

# The Coercive Control Entrapment Timeline (CCET): Mapping risk escalation, control & danger

PHASE  
01

## The Hook (Low Risk)

### Characteristics

- Illusion of an ideal relationship (love bombing)
- Intense connection, rapid commitment
- Early red flags are dismissed or reframed as love/care.
- Laying down the subtle groundwork for control/attachment (↑ dependency, discouraging independence)
- Seeking out victims vulnerabilities – personalised approach

### How the victim might present

- Enthusiastic, deeply in love, may describe whirlwind romance, intense partner involvement, slight loss of independence

PHASE  
02

## The Control Campaign (Moderate Risk)

### Characteristics

- Escalation of coercive control –perpetrator micromanages victim
- Gaslighting, isolation, & degradation become regular.
- Increased confusion, fear, and self-doubt for victim
- Intermittent reinforcement (kindness & control)
- Use of abusive tactics/ behaviours
- Instil fear and the consequences (intimidation)
- Erosion of consent & autonomy
- Jealousy manifestation (towards others/children)

### How the victim might present

- Withdrawn, anxious, stressed, may struggle with decision-making, loss of self-confidence, some physical signs of stress or tension



PHASE  
03

## The Lock-In (High Risk)

### Characteristics

- Self-regulation (compliance) based on fear/ coercion/consequences - perpetrator has to do less overt work
- Limitation of freedom/autonomy/safety
- Walking on eggshells, feelings of going crazy or confusion
- Victim takes on the perpetrators narrative
- Isolated - others can not recognise change in the victim
- Altered Identity/self
- Resigned to being entrapped and isolated

### How the victim might present

- Extremely passive, self-blaming, hesitant to speak freely, high levels of hypervigilance, may downplay concerns, may show physical signs of stress or exhaustion



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04

## The Breaking Point (Critical Risk)

### Characteristics

- Something shifts—tries to leave/escalates control/possible violence
- Increased threats, retaliation, or financial sabotage if attempts to leave the relationship
- High risk of post-separation abuse, harassment, stalking, legal threats, child custody coercion
- Perpetrator threatens suicide to manipulate/control

### How the victim might present

- Distressed, fearful, looking for help but conflicted, expressing doubt about their reality, may drop hints about control or violence



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05

## Post-Separation Trap (High Risk)

### Characteristics

- Post-separation coercive control (legal/ financial/emotional manipulation)
- Might cycle back through the phases or coerced back to the relationship (trauma bond/economic dependency/fear)
- Children used as leverage to continue abuse
- May feel more entrapped post-separation than during the relationship

### How the victim might present

- Emotionally exhausted, still experiencing coercion through child arrangements, legal issues, financial abuse, stalking or harassment

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06

## The Trauma Healing Journey (Variable)

### Characteristics

- Gradual reconstruction of identity, independence, & trust
- Ongoing co-parenting abuse may hinder recovery.
- Trauma triggers remain, but autonomy begins to return
- Support from specialist services, peer support, and therapy
- Victim/survivor begins to recognise coercive control & reclaim control over their lives

