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| Signs of Abuse  domestic abuse/violence |  | Liza Young Counseling, LLC |
| Abusive behavior often builds so slowly that it’s hard to recognize until you’re deep into the relationship. We naturally want to forgive offenses and move forward to repair the relationship repeatedly. However, with an abuser, they are not repairing the relationship, they are doing just enough to keep you close so that they can continue to control you.  Here are red flags to take note of. I suggest you start a journal with dates and hide it so that you can look back on it and see patterns. If you are in imminent danger, please call 911.  Above all else remember that it is not your fault. Reach out to a therapist who specializes in this for guidance on moving forward. You deserve to live in peace and to be treated with dignity. |  |  |
| What to watch for… Pressures you to move fast in a relationship or pushes for immediate commitment.  Early in the relationship flatters you constantly and seems “too good to be true.”  Blames the entire failure of previous relationships on his or her former partner.  Takes little to no responsibility for his or her behavior and blames others.  Believes in stereotypical gender roles and is domineering.  Is often jealous and possessive. Accuses you of cheating.  Has a violent temper and quickly changing moods.  **The following are only some signs of abuse but not all the signs. You may not be experiencing all of these but if even one of these is happening, it is abuse.**  1**. Physical abuse**  Any use of force or physical harm. This includes keeping you from leaving a room, taking your keys or phone, blocking a doorway.  2. **Mental or emotional abuse**  A regular pattern of verbal offense, threatening, bullying and constant criticism, as well as more subtle tactics like intimidation,  shaming and manipulation.  3. **Controlling money**  Your partner should not have financial secrets, keep money from you or control how you spend your money.  4. **Isolation**  Keeping you from seeing friends or loved ones or getting upset when you want to spend time with others.  5. **Threats or intimidation**  Looking at you in a certain way, getting in your personal space with intimidation. This may include your partner breaking things on purpose that are sentimental or valuable to you.  6. **Threats of suicide**  Using threats of suicide as a way to control a partner and/or keep them from leaving.  7. **Drug or alcohol abuse**  This can lead to other abusive behaviors. One partner insisting the other drink or take drugs is also a form of abuse.  8. **Extreme jealousy or possessiveness**  Calling or checking up on you excessively or insisting on knowing where you are at every moment. This also includes possessive behavior, such as criticizing or dictating what you wear.  **Here are some, certainly not all, signs that you could be in an abusive relationship:**  **Intimidation:**  Making you feel afraid by using looks, actions, and gestures  Smashing things, destroying property  Abusing pets  Displaying weapons  **Verbal:**  Putting you down and making you feel bad about yourself  Calling you names and swearing at you  Constant criticism  Belittling your abilities  Making “jokes” at your expense  **Psychological:**  Playing mind games and making you feel like you’re crazy  Making you feel guilty  Gaslighting  Minimizing or denying abusive behavior  Blames alcohol, drug use, past trauma, or mental health on abuse  Turning things around and blaming you  Withholds affection  **Isolation:**  Controlling what you do, who you see, who you talk to and where you go  Limits your outside involvement  Uses jealousy to justify actions  When you go out, constant texts and phone calls  Keeps you from seeing friends and family  Coerces you to have lots of children and homeschool them  **Economic:** Prevents you from getting a job  Makes you ask for money or takes your money  Doesn’t le t you know about income or have access to bank account  Spends money carelessly, putting you in debt, ruining your credit  Makes you work and doesn’t get or keep a job  **Spiritual:**  Manipulates scripture to make you do things such as submit and give him sex at any time  Assures he is liked by everyone in church so no one would believe you  Becomes involved in church, possibly on staff to maintain a good persona  Tells you what God is saying to coerce you  Makes you feel like a bad spiritual person  **Male Privilege:**  Makes you do all the housework and cooking  Makes all the decisions or makes you feel like you are unable to make decisions  Entitled to whatever he wants  **Threats:**  Threatens to hurt you  Threatens to leave you  Threatens to commit suicide if you leave  Threatens to harm your family  Threaten to keep children from you  **Sexual:**  Coerces you to have sex with him or some type of sexual activity  Holds you down during sex  Ignores your feelings about sex  Makes you watch porn or try things you are uncomfortable with  Rapes you, often trying to convince you that you wanted it  Withholds sexual activity from you  Accuses you of cheating  Cheating and using pornography  **Physical:**  Blocks doorways to prevent you from leaving  Takes keys and phone  Locks you inside or outside of a room, closet, or house  Slaps, hits, punches, kicks, shoves, pinches you  Chokes you  Grabs or throws you  Throws things at you  Stalks you  Tracks your phone or car  Makes you drop charges  Makes you do illegal things |  |  |
| Isolates you from your friends and family and may try to persuade you not to have a job.  Has two sides to his or her personality—others see your partner as a good person, but behind closed doors, he or she is angry and aggressive toward you.  Experiences most emotions in the form of anger and has difficulty conveying other emotions. |