Spiritual and Religious Abuse

**Asserting Authority**
Misusing Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to impose gender roles that are abusive or coercive, to assert abusive authority, to reinforce privilege, to encourage you to submit to abuse, to give commands, or to punish you.

**Restricting Access to or Use of Health Care**
Misusing Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to force you to forego regular check-ups and medical care, family planning, medications, emergency medical care, or to neglect medical care for your children.

**Using Community Coercion**
Working through clergy or lay leader, or friends or family from your faith community, to put pressure on you to stay in the relationship or to put up with abuse. Coercion may include letters or phone calls on the abuser's behalf, comments in social settings, and on social media.

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

**Blaming the Victim**
Misusing Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to blame you and justify abuse because you are sinful, estranged from God, not created in God's image, created to be a servant or slave, unclean, polluted, or defiled.

**Isolating**
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.

**Prolonging Abusive Relationships**
Misusing Scripture, traditions, or cultural norms to encourage you to forgive abuse, to prolong an abusive relationship, to excuse or minimize the abuse, to remain silent, or to accept suffering and abuse.

**Controlling Sexuality and Reproduction**
Misusing 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 a coerced or forced marriage.