



# Forms of Abuse

## Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a powerful way that an abusive person gets and keeps their partner under control and it instills an environment of constant fear. While physical abuse is the form of abuse that is most commonly known, it may or may not be a part of an abusive relationship. If physical abuse is present early in the relationship, it commonly gets worse over time. If there is no physical abuse in the relationship, it may begin to occur when the victim is pregnant or when the victim is considering leaving the relationship.

Physical violence may include: hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, strangling, smothering, using or threatening to use weapons, shoving, interrupting your sleep, throwing things, destroying property, hurting or killing pets, and denying medical treatment.

## Sexual Abuse

Some form of sexual abuse is common in abusive relationships but it is often the least discussed. It can be subtle or overt. The impact on the victim is commonly feelings of shame and humiliation.

Sexual abuse may include: physically forcing sex, making you feel fearful about saying no to sex, forcing sex with other partners, forcing you to participate in demeaning or degrading sexual acts, violence or name calling during sex, and denying contraception or protection from sexually transmitted diseases.

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs in some form in all abusive relationships. It is a very effective tactic used by abusive partners to obtain power and control and it can cause extreme damage to the victim's self esteem. Commonly, emotional abuse makes the victim feel like they are responsible for the abuse and to feel crazy, worthless and hopeless. It is so damaging that many survivors of domestic violence report that they would have rather "be hit" than endure the ongoing psychic damage of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse can include: constant put downs or criticisms, name calling, "crazy making", acting superior, minimizing the abuse or blaming you for their behavior, threatening and making you feel fearful, isolating you from family and friends, excessive jealousy, accusing you of having affairs, and watching where you go and who you talk to.

## Financial Abuse

This form of abuse is one of the least commonly known but one of the most powerful tactic of entrapping a victims in the relationship. It is so powerful that many victims of abuse describe it as the main reason that they stayed in an abusive relationship or went back to one.

Some forms of financial abuse include: giving you an allowance, not letting you have your own money, hiding family assets, running up debt, interfering with your job, and ruining your credit.