



The Wellness Watch

October 2018



Domestic violence and abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused, or denied.

This is especially true when the abuse is psychological, rather than physical.

Noticing and acknowledging the signs of an abusive relationship is the first step to ending it.

What is Domestic Violence and Abuse?

- ◆ One person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate and control the other person.
- ◆ Used for one purpose and one purpose only: to gain and maintain total control over you.

An abuser doesn't "play fair." They use fear, guilt, shame, and intimidation to wear you down and keep you under their thumb. They may threaten you, hurt you, or hurt those around you.

It does not discriminate

- ◆ Happens among heterosexual couples and in same-sex partnerships.
- ◆ Occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds, and economic levels.
- ◆ Women are more commonly victimized but men are also abused.

Abusive behavior is never acceptable, no matter who it's coming from. You deserve to feel valued, respected, and safe.

Many signs of an abusive relationship

- ◆ The most telling sign is fear of your partner. If you feel like you have to constantly watch what you say and do in order to avoid a blow-up, chances are your relationship is unhealthy and abusive.
- ◆ A partner who belittles you, tries to control you, is violent or threatens you.
- ◆ Feeling helpless or desperate or self-loathing.

Occurs in many forms

Physical. The use of physical force against someone in a way that injures or endangers that person.

- ◆ Physical assault or battering is a crime.

Sexual. Being forced to participate in unwanted, unsafe, or degrading sexual activity.

- ◆ Forced sex, even by someone with whom you also have consensual sex, is an act of aggression and domestic violence.
- ◆ People abused physically *and* sexually are at a higher risk of being seriously injured or killed.

Emotional or psychological. Behavior used by the abuser to chip away at your feelings of self-worth and independence, leaving you feeling that there's no way out of the relationship, or that without your abusive partner you have nothing.

- ◆ Emotional abuse can be just as damaging, sometimes even more so, than physical abuse.
- ◆ Often minimized or overlooked.
- ◆ Includes *verbal abuse* such as yelling, name-calling, blaming, and shaming.
- ◆ Isolation, intimidation, and controlling behavior are also emotional abuse.
- ◆ Threats of physical violence or other punishment if you don't do what the abuser wants.

Economic or financial. An abuser will often use money to control you by:

- ◆ Rigidly controlling your finances—withholding money or credit cards, making you account for every penny you spend, restricting you to an allowance
- ◆ Withholding basic necessities (food, clothes, medications, shelter)
- ◆ Preventing you from working or choosing your own career or sabotaging your job (making you miss work, calling constantly)
- ◆ Stealing from you or taking your money



If you suspect that you or someone you know is being abused, speak up! There is help available. No one should live in fear of the person they love.

The National Domestic Violence

HOTLINE

Trained advocates are available 24/7/365 to talk confidentially with anyone seeking information or help for domestic violence. Don't wait to contact them!

Phone: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Website: <https://www.thehotline.org/about-the-hotline/>

Recognizing the warning signs that someone is being abused

It's impossible to know for sure what goes on behind closed doors, but there are some telltale signs and symptoms of emotional abuse and domestic violence. If you witness these warning signs of abuse in a friend, family member, or co-worker, take them very seriously.

People who are being abused may:

- ◆ Seem afraid or anxious to please their partner
- ◆ Go along with everything their partner says and does
- ◆ Check in often with their partner to report where they are and what they're doing
- ◆ Receive frequent, harassing phone calls from their partner
- ◆ Talk about their partner's temper, jealousy, or possessiveness

Warning signs of physical violence.

- ◆ Have frequent injuries, with the excuse of "accidents"
- ◆ Frequently miss work, school, or social occasions without explanation
- ◆ Dress in clothing designed to hide bruises or scars

Warning signs of isolation.

- ◆ Be restricted from seeing family and friends
- ◆ Rarely go out in public without their partner
- ◆ Have limited access to money, credit cards, or the car

The psychological warning signs of abuse.

- ◆ Have very low self-esteem, even if they used to be confident
- ◆ Show major personality changes (e.g. an outgoing person becomes withdrawn)
- ◆ Being depressed, anxious, or suicidal



Featured Food — Bananas: 105 calories are in a medium banana.

- ◆ According to a new study: Bananas are just as good a fuel for workouts as a sports drink with electrolytes.
- ◆ Also, the fruit contains compounds that mimic ibuprofen to reduce pain and swelling, which may help you recover faster.



Keeping roads safe for cyclists

We all have places to go, and whether we get there on foot, by car, or by bicycle, safety should always be a part of our journeys.



More than half a million collisions between motor vehicles and bikes happen in the United State each year. Incidents can be caused by motorists' failure to yield to cyclists, so drivers should be aware of their fellow two-wheeled travelers.

Bicyclists can also take extra precautions and be alert for both cars that are turning and those that are parked.

The following actions can make sharing the road safer for everyone.

- ⇒ **Give cyclists space when you pass.** Drivers, give cyclists at least three feet of clearance when passing--even more when moving at higher speeds. Don't pass a cyclist until you can do so safely, without crossing into oncoming traffic.
- ⇒ **Enter intersections with caution.** The "right hook," when a motorist turns right at an intersection and collides with a cyclist, is one of the most common collisions. Look both ways and use your mirrors before turning your car.
- ⇒ **Obey signs and signals.** Cars and bikes must stop at all red lights and stop signs.
- ⇒ **Make yourself more visible.** Cyclists should wear bright reflective clothing and use blinking safety lights on their bikes--even in broad daylight.
- ⇒ **Plan your route.** Choose a way with less traffic and slower speeds when biking. Your safest course may be away from traffic altogether, in a dedicated bike lane or on a bike path.

