

SIGNS THAT YOU'RE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Your Inner Thoughts and Feelings	Your Partner's Belittling Behavior
<p style="text-align: center;">Do you:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Feel afraid of your partner much of the time?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Does your partner:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Humiliate or yell at you?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Avoid certain topics out of fear of angering your partner?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Criticize you and put you down?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Feel that you can't do anything right for your partner?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Treat you so badly that you're embarrassed for your friends or family to see?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wonder if you're the one who is crazy?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ignore or put down your opinions or accomplishments?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Blame you for their own abusive behavior?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Feel emotionally numb or helpless?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">See you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?</p>
Your Partner's Violent Behavior or Threats	Your Partner's Controlling Behavior
<p style="text-align: center;">Does your partner:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Have a bad and unpredictable temper?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Does your partner:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Act excessively jealous and possessive?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Hurt you, or threaten to hurt or kill you?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Control where you go or what you do?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Threaten to take your children away or harm them?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Keep you from seeing your friends or family?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Threaten to commit suicide if you leave?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Force you to have sex?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Destroy your belongings?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Constantly check up on you?</p>

Abusers use a variety of tactics to manipulate you and exert their power:

- **Dominance** – Abusive individuals need to feel in charge of the relationship. They will make decisions for you and the family, tell you what to do, and expect you to obey without question. Your abuser may treat you like a servant, child, or even as his or her possession.
- **Humiliation** – An abuser will do everything he or she can to make you feel bad about yourself or defective in some way. After all, if you believe you're worthless and that no one else will want you, you're less likely to leave. Insults, name-calling, shaming, and public put-downs are all weapons of abuse designed to erode your self-esteem and make you feel powerless.
- **Isolation** – In order to increase your dependence on him or her, an abusive partner will cut you off from the outside world. He or she may keep you from seeing family or friends, or even prevent you from going to work or school. You may have to ask permission to do anything, go anywhere, or see anyone.
- **Threats** – Abusers commonly use threats to keep their partners from leaving or to scare them into dropping charges. Your abuser may threaten to hurt or kill you, your children, other family members, or even pets. He or she may also threaten to commit suicide, file false charges against you, or report you to child services.
- **Intimidation** – Your abuser may use a variety of intimidation tactics designed to scare you into submission. Such tactics include making threatening looks or gestures, smashing things in front of you, destroying property, hurting your pets, or putting weapons on display. The clear message is that if you don't obey, there will be violent consequences.
- **Denial and blame** – Abusers are very good at making excuses for the inexcusable. They will blame their abusive and violent behavior on a bad childhood, a bad day, and even on the victims of their abuse. Your abusive partner may minimize the abuse or deny that it occurred. He or she will commonly shift the responsibility on to you: Somehow, his or her violent and abusive behavior is your fault.