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Domestic Violence Signs & Behaviors

What starts off as generally emotionally, is rarely a one-time event and escalates in frequency and severity including psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse within a relationship. The relationship doesn't need to be a married one—dating relationships can have these same signs and behaviors. ****Note**** while most violence is male to female, it is also a female to male issue. Men can be battered as well as women.

If these emotional abuses are happening, seek counsel from a domestic violence counselor or a therapist with Domestic violence knowledge. If possible take someone along for emotional support If you seek marriage counseling with someone who domestic violence. Let your counselor know how long things have been struggling and be open to the discussion of whether or not the violence you are experiencing is to the point of needing to leave immediately or not.

Signs & Behaviors of Emotional Abuse

Put downs—your partner calls you "ugly," "stupid," "weak," "fat," "worthless," "fair," and the list goes on.

Constant criticism of you

Putting you down in front of others

Mocking you

Shouting at you

Being excessively jealous

Accusing you of flirting when you weren't

Controlling what you wear

Not listening or responding you are talking

Refusing to accept your decisions, saying you have no choices

Humiliating you in public

If your partner is mentally/psychologically abusive, the likelihood that the abuse is going to increase and become physical. Emotional and Psychological Abuse make you feel like you are walking on eggshells—sometimes strong yet sometimes fragile. Never knowing what is going to happen.

Signs & Behaviors of Mental/Psychological Abuse

Isolating you from friends and family

Monitoring or blocking your telephone calls or disconnecting the number, making you a prisoner in your own home.

Harassment - following you, checking up on you and/or opening your mail.

Threats—Making angry gestures using physical size to intimidate you—wielding a knife or gun, threatening to kill or harm someone or your, your children, family, friends or him/herself.

Punishing or depriving your children when upset with you.

Abusing pets to hurt you, your children or someone else close to you.

Denial by saying the abuse doesn't happen, saying you caused the abusive behavior, being publically gentle, patient and charming but privately violent and abusive then crying and begging for forgiveness saying it will never happen again.

Manipulating you with lies and contradictions.

Financial Abuse:

Keeping you from working.

Controlling your money or the household money.

Withholding money from you.

Spending money on themselves or even on other men/women except you.

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If your partner is physically or sexually abusive, get help to get out. This is the most dangerous time (planning to get out).

Signs & Behaviors of Physical Abuse

Attacking you—Punching, slapping, hitting throwing objects, biting, pinching, kicking, hair pulling, shoving, burning, strangling, beating—these often lead to permanent injuries or may lead to death.

Denying food, warmth or sleep.

Keeping you locked up.

Refusing to help you when you are sick, injured or pregnant (if applicable).

Holding you to keep you from leaving.

Abandoning you in a dangerous place.

Signs & Behaviors of Sexual Abuse & Rape

Using force, threats, or intimidation to make you perform sexual acts, insisting on sex when you don't want it, forcing sex after beating you, forcing sex when you are sick or when in a dangerous situation, or forcing you to have sex in front of others.

Sexual degradation including using abusive insults such as "whore" or "frigid".

Sexually critical, making demeaning gender based comments.

Insisting on unwanted touching.

Forcing you to strip

Withholding sex and physical affection

There are 3 primary types of rape in marriage:

- Power Rape—Using enough physical force to subdue you.
- Anger Rape—The abuser brutally beats and degrades you to express the explosive anger
- Sadistic Rape—The violence becomes eroticized. You are stalked and tortured, generally this is done by someone who is mentally ill.

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Reasons you may not have left to this point

A strong love

Believes the abuse is a sign of loving you

You are confused about what loving your partner means

It feels like you are betraying your partner

Wanting to believe that when your partner says the abuse won't happen again, that it won't.

You feel ashamed to admit you're being abused

You don't want to split up your family

You don't have anywhere else to go.

You don't know where to go to get help.

You've been told the police won't believe you.

The police haven't helped before, and you're afraid to try again.

You've never used a domestic abuse program before to assist you with help.

You've never worked outside of the home—you've been a stay at home parent.

You believe the abuse is your fault

You are too mentally and physically exhausted to get help by yourself

You're afraid.

You've tried to leave before and your partner threatened to kill you and your children if you leave again.

Your children are missing your partner.

Your partner, who is your abuser, persuades you things will be better and you believe him and return.

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