How to Tell if You're in an Unhealthy Relationship

Unhealthy or abusive relationships occur across racial and socio-economic lines. The "abuser" may be either male or female. Abuse can occur in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Common characteristics of unhealthy relationships include: emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse; aggression; intimidation and control; economic domination; and minimizing, denying, and blaming. The following checklist gives some examples of specific behaviors common in unhealthy relationships.

**Does your partner:**

- Act jealous of your friends, family, past partners, or others in your life?
- Not see you as an equal (e.g., because he or she is older, or sees him or herself a superior socially or more intelligent)?
- Prevent you from getting or keeping a job, having access to money, or participating in making financial decisions?
- Drink or use drugs excessively?
- Ridicule, embarrass, or humiliate you with bad names, put-downs, or belittling comments?
- Berate you for not wanting to have sex?
- Easily lose his or her temper?
- Make all the decisions, "take over" things you want to handle on your own, or sulk or become angry when you initiate an action or idea?
- Try to get you drunk or high, or berate you for not wanting to get drunk or high?
- Lead you to like yourself less or feel bad about yourself after you have been with him or her?
- Engage in sex with you in a way that feels degrading or humiliating?
- Throw or break things or destroy your property when angry?
- Think that in a relationship there are times when violence is okay?
- Invade your "personal space" (e.g., sits too close, touches you when asked not to, speaks like he or she knows you much better than he or she does)?
- Threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- Try to run or control your life, such as what you do, where you go, whom you see or talk to, whom you are friends with, or how you should look or dress?
- Use looks, actions, or gestures that make you scared?
- Seem like "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," that is, kind one minute and cruel the next?
- Force you to participate in sex or a sexual act against your will?
- Get angry if you are not always giving him or her your attention?
• Threaten to hurt or kill your pets or other people?
• Use guns, knives, or other weapons to intimidate you?
• Act angry and threatening to the point that you have changed your life to avoid angering him or her?
• Acknowledge hitting previous partners?
• Keep you confined or prevent you from leaving?
• Use weapons or objects or otherwise act aggressively during sex in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable?
• Ignore you or withhold love and affection in order to get his or her way?
• Talk negatively about your gender (e.g., "All women are stupid.")
• Push, shove, slap, kick, bite, choke, pull your hair, throw you across the room or down on the floor or hit you?
• Play mind games with you or make you think you are crazy?
• Think that you are "cheating" if you talk to or dance with someone else?
• Threaten to harm or kill you?
• Blame you for his or her abusive behavior, act like it is no big deal, or deny it happened?
• Force you into dropping, or never filing, criminal charges against him or her?

**If you answered "yes" to 3 or more questions you are experiencing dangerous signs of relationship abuse. It may be time to seek out help, after all YOU DESERVE TO BE RESPECTED AND HAPPY IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS!!

ALSO REMEMBER--YOU ARE NOT ALONE. Unfortunately, somewhere between ¼ and ½ of all young adult relationships involve some form of abuse—whether it be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or psychological. Oftentimes, destructive relationship dynamics appear slowly over time and you do not realize you are being controlled and manipulated until you are deeply involved in the relationship. You may feel confused and scared about what is going on, but you need to deal with it because the abuse will likely get worse over time. Please find help and support for yourself.

How to Help Yourself:
• You must realize the seriousness of the abuse and make your getting help the first priority in your life.
• Talk to trusted friends, family members, or professional counselors to help support you as you entangle yourself from the relationship and regain your former self-esteem that has been temporarily stolen from you
GET SUPPORT!
**Please call one of the following resources for support. There are well qualified and trained professionals to help you every step of the way.**

**Counseling & Psychological Services**
Creighton University
2500 California Plaza
Brandeis 203
Omaha, NE 68178
(402) 280-2733
[www-vip.creighton.edu/studentservices/counselingpsychologica尔斯ervices](http://www-vip.creighton.edu/studentservices/counselingpsychologica尔斯ervices)

**YWCA Omaha**
222 S. 29th Street
Omaha, NE 68131
[www.ywcaomaha.org](http://www.ywcaomaha.org)
(402) 345-6555

**YWCA Omaha 24-hour hotline** for sexual assault and domestic violence (402) 345-7273