

Advocacy in Action

Hidden Forces: Shining a light on Reproductive Coercion – White Paper

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CONTENT WARNING

**Family Violence, Intimate Partner
Violence, Sexual Violence, Reproductive
Coercion & Abortion Care**

MSA



6
States &
Territories

16
Clinics



260
Staff



Quality and safety is at the heart of what we do at Marie Stope in Australia



Hidden Forces

Shining a light on
Reproductive Coercion
White Paper



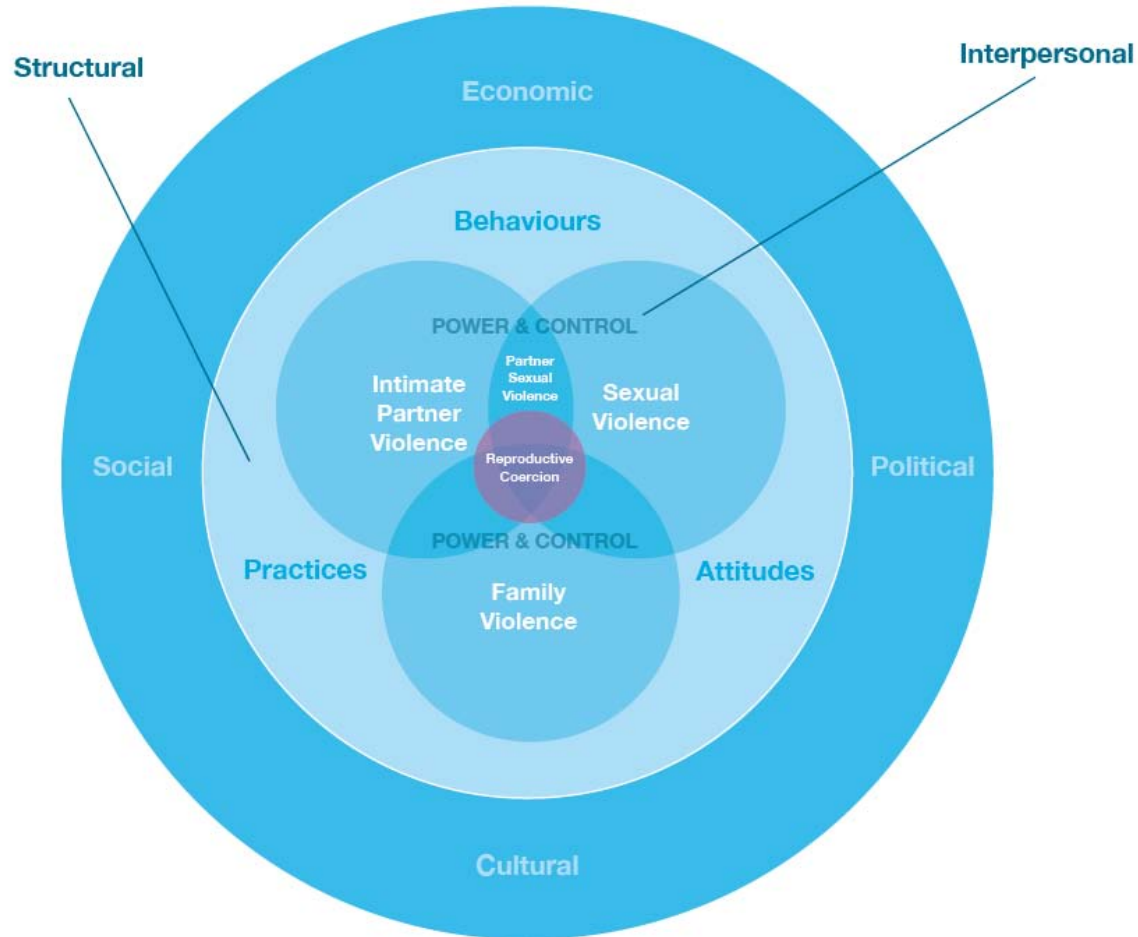
Reproductive Coercion...

- First described in 2010 in a review of reproductive controlling behavior including Intimate Partner Violence in the United States.
- Since then, has gained greater understanding in the United States and more recently the United Kingdom and Australia.

Reproductive Coercion is...

- Behaviour that interferes with the autonomy of a person to make decisions about their reproductive health.
- It includes any behaviour that has the intention of controlling or constraining another person's reproductive health decision-making.
- It includes
 - Sabotage of another person's contraception – e.g. 'stealthing'
 - Pressuring another person into pregnancy
 - Controlling the outcome of another person's pregnancy: forcing to continue or to terminate
 - Forcing or coercing another person into sterilisation.

Reproductive Coercion...



Interpersonal...

I always felt that what was happening to me was wrong. He wasn't beating me, he wasn't mean to me. He just would not wear a condom.

Sasha, NSW

Structural...

I believe the lack of action from the Tasmanian Government regarding access to affordable and safe surgical terminations in Tasmania heavily influenced a personal reproductive decision.

Angela, Tasmania

Interplay between the two...

From a young age I was taught that my only purpose in life was to give birth to the next generation...

Helen, Victoria

A complex array of sociological, psychological, epidemiological factors are at play in the phenomenon of Reproductive Coercion.

The influence of cultural norms, gender roles and expectations, and interpretations of masculinity impact how men and women experience and understand decisions and pressure regarding reproductive health.

Dr Karen Trister Grace (2016)

Public Health Issue

- Mental Health Impacts
- Chronic pain and issues
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Problems
- Maternal and Perinatal Health Impacts
- Homicide

Stories matter

Democratised **understanding** of an
emerging issue

Lived **experiences** create the most
important learning opportunities

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS
WELCOME

Structural Drivers

- Social Drivers: Rigid Gender Roles
- Cultural Drivers: Religion, Family Social Norms
- Economic Drivers: Taxation, Gender Pay Gap
- Policy and Legislation Drivers: SRH Policy and Support

Religion and Reproductive Control

- Accepted link
- Little hard research
- Reproductive coercion is normalized and reinforced in structure and familial units
- Cultural drivers:
 - Condone male violence
 - Collectivism: reinforced hierarchies of power that must be protected for the good of the group
 - Patriarchal structures reinforce male dominance over female structures.

Stories....

Helen

Ella

Religion and Reproductive Control

- Access to:
 - Education
 - Finance
 - Health Services

- Constant reinforcement of control structures:
 - Family
 - Hierarchy
 - Education
 - Gender roles
 - Economic

Case studies...



1960s Reproductive Rights and the Church

- John XXIII and *Pacem in Terris* – endorsement of feminism?
- 1960s fight for reproductive rights: sex education, contraception and legal abortion
- Protestants ordain women
- Criticism of the rhythm method
- 1964 Birth Control Commission formed and contraception recommended under certain conditions
- 1968 *Humanae Vitae* reiterated objection to contraception but feeling among congregations widely in favour

The Vatican and Prohibition of Abortion

- 1972 Abortion legalized during first two trimesters in the US
- 1973 Roe v Wade
- Global crusade by the Papacy advocating a return to complementarity
- 1994 Cairo meeting of United Nations Conference on Population and Development
- 1995 Beijing meeting of United Nations Conference on Women
- 2000 George W Bush – global gag rule and so on.....

The Vatican's strategy of opposition

- North and South America, Asia, Africa and Europe
- Access to sex education that includes contraception
- Provision of State funding to family planning programs
- Access to contraception (and abortion) in Catholic-run hospitals
- Provision of coverage in insurance policies
- Access to emergency contraception: refugee settings (Kosovo, Bosnia), Philippines, sexual assault
- Access to condoms: HIV/AIDS
- Complete opposition to abortion under any circumstances (El Salvador)

Catholic resistance to the Reproductive Control

- Catholics for a Free Choice (US and Latin America)
- See Change – challenge to Vatican influence on UN
- Condoms for Life



Clergy Consultation Service

- 1950s and 1960s restrictions on abortion led to between 200,000 and 1.2 million women accessing illegal abortions across the US
- Network of more than 2,000 ministers across US and Canada committed to helping women access safe abortions
- Critical role in the Reproductive Justice Movement

Reproductive Justice

1. The right to *not* have a child
2. The right to *have* a child
3. The right to *parent* children in safe and healthy environments.

Reproductive Justice demands sexual autonomy and gender freedom for every human being.

Role of Religion

- Reform from within
- Dismantling power structures that have exerted control
- Critical questioning of the role of religion in setting policy
- Education, education, education!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....

Questions?

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