

Know the Signs



There are resources available for you. You are not alone. In an emergency, call 911.

National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-422-4453
www-childhelp-org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)
www-ndvh-org

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
1-800-656-4673
www-rainn-org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline
1-866-331-9474
www-loveisrespect-org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255
www-suicidepreventionlifeline-org

*Domestic violence is often more than just physical abuse. It encompasses sexual, emotional, economic and psychological violence. Initially, identifying the signs of an abusive relationship can be difficult, especially if the abuser uses subtle tactics to gain power and control. **It is very common for survivors to recognize the beginning of the abuse as the first time the abusers hit them, but really the cycle of violence may have started early on in the relationship.** Perpetrators tend to be charming and very convincing when exerting power and control tactics. However, understanding common occurrences or patterns in an unhealthy relationship and being able to begin an informed conversation is a major step to healing and helping others to join in understanding why and how domestic violence occurs.*

Common signs of an abusive relationship are if one or both partners:

- Prevents contact and communication with friends and family
- Controls money and important identification, such as driver's licenses and passports
- Causes embarrassment with bad names and put-downs
- Is critical about survivors appearance and/or behavior
- Attempts to control what partner wears
- Has unrealistic expectations, like partner being available at all times
- Threatens to take away or hurt the children
- Acts like abuse is not a big deal, or denies it's happening
- Plays mind games to place blame on the survivor
- Destroys property or threatens to kill pets
- Intimidates with guns, knives or other weapons
- Shoves, slaps, chokes, hits or forces sexual acts
- Threatens to commit suicide

Often, it can be difficult to identify what types of abuse are and what constitutes each type of abuse.

These are some telltale signs of physical, sexual, emotional, economic and psychological abuse:

- **PHYSICAL.** Any use of force that causes pain or injury such as, hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, etc.. This type of abuse also includes the use of weapons, denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use upon him or her.
- **SEXUAL.** Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.
- **EMOTIONAL.** Any pattern of behavior that causes emotional pain that can include, but is not limited to constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, being unfaithful, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children. Perpetrators may also be emotionally neglectful, such as not expressing feelings or respecting the survivor's feelings and opinions.
- **ECONOMIC.** Making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money, or forbidding one's attendance at school or employment. Forcing a survivor to use his or her credit to rack up debt is also very common and can present problems in the future when attempting to obtain credit.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL.** Elements include—but are not limited to—causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work.

See more: www.joyfulheartfoundation.org and National Domestic Violence Hotline: www.thehotline.org

Safety Alert: Computer use can be monitored and is impossible to completely clear. If you are afraid your internet usage might be monitored, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)** or TTY **1-800-787-3224**.