

It could be abuse if...

Relationship (Domestic) and Dating Violence

Relationship violence is a pattern of behavior in which one partner uses fear and intimidation to establish power and control over the other partner, often including the threat or use of violence. This abuse happens when one person believes they are entitled to control another. It may or may not include sexual assault.

Relationship violence occur in straight/heterosexual relationships, same-sex/gender relationships and in intimate relationships that do not involve romantic feelings. Intimate partner violence can happen with roommates, friends, classmates, or teammates. Relationship violence impacts people of all ethnicities, races, classes, abilities and nationalities.

Although there are some general patterns in domestic or dating violence, there is no typical abusive behavior. To wear down and control his/her victim, an abuser may use emotional harassment, physical contact, intimidation, or other means. The controlling behavior usually escalates, particularly if the object of the abuse tries to resist or leave.

Types and Forms of Relationship Violence

Relationship violence is a crime. Behaviors that are used to maintain fear, intimidation, and power over another person may include threats, intimidation, economic abuse, sexual abuse or taking advantage of male privilege. These behaviors may take the form of physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological violence.

General descriptions of the types of domestic and dating violence are as follows:

Physical violence: The abuser's physical attacks or aggressive behavior can range from bruising to murder. It often begins with what is excused as trivial contacts, which escalate into more frequent and serious attacks. Physical abuse may include, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, choking, restraining with force, or throwing things.

Sexual abuse: Physical attack is often accompanied by or culminates in some type of sexual intercourse with the victim, or forcing her/him to take part in unwanted sexual activity. Sexual violence may include, but is not limited to, treating the victim and other people as objects via actions and remarks, using sexual names, insisting on dressing or not dressing in a certain ways, touching in ways that make a person uncomfortable, rape, or accusing the victim of sexual activity with others.

Emotional or Psychological violence: The abuser's psychological or mental attack may include constant verbal abuse, harassment, excessive possessiveness, isolation from friends and family, deprivation of physical and economic resources, and destruction of personal property. Emotional or psychological abuse may include, but is not limited to, withholding approval, appreciation, or affection as punishment; ridiculing her/his most valued beliefs, religion, race, or heritage;

humiliating and criticizing her/him in public or private; or controlling all her/his actions and decisions.

It Could Be Intimate Partner Abuse If....

One person:

- Constantly blames his/her partner for everything - including his/her own abusive behavior/temper.
- Makes mean and degrading comments about a partner's appearance, beliefs or accomplishments.
- Controls money and time.
- Gets really jealous.
- Loses his/her temper.
- Physically and/or sexually assaults another.

The other person:

- Gives up things that are important to her/him.
- Cancels plans with friends.
- Becomes isolated from family and/or friends.
- Worries about making her/his partner angry.
- Shows signs of physical abuse like bruises or cuts.
- Feels embarrassed or ashamed about what's going on in her/his relationship.
- Consistently makes excuses for her/his partner's behavior