

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

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Warning Signs of Abuse

(Information adapted from Education Wife Assault’s “For Women to Think About” and “Emotional Abuse Assessment Guide”)

If you are concerned about your situation or that of someone you know, examine the following list for symptoms of abuse. Remember that fear is a constant in all forms of abuse. (See Common Factors in Various [Forms of Abuse](#)) This fear will most likely cause a person to be fearful of negative reactions from her/his partner (or other person of powerful or influence) if she/he behaves contrary to the partner’s wishes. Fear may also cause someone to alter her/his behaviour, decisions, likes, or choices.

A Relationship May Already Be Abusive or Be Becoming Abusive if Someone:

- ✦ Is always accompanied to appointments by partner.
- ✦ Has limited or no access to financial resources.
- ✦ Is hindered from learning English.
- ✦ If disabled, relies only upon partner.

Reactions to Partner’s Anger

- ✦ Feels as if “walks on eggshells” to prevent assuage partner’s anger.
- ✦ Is frightened by partner’s temper.
- ✦ Experiences violence as a result of partner’s jealousy and/or anger.
- ✦ Is forced to have sex.
- ✦ Stays to prevent partner from frightening or injuring children.

Impact on Self-Confidence

- ✦ Defends partner quickly from any criticisms and excuses partner’s actions.
- ✦ Plays down the partner’s behaviour and its impact.
- ✦ Loses self-confidence and ability to speak her/his mind.
- ✦ Frequently puts her/himself down and/or disregards positive comments of others.
- ✦ Apologizes and creates excuses when partner humiliates or treats her/him badly.
- ✦ Does not express opinions or beliefs contrary to partner’s.
- ✦ Believes partner’s insults and put downs are true.
- ✦ Blames her/himself if does not enjoy the sexual acts forced by partner.

Mental and Physical State

- ✦ Lacks sleep and is often tired.
- ✦ Constantly feels anxious or appears edgy.
- ✦ Appears depressed or suicidal.
- ✦ Is convinced jealousy is a sign of love.
- ✦ A chronic illness or disability worsens.
- ✦ Develops stress-related health problems.
- ✦ Uses drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism.
- ✦ Feels as if going ‘insane’.

Imposed Pressures or Responsibilities

- ✦ Possesses compulsion to “rescue” partner when he/she is distressed.
- ✦ Thinks only one able to help partner.
- ✦ Takes sole responsibility for improving relationship and assumes blame for problems within relationship.
- ✦ Believes able to “reform” partner.
- ✦ Stays because thinks partner will commit suicide if she/he leaves.
- ✦ Complies with partner’s wishes in order to avoid hurting his/her feelings.
- ✦ Behaves submissively at partner’s insistence.