his behaviour and realise some of the effects his behaviour has had upon his partner/children extended family and so on as appropriate. It’s also a way of acknowledging his own unhappiness about his behaviour.

- Ask the man about the effects on him of his own behaviour first – this helps to build empathy for others later, it also acknowledges that this is not a way he wants to behave and so implies a process of change is necessary
- Then ask about effects on partner remembering to highlight both physical and emotional injuries – you are looking to create empathy here
- Repeat for children
- Repeat for effected others where appropriate – such as other family or friends present
- If possible contrast his hopes for the relationship with the effects of his behaviour – such as reflecting whether or not after he has been abusive he is closer to a trusting relationship with his partner or further away from it
- Similarly contrast the father he wants to be with the effect of his behaviour on the children
- You can also contrast the man that his partner met and fell in love with at the start of the relationship to how that man is behaving now

Non-controlling Behaviours – This is the chance to develop non-abusive alternatives to the behaviours the man used in the incident he was describing. However, they need to be realistic and he will benefit from trying these out – so role playing is really useful:

- Get him to list ways he could have behaved differently
- Get the other men in the group to suggest alternatives too (note they will often come up with solutions that are just more subtle ways to control a partner or “solve” the problem – you need to make sure examples remain non-abusive
- Get the man to try these alternatives out by role-playing it again from before the point he was abusive and use the non-controlling alternatives instead
- With any role play of this nature – agree rules beforehand – no violence, no physical contact and the fact that facilitators can interrupt
- If you are using role play – run it several times & after each one take feedback from the men. Inevitably they will come up with ways that he could have done better – at which point it is fine to have men swap roles and try out their new suggestions
- De role afterwards – particularly important for the person who played the abused partner
- Don’t make the partner being abused too meek – she may well have been argumentative or angry. The role play will probably have more authenticity for the men if they are confronted with a situation they find difficult – the point here is to provide a safe space where they can make mistakes