

Fifteen Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship

If your partner is displaying a combination of these behaviors, you may have a potential batterer on your hands.

- 1. A push for quick involvement:** Comes on very strong, claiming, “I’ve never felt loved like this by anyone.” An abuser pressures the woman for an exclusive commitment almost immediately.
- 2. Jealousy:** Excessively possessive; calls or texts constantly, visits unexpectedly, prevents you from going to work because “you might meet someone,” checks the mileage on your car, accuses his victim of cheating on him.
- 3. Controlling:** Controls what you do, who you see, controls finances or whether you allowed to work or not. Controls what happens at home. Questions you intensely.
- 4. Unrealistic expectations:** Expects you to be the perfect woman and meet his every need. Expects you to do more than you are able to.
- 5. Isolation:** Tries to cut you off from family and friends; accuses people who are your supporters of “causing trouble.”
- 6. Blames others for problems or mistakes:** The boss, you – it’s always someone else’s fault for his abusive behavior or if anything goes wrong.
- 7. Makes everyone else responsible for his feelings:** The abuser says, “You make me angry” instead of, “I am angry”, or “You’re hurting me by not doing what I tell you.” Less obvious is the claim: “You make me happy.”
- 8. Hypersensitivity:** Is easily insulted, claiming that his feelings are hurt when he is really mad. He’ll rant about the injustice of things that are just a part of life.
- 9. Cruelty to animals and to children:** Kills or punishes animals brutally. Also may expect children to do things that are far beyond their ability (spanks a 2 year old for wetting a diaper or may tease them until they cry.)
- 10. Forced sexual acts:** Won’t stop when told ‘No’. Makes you do sexual acts you aren’t comfortable with. Enjoys throwing you down or holding you against your will during sex; says he finds the idea of rape exciting.
- 11. Verbal abuse:** Criticizes you or says blatantly cruel, hurtful things; degrades, curses, calls you ugly names. This may also involve sleep deprivation, waking you up with relentless verbal abuse.
- 12. Rigid sex roles:** Expects you to serve, obey and remain at home. Doesn’t see you as his equal, nor respects you. He expects you to ask permission but feels he doesn’t need your approval for anything.
- 13. Sudden mood swings:** Switches from sweetly loving to explosively violent in a matter of minutes or even more confusing, within seconds.
- 14. Past battering:** Admits to hitting women in the past, but says that they made him do it, or the situation brought it on.
- 15. Threats of violence:** Makes statements like, “If I can’t have you, no one will”, or, “I could kill you,” then dismisses them with “Everybody talks that way”, or, “I didn’t really mean it.” If he has come this far, it is time to get help, or get out!