

(Continued)

- The victim *feels guilty and responsible for the abuse*, often because the abuser has convinced her that it is her fault. If only she would do something—or not do something—he wouldn't become so angry with her. She may also believe it is her responsibility to maintain family harmony and keep the family intact.
- The victim is *socially isolated*. Restricting the victim's interactions with family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers is a common tactic of coercive control used by abusive partners. The victim may feel like she has no one to whom she can turn for help, and such feelings may be exacerbated if *family members pressure her to stay* with the abuser because they believe divorce is wrong or a "sin" or that it will harm the children.
- The victim *feels embarrassed and ashamed*. The victim may come from a cultural background that values "family privacy" and discourages family members from "airing their dirty laundry." If the victim is middle class or more affluent, she may believe that IPV only occurs in working class or poor families, and fears the stigma she will incur if the abuse is discovered. She also may not want to tarnish the abusive partner's reputation or cause problems for him at work, in their church, or with relatives and friends.

**SOURCE:** Adapted from Buel, 1999.