

What is Abuse and How to Call for Help

Six Types of Abuse

Physical – Domestic Violence – abuse includes punching, hitting, slapping, kicking strangling, physically restraining a partner against their will. And can include driving recklessly or invading someone’s physical space, and in anyway make a person feel physically unsafe. Including withholding medical attention, entrapment, and threatened with a weapon.

Sexual – abuse includes both physical and non-physical components and can include rape or other forced sexual acts, or withholding or using sex as a weapon. The abuse can also use sex to degrade and devalue a person with condemnation. I.E. “All you’re good at is sex,” or “You are not good enough at sex.”

Verbal/Emotional – abuse is when words are used like weapons: your worthless, stupid, ugly, no one else would ever want you. Jealousy fits here too, blaming you for something you’ve never done. This type of abuse is harder to spot and harder to prove. Emotional scars often take longer to heal.

Here are examples of emotional/verbal abuse”

“I don’t want you going out with them. I trust you—I just don’t trust them.”

“You know you can’t get anyone better than me. You are lucky to be with me.”

“Are you sure you want to eat that? I’m just attracted to someone who takes care of themselves.”

“You’re so dumb. I knew this would be over your head.”

Mental/Psychological – abuse happens when one person, through a series of action or words (even being told victim is crazy), wears away at their partner’s sense of mental security and health. This form of abuse can cause the victims to doubt their own sanity. I.E. abuser moves car keys or vehicle, purse, dimming lights, and then denying these types of things truly happened. This abuse coerces the victim into trusting the abuser more and more because the no longer trust self. The victim then hesitates to tell anyone due to fear of non-belief.

Financial/Economic – abuse is about power and control. However it is gained. Many times power is obtained economically by controlling budgets, spending money, credit cards, and bank accounts. Many victims are not allowed to earn their own money. Therefore, many victims are unable to leave because they have no career and often times bad credit because their abuser mishandle their debt.

Cultural/Identity – abuse occurs when abusers use facets of a victim’s cultural identity to inflict suffering as a means of control. This happens when the abuser fails to allow someone to

observe dietary needs or dress according to their custom or faith, uses racial slurs, threatens to 'out' someone as LGBTQ/T, or by isolating someone who doesn't speak the dominant language where they live.

Please keep in mind, all forms of abuse include manipulation, control, and coercion. None of which is love or healthy behavior.

An abusive relationship can include any or all of the above types of behaviors. They can be sustained over a period of time and often escalate. If you or someone you care about is experiencing any form of abuse and you want to talk to someone about your concerns, please call 1.800.799.SAFE or 1.800.799.7233 or text "Safe" to 88788

Or

REACH – 800.899.4000

To speak with a trained professional 24/7.

<https://www.thehotline.org/>

<https://reachma.org/get-support/direct-services/>