

21 Warning Signs of an Abusive Person

Following are some common signs that a person is or may turn out to be abusive to his/her partner. Answering yes to one or two questions below does not necessarily mean a person is abusive. However, if any of the questions below are true of you or your partner, you should be cautious about proceeding with the relationship and be sure to address those issues right away, preferably with the help of a counselor.

Am I/Is my partner a person who...

1. Was or is abused by a parent?
2. Grew up in a home where an adult was abused by another adult?
3. Gets very serious with boyfriends/girlfriends very quickly - saying "I love you" very early in the relationship, wanting to move in together or get engaged after only a few months, or pressuring partner for a serious commitment?
4. Comes on very strong, is extremely charming and an overly smooth talker?
5. Is extremely jealous?
6. Isolates partner from support systems - wants partner all to themselves, and tries to keep partner from friends, family, or outside activities?
7. Attempts to control what partner wears, what s/he does or who s/he sees?
8. Is abusive toward other people, especially mother or sisters if he is male?
9. Blames others for one's own misbehavior or failures?
10. Abuses drugs or alcohol?
11. Has unrealistic expectations, like expecting partner to meet all of one's needs and be the perfect partner?
12. Is overly sensitive - acts 'hurt' when not getting one's way, takes offense when others disagree with an opinion, gets very upset at small inconveniences that are just a normal part of life?
13. Has ever been cruel to animals?
14. Has ever abused children?
15. Has ever hit a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past?
16. Has ever threatened violence, even if it wasn't a 'serious' threat?
17. Calls partner names, puts him/her down, or curses at him/her?
18. Is extremely moody, and switches quickly from being very nice to exploding in anger?
19. If a male, believes women are inferior to men and should obey them?
20. Is intimidating, for example, using threatening body language, punching walls, or breaking objects?
21. Holds partner against his/her will to keep him/her from walking away or leaving the room?

*Numbers 1 and 2 do not indicate a person will be abusive. The majority of children who grow up in abusive homes choose not to be abusive as adults. However, these children have a higher likelihood than other children of growing up to be involved in abusive relationships. These factors should be considered with other factors.

*Copyright 2001 Wellness Reproductions and Publishing, Inc. 1-800/669-9208

**Questions? Call the Rape and Abuse Crisis Service
634-4911 or 1-800-303-0013**