



Identifying Abuse

Is it abuse? I'm not so sure

Everyone has arguments, and everyone disagrees with the person they're seeing every now and then. We all do things that we regret, and which cause unhappiness to those we care about. This is just part of being human. Remember, you can be in an unhappy relationship without it being abusive. Maybe you're both hurting each other's feelings, making each other jealous, and making each other miserable.

An indication of abuse is when you begin to feel scared, nervous or anxious because of patterns of controlling behavior from an intimate partner or family member. You might also feel confused because you are being told you are loved because you are made to meet certain conditions in order to be loved. Love should not be conditional - especially if those conditions seem to fundamentally change the person you are.

Abuse often looks like love. Find out if your relationship healthy by asking yourself the following questions:

- Have they ever hurt you or threatened to hurt you physically?
- Have they ever forced or pressured you to have sex or to do sexual things you did not want to do?
- Will you be hurt, or face threats, intimidation or self-harm if you mention breaking up?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions - it is not love, it is abuse.

Types of unhealthy behavior to look out for:

- They get really jealous when you spend time with your friends
- They tell you what to wear and what not to wear
- They tell you what to do and who you can talk to
- They accuse you of flirting or cheating when you're just being friendly
- They have frequent temper outbursts
- They accuse you of stuff that isn't true
- They criticize you or puts you down in front of your friends
- They make you feel like you can't do anything right
- They make you feel nervous all the time, like you're walking on eggshells
- They force you to do sexual things that you don't want to do
- They stop you from working or going to school/college/university
- They take your money away or controls it

- They threaten to hurt you if you do not behave in a certain way
- They check what you are posting on social media
- They threaten to break or damage your stuff (such as your phone)
- They say they can't live without you
- They threaten to hurt themselves, or the pets if you leave them

This type of behavior is not loving or healthy. This behavior is selfish and controlling. It is designed to make you feel bad about yourself.

Is it love or abuse?

It is important to recognize that love cannot be abuse and abuse is not love. Healthy relationships are based on trust and mutual respect. Abusive relationships are characterized by power and control.

Learn how to recognize abuse.

If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you might be in an abusive relationship.

Does your partner, or former partner:

- criticize your body and the way you look?
- insults or humiliates you in front of others?
- tell you what to wear?
- make you feel bad for visiting your friends and family?
- stops you from going to work or school/university?
- check your phone to see who you're talking to?
- accuse you of flirting or cheating on them?
- control your money or not give you enough to buy essential things?

If you answered yes to one more of these questions, you are being emotionally abused!

Does your partner, or former partner:

- harass or follow you?
- threatens to share naked or sexual pictures of you online?
- destroy things that belong to you?
- makes you feel nervous all the time?
- threaten to hurt or kill you?
- threaten to kill themselves or the children?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, your partner is intimidating you and abusing you!

Does your partner, or former partner:

- slap, hit or punch you?
- throw things?
- push, kick or shove you?
- choke you or hold you down?

If you answered yes to one more of these questions, you are being physically abused!

Does your partner, or former partner:

- touch you in a way you do not want to be touched?
- pressure you to have sex or to do sexual things with them?
- pressure you have unsafe sex?
- hurt you during sex?

If you answered yes to one more of these questions, you are being sexually abused.