



Abusive Relationships

What is an Abusive Relationship? While a healthy relationship is characterized by mutual respect, equality, trust, communication and freedom, an abusive relationship is characterized by a **pattern of abusive and dominating behaviors that are used to maintain power and control**. Abuse can be **emotional, verbal, physical or sexual**, and can include **threats, isolation, and intimidation**. Abuse tends to escalate over time. When someone uses abuse and violence against another, it is always part of a larger pattern of control.

What are the Types of Abusive Relationships?

1. **Physical Abuse** is the use of physical force against someone in a way that injures or endangers that person. Physical assault or battery is a crime, whether it occurs inside or outside of the family.
Ex: Pushing, beating, throwing objects, using or threatening to use a weapon against you.
2. **Verbal Abuse** is an aspect of emotional abuse where words are used against a person.
Ex: yelling, name-calling, blaming, humiliating
3. **Emotional Abuse** is as destructive as physical assaults, and can be difficult to identify. The aim of emotional abuse is to lower one's feelings of self-worth and independence. As a result, victims of emotional abuse often feel that there is no way out of the relationship. *Ex: Isolation, intimidation, controlling behavior, threats of physical violence*
4. **Sexual Abuse** includes any situation in which you are forced to participate in unwanted, unsafe, or degrading sexual activities.
Ex: Unwanted touching, demanding sex, videotaping or photographing sexual acts

Common Signs of an Abusive Relationship:

Your inner thoughts and feelings:	Behaviors of your partner:
<p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>feel nervous around your partner?</i> • <i>feel afraid to disagree with your partner?</i> • <i>constantly apologize for your partner's abusive behavior?</i> • <i>feel like you are wrong, stupid, crazy, or inadequate?</i> • <i>find yourself crying a lot?</i> • <i>feel depressed or unhappy?</i> • <i>believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?</i> • <i>feel emotionally numb or helpless?</i> • <i>receive frequent, harassing phone calls from your partner?</i> 	<p>Does your partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have a bad and unpredictable temper?</i> • <i>humiliate or yell at you?</i> • <i>criticize you in front of others?</i> • <i>ignore or put down your opinions or accomplishments?</i> • <i>control where you go and what you do?</i> • <i>keep you from seeing friends or family?</i> • <i>threaten you with violence?</i> • <i>throw or break objects to intimidate you?</i> • <i>make excuses for the abusive behavior?</i>

Other Information:

- Recognizing an abusive relationship is the first step of breaking the abuse cycle.
- Call the NATIONAL ABUSE HOTLINE: 800-799-SAFE
- Know that you are not to blame for someone else's abusive behavior and have a right to feel safe and respected.

For more information, check out the following recommended websites:

<http://stoprelationshipabuse.org/educated/types-of-abuse/>

<http://www.domesticabuseproject.com>

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/abuse/domestic-violence-and-abuse.htm>