Mental Health Coercion Survey

From Feb. 1 through March 14, 2012, The Hotline with support from The National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health conducted a survey about the intersection between mental health coercion and domestic violence.

“Mental health coercion” refers to abusers’ efforts to
- undermine their partner’s sanity or perception of events;
- induce stress or exacerbate mental health symptoms;
- sabotage or control and manipulate treatment;
- control access to medications;
- undermine a partner’s ability to maintain custody by calling them “crazy;” or
- undermine a partner’s credibility with family, friends, and systems where they seek help.

“He’s so manipulative I know he is making everyone think I’m crazy, which isn’t true... I want to talk to a counselor tomorrow... But then I’ll start thinking in the morning when I get up and start to question if I even deserve better.”
—Anonymous Hotline Caller

“He told me that if I tried to leave he was going to take the kids and I would be in a Psych Ward.”
—Anonymous Hotline Caller

“He would lock my medicine up.”
—Anonymous Hotline Caller

86% of callers (2,149) reported that their partner or ex-partner had called them “crazy” or accused them of being crazy.

74% (1,740) reported that they think their partner has deliberately done things to make them feel like they were going crazy or losing their minds.

50% (1,197) reported that their partners had threatened to report to authorities that they were “crazy” to keep them from getting something they want or need (e.g. custody of children, medication, protective order).

53% (1,231) reported that in the last few years they had sought professional help.

Of these callers, 50% (560) reported that their partners have tried to prevent or discourage them from getting that help or taking medication they were prescribed.