



Warning Signs

Anyone can choose to use violence. Although both men and women can be abusive, a high percentage are men. Those who use violence often refuse to accept responsibility for the abuse and attempt to rationalize or blame the other person or people for causing it.

Signs of Potential Danger

Jealousy: of your friends, family, co-workers—any other relationship you may have.

Violent behavior: fights at parties, on the street, or in bars.

Controlling behavior: monopolizing your time; not allowing you to make decisions about your clothes, how to wear your hair, spending money, or looking for a job.

Verbal abuse: calling you hurtful and harmful names; putting you down either in private or in public.

Mood swings: a personality that is “up and down.” You don’t know what suddenly will make them mad. They may be happy one minute and angry the next minute.

Isolation: from friends, family, neighbors. You fear that if you say “hello” to a friend, they will get jealous and angry.

Blaming: those who use abuse blame you and/or others for their problems, for example, losing a job. Unrealistic expectations: an abusive person can be overcritical. They may expect you to be the perfect partner, lover, or friend.

Hypersensitivity: those using abuse often are easily insulted or hurt.

Family history: individuals using violence may have seen domestic violence in their own families. They may have been raised believing that domestic violence is a normal behavior.

Sexist attitude toward the opposite gender: people who use violence often believe in strict gender roles. They can insist that it is a woman’s job to care for the home and her partner.

Threats of violence: any threat or physical force that is used to control you—including the threat of suicide.