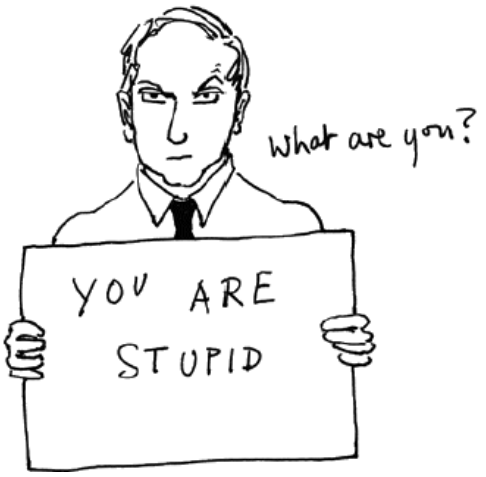
Session 3 - THE HEADWORKER



THE HEADWORKER USES EMOTIONAL ABUSE TO CONTROL US – he does this by using the following tactics:

He makes us feel stupid, useless, and worthless. The **Headworker** is fond of using humour to achieve this. He likes to make jokes about us in front of others. He jokes about our driving, cooking, and technical abilities etc. When we speak, he says "what?!'' and looks at us like we are stupid. He then does the same when we repeat what we said. He also repeats the last thing we said in a derogatory tone. He corrects our use of language or the content of our remarks. He tells us we are stupid and useless. Again, this often starts with humour. If we object, he says "Can't you take a joke?"

He does not use our name. He calls us 'babe', 'princess', 'she', 'the wife' or 'woman'. He also calls us other insulting names such as 'slag', 'bitch', 'cow' and 'whore'. He may have an insulting pet name for us; he may call us 'little pig' but insists it is a term of endearment. We are not saying that every man who does not use his partner's

name is abusive, but we do know that abusive men often use insulting names to refer to their partners rather than using their names.

He makes us feel ugly

He tells us we are too fat, thin, tall, small, old etc. Our tits are too big, too small, or too saggy. He tells us we are fat and ugly and that we are lucky to have him as no other man would want us. This is very common when we are pregnant and after we have given birth, he will complain that our vaginas are too big to give him sexual pleasure. He will also say this even if we have not had children.

He will compare us unfavourably to other women on the TV and in the media. He will openly ogle other women when we are out with him and then deny it. He will flirt sometimes outrageously with other women including our friends, sisters, and other female family members.

He makes us think we are going mad

He moves or hides things and then denies it. He tells us something and then denies having said it. He tries to confuse us by moving the goal posts and constantly changing the rules. For example, the kettle should always be full or empty or half full, the window should be left open or shut. He tells us we must be suffering from PMS. He tells us we call out the name of former lovers in our sleep. We are then afraid to sleep. He is blatantly unfaithful but will continue to deny it and say that we are being stupid, jealous, or crazy.

He sets us up with other agencies so we will be diagnosed as mentally ill. There are various ways he does this such as he will say to his wife/partner “Quick! Call the police there are burglars in the house!” She does so and when the police come, he asks them who called them and apologises on her behalf. He will say things like, “Sorry, she is always doing things like this.” Soon, she becomes known to local

agencies and it is easier for to him to get custody of the children and get her out of the house. He encourages us to visit the doctor and take tranquiliser or antidepressants. He encourages us to drink or take drugs. When we aren't sober, we are even easier to confuse. He then says " I had to hit you because you are mad/drunk/high."

What does the Headworker believe which allows him to behave in this way?

The Headworker believes we are so stupid that if he tells us something often enough we will believe him. He also believes that his behaviour is not abusive. He believes it is normal. He also believes that he has a right to use whatever means are at his disposal to control his partner. We should be subservient.

He believes that we are too stupid to survive on our own, and we need men to look after us. He knows we are too stupid to do work which requires intelligence or ability. He also knows that if women are successful in business it is because they slept their way to the top or are not 'real women'.

The Headworker does not like women. He believes we exist to be used by men.

He believes that women are dirty, we are slags and we are pieces of meat and men own us. We are snakes with tits. We are snails with tits. If you tell someone they are stupid often enough they will soon believe it!"

The **Headworker** hates the colour pink! Yes, he really does. It reminds him of women.



Where does the Headworker get his beliefs from and how are they reinforced by whichever society he happens to live in?

Shall we start by considering where he gets his beliefs about our intelligence and abilities? He could have watched his father treating his mother with contempt. He could have been encouraged by his father to join in with this abusive behaviour.

There are hundreds of sexist jokes, both subtle and obvious that insult and devalue women. There are many jokes about women drivers and abusive men really believe that women can't drive. They insist on this, even though insurance companies offer us cheaper premiums. If challenged, they will insist that women actually cause accidents because we drive too slowly. They use the words 'Woman' and 'Girl' and slang words for female genitalia as an insult towards other men.

Words like 'Bimbo', 'Essex girl' and 'Airhead' all support the **Headworker**'s view that we lack competence and ability. The media give a lot of attention to the way female politicians look and dress rather than the job they are doing. Male politicians are not treated in this way by the media.

The **Headworker**'s beliefs are further supported by the fact that we are still paid less than men for doing the same job. Mothers are more likely to take parental leave than

fathers. Many women who do return to work after having children often find that their chances of career progression are stalled, and they are less likely to be promoted. Sexual harassment is still very prevalent within the workplace too. Advertising uses subtler messages that sexualize women and imply that we are parasites who provide sex to our husbands/partners in exchange for goods. Women are also often portrayed either as the happy dutiful wife whose only aim in life is pleasing her man or as a sex object. How many times have you wondered what product a particular ad is trying to advertise? Logically there is no relation between naked women and beer/cars/aftershave, yet they are often used to sell these things.

Let us examine the **Headworker**'s belief that women are pieces of meat and have no other value. A popular joke amongst abusive men is this: "How can you trust something that bleeds for a week and doesn't die?" The view that we are pieces of meat is supported by several words and phrases in common use. A woman who is considered to be dressing too young for her age is described as 'mutton dressed as lamb' or 'done up like a dog's dinner'. Pubs and clubs where men meet women are described as 'cattle markets' or 'meat markets'.

Shall we now consider magazines? Let us begin with magazines for men. There are magazines for every conceivable hobby and sport. We have motorcycle magazines, music magazines, football magazines and computer magazines.

Now let's examine the magazines for women. These magazines are devoted to the subject of how to be an attractive piece of meat. They print diets and advice on how to kiss, dress and wear make-up. They contain little information about careers or hobbies.



The beliefs we share

Many of us believe that men are better drivers (insurance companies don't). Some women believe that if a woman is successful, she must have slept her way to the top. And we express surprise that women do successful jobs.

We call other women names like 'slag' and 'cow' and 'bitch' and target her if our partner has been unfaithful with her, whilst he often gets off scot free!

We have been socially conditioned to believe men are cleverer and more skilful than us, so when a man moves into our home we lose our ability to do 'men's work' such as changing plugs and putting in a new light bulb.

How are women affected by living with a Headworker?

He is often very successful. We can feel hateful and ugly. Many thin women have often been convinced that they are grossly overweight, because he has made remarks about their weight . Many pregnant women come on the programme convinced they are grossly and disgustingly fat.

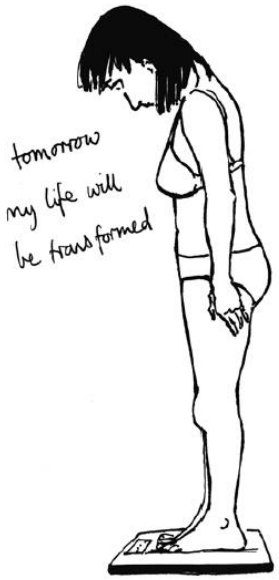
This can lead to eating disorders. We have plastic surgery, to create 'designer vaginas', bigger breasts or bums. We have all our body hair removed because this is considered cleaner and sexier.

Many women have been brainwashed into hating the women they have been compared to. We may lack respect for all women, including ourselves. We can feel so bad about ourselves that we may abuse drugs or alcohol. If the **Headworker** convinces us and others that we are mad, we may be diagnosed as mentally ill and given antidepressants or tranquilisers. Many women can be diagnosed as suffering from postnatal depression as a result of the tactics of the **Headworker**.

The **Headworker** makes us unable to trust our judgement or our decisions. This can lead to an inability to end abusive relationships or be an effective parent. He increases our dependence upon him. This can lead to unemployment or lack of confidence to train for work.

How are women affected by living in a society, which holds the beliefs of the Headworker?

We are never happy with ourselves. We are always on diets. We see other women as competition when we should be able to get support and help from one another.



We cannot achieve our full potential if we are constantly told we are stupid and useless.

THE CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

This is how the Confidence Booster behaves

He tells us we look good and enjoys our company. He values our opinions, abilities, talents, and conversation. He actually talks to us and listens to what we have to say.

He supports our ambitions and encourages our efforts. He encourages us to learn new skills.

He believes women are intelligent and worthy of respect. He also believes we are capable of doing any job we choose as well as any man. He tells us that we are absolutely fine just the way we are!

