

Non-Physical Abuse

Abusive relationships are often difficult to recognize. Abusers do not physically batter early on in a relationship. A relationship is usually developed, and solidified, before an abuser will use such tactics.

Non-physical forms of abuse (such as jealousy, isolation, mind games, threats, coercion, economic abuse, etc.) are key indicators that physical abuse may take place later on in a relationship. Many survivors say that non-physical abuse leaves deeper emotional scars than other kinds of abuse. It can leave a person feeling worthless, demoralized, depressed, helpless and very confused.

Some of the biggest challenges faced regarding this type of abuse is to recognize that this behavior is abusive, and that abuse continues and gets worse over time. Violence tends to increase in frequency and severity.

It is important to remember that abusive relationships are not abusive all of the time. They are also filled with good times and love. This is another reason that abusive relationships are difficult to recognize and end. Although every abusive relationship is different, on average physical violence only takes place three times a year.

FORMS THAT ABUSE CAN TAKE:

- **Emotional/Psychological Abuse:** Examples of emotional and psychological abuse include: name-calling, put-downs, negatively comparing her/him to others, making her/him think s/he is crazy, humiliation, giving gifts after an abusive incident, feeling bad about herself/himself because of race, religion, class or sexual orientation.
- **Isolation:** Examples of isolation include: excessive jealousy, breaking down the relationships with family, friends or co-workers, taking away the car, moving away to another town or out to the country, telling her/him when s/he can leave the house, shutting the phone off, controlling any of activities, controlling access to medical care, saying that no one will provide assistance because of her/his age, race, income or sexual orientation.
- **Intimidation:** Examples of intimidation include: destroying possessions, using looks or gestures to instill fear, yelling, throwing objects, threatening to or abusing pets, blocking the exit way, using alcohol or drugs, slamming doors, hitting the wall, displaying weapons, stalking, driving recklessly, using racism or homophobia to prevent her/him from talking about the abuse.



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- **Minimizing, Denying, Blaming:** Examples include: accusing her/him of mutual abuse or instigating the abuse, pretending to be the victim, using alcohol or drugs as an excuse for the violence, lying about or concealing the abuse from others, blaming outside circumstances, denying or minimizing the extent of the abuse.
- **Economic Abuse:** Examples of economic abuse include: controlling all of money, making the economic decisions, giving an allowance, keeping her/him from furthering a career, deciding where and how much s/he is going to work, taking away the car, keeping the checkbook in one partner's name, sabotaging her/his work life or school life, concealing information about the finances, using personal or family assets without permission. Economic abuse gives the abuser enormous control over the home, and it makes it much more difficult to leave the relationship.
- **Using Coercion and Threats:** Examples include: making and/or carrying out threats to hurt you, a loved one or a pet, threatening to leave or commit suicide; making you do illegal things; threatening to reveal your sexual orientation, economic or immigration status to friends, family, co-workers or authorities.
- **Using Privilege:** Examples include: defining what is and is not important, making all of the decisions, treating you as inferior, defining what the gender roles are, and acting like master of the castle, abuser walking out on arguments.
- **Using Children:** Using children to manipulate you or relay inappropriate messages, encouraging the children to abuse you, using visitation to harass, threatening to take the children away, and emotional, sexual or physical abuse of the children.
- **Physical Abuse:** Examples include: pushing, shoving, tripping, slapping, restraining, pulling hair, choking, punching, kicking, and assault with a weapon, kidnapping, homicide or attempted homicide.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Examples of sexual abuse include: sexual harassment, treating her/him like a sex object, forcing he/him to enact or make pornography, forcing her/him to participate in sexual acts that make her/him uncomfortable, hurting physically or emotionally during sex, attempting rape, incest.

**If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, support is available.
Call LACASA's 24-hour toll-free crisis line: (866) 522-2725**