



Are You In An Abusive Relationship?

All relationships have their ups and downs, but there are certain types of behavior in any relationship that are unacceptable and abusive. If you think that your partner is abusive, or you suspect that someone you know is in an abusive relationship, review the information below. Recognizing the signs of an abusive relationship is the first step to breaking free.

What is relationship abuse? Relationship abuse is a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors used to maintain power and control over a former or current intimate partner. An abusive relationship means more than being hit by the person who claims to love or care about you. Abuse can be emotional, psychological, financial, sexual or physical and can include threats, isolation and intimidation. Abuse tends to escalate over time. When someone uses abuse and/or violence against a partner, it is always part of a larger pattern to try to control him/her.

Self-test: Is your relationship abusive?

Do you wonder if your relationship may be abusive? Ask yourself the questions below. The more "yes" answers, the more likely it is that you're in an abusive relationship.

Does your partner:

- humiliate, insult, criticize, demean or yell at you?
- ignore or put down your thoughts, feelings or accomplishments?
- treat you so badly that you're embarrassed for your friends and family to see?
- blame you for all the problems in your relationship, or for his/her own abusive behavior?
- see you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?
- act excessively jealous and possessive?
- control where you go or what you do?
- keep you from seeing your friends or family?

- check up on you all of the time to see where you are, what you're doing and who you are with?
- accuse you without good reason of being unfaithful or flirting?
- limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
- have a bad and unpredictable temper?
- destroy your belongings or things you value?
- hurt you, or threaten to hurt or kill you?
- threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- force you to have sex?

Do you:

- feel afraid of your partner much of the time?
- avoid certain topics out of fear of angering your partner?
- feel that you can't do anything right for your partner?
- believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- wonder if you're the one who is going crazy?
- feel increasingly trapped or powerless?
- feel emotionally numb or helpless?

What to do if you're being abused

If you are in an abusive relationship, you may feel confused, afraid, angry and/or trapped. What should you do? Taking the wrong step could escalate tensions or may destroy the relationship permanently. The following information can help. Obviously, the level of your response will depend on the degree of seriousness with which the abuse is inflicting emotional or physical injury.

1. Acknowledge the reality of abuse. The first step toward changing things is recognizing that your situation is abusive.

2. Meet with a professional therapist or counselor. For your health and safety, and the security of any children who may be involved, it is vitally important that you utilize the help of a professional therapist or counselor who can help you assess your situation and advise you with solid principles and practical information.

3. Confide in a trusted friend or family member. Talk to someone who can be an objective listener to help you separate your emotions from reason in sorting through the issues involved in an abusive relationship.

4. Find out about local support programs. Ask your counselor about local services that you may need if you break off your relationship with the abuser, including: shelters/safe homes, 24-hour emergency hotlines, support groups for victims of abuse, and advocacy programs offering help in obtaining medical care, legal protection, housing, furniture, clothing, training and educational services, employment, social services, and emergency transportation.

Resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 / 1-800-799-SAFE

National Teen Dating Abuse Help Line: 1-866-331-9474

For Your Information

Increasing Your Stress Fitness

To increase your stress resistance, emphasize your personal development. Develop as many of your talents as possible. Otherwise, you will be frustrated, which in turn causes internal stress.

10,000 Steps Per Day

Studies show that those who take at least 10,000 steps a day (the equivalent of walking about 5 miles) are more fit, have less body fat, and live longer. Try these to increase your walking and physical activity:

- Park your car a block or two away and walk
- Get off one or two bus stops early and walk the rest of the way
- Use the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator
- Walk with a friend or group

Better Sleep Tips

- Try to relax before bedtime. Take a walk, read a book, or take a warm bath.
- Unwind early in the evening. Try to deal with worries and distractions several hours before bedtime. Do work-related activities early in the evening.
- Develop a sleep ritual. Doing the same things each night just before bed signals your body to settle down for the night.

Employee Assistance Program

When you are faced with a problem that seems too hard to solve on your own, your EAP can help you with free, confidential counseling, information or referrals. Horizon Health EAP is here to help you deal with problems in your life before they jeopardize your health, family life or job performance. Confidential and timely counseling is available to you and your family members for personal problems including:

- Stress Management
- Marriage/Relationships
- Family
- Depression
- Health and Wellness
- Anxiety
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Grief and Bereavement
- Legal Concerns
- Finance/Budgeting

Help is available 24 hours a day by calling (800) 272-7252. Your organization has been contracted with Horizon Health EAP to provide you with this service. Please remember that no one will ever know that you called Horizon Health EAP unless you choose to tell them. There are strict standards of confidentiality that are in place to protect your privacy.