

Signs of Potentially Abusive Partners (Male or Female)

Project for Victims of Family Violence in Fayetteville, Ark.

1. **PUSHES FOR QUICK INVOLVEMENT:** Comes on strong, claiming, “I’ve never felt loved like this by anyone.” An abuser pressures the new partner for an exclusive commitment almost immediately.
2. **JEALOUS:** Excessively possessive; calls constantly or visits unexpectedly; prevents you from going to work because “you might meet someone;” checks the mileage on your car.
3. **CONTROLLING:** Interrogates you intensely (especially if you’re late) about whom you talked to and where you were; keeps all the money; insists you ask permission to go anywhere or do anything.
4. **UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS:** Expects you to be the perfect mate and meet his or her every need.
5. **ISOLATION:** Tries to cut you off from family and friends; accuses people who are your supporters of “causing trouble.” The abuser may deprive you of a phone or car, or try to prevent you from holding a job.
6. **BLAMES OTHERS FOR PROBLEMS OR MISTAKES:** It’s always someone else’s fault if something goes wrong.
7. **MAKES OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OR HER FEELINGS:** The abuser says, “You make me angry.” Instead of, “I am angry,” or says, “You’re hurting me by not doing what I tell you.”
8. **HYPERSENSITIVITY:** Is easily insulted, claiming hurt feelings when he or she is really mad. Rants about the injustice of things that are just a part of life.
9. **CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND CHILDREN:** Kills or punishes animals brutally. Also, may expect children to do things that are far beyond their ability (whips a 3-year-old for wetting a diaper), or may tease them until they cry. Sixty-five percent of abusers who beat their partner will also abuse children.
10. **“PLAYFUL” USE OF FORCE DURING SEX:** Enjoys throwing you down or holding you down against your will during sex; find the idea of rape exciting.
11. **VERBAL ABUSE:** Constantly criticizes 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.
13. **SUDDEN MOOD SWINGS:** Switches from sweet to violent in minutes.
14. **PAST BATTERING:** Admits to hitting a mate in the past, but says the person “made” him (or her) do it.
15. **THREATS OF VIOLENCE:** Says things like, “I’ll break your neck,” or, “I’ll kill you,” and then dismisses them with, “Everybody talks that way,” or, “I didn’t really mean it.” If the abuse has gone this far – it’s time to get help or get out!