

It's Not Just Black and Blue...It's More Like Shades of Gray

Abuse is more than physical. Listed below are examples of ways someone can be abusive. Is there a *pattern* or *frequency* in these behaviors? Abuse is a pattern of conscious, intentional and premeditated acts, done with the purpose to control and dominate another person (as defined by *Alternative to Domestic Aggression*, Ann Arbor, MI). Look for evidence of, or listen for reports of, the following:

Emotional Abuse

- Constant criticizing/belittling the victim
- Comments that the victim is "useless" as a child, partner, parent, person, etc.
- Blowing victim's mistakes out of proportion
- Bringing up past "wrongs" to subdue victim
- Deliberately starting/looking for arguments
- Often behaving surly or out-of-sorts
- Calling victim names
- Giving victim "The Silent Treatment"
- Often failing to keep promises
- Sabotaging victim's relationships w/others
- Disregarding victim's feelings and opinions
- Regularly acting jealous or possessive
- Refusing to allow victim to make decisions
- Yelling/shouting/swearing at victim
- Talking over or interrupting victim
- Humiliating victim in front of others
- Ridiculing victim's family and friends
- Minimizing/denying victim's hurt feelings
- Threatening to leave to keep victim "in line"
- Using guilt as a means to control victim
- Saying the victim provoked anger/abuse

Exploiting Privileged Status

- Abuser has different rules than victim/s ("Do as I say, not as I do")
- Dictating family roles and duties
- Refusing to fulfill personal responsibilities
- Treating victim as a servant
- Using status in community/relationship to discredit victim's account of abuse
- Demanding that all personal needs and desires be met first, despite needs/desires of adult or child victim
- Using knowledge of culture, institutions and systems to victim's disadvantage
- Culling favor with public servants to avoid accountability for abusive behaviors

Medical Neglect

- Withholding necessary medication or care
- Preventing the victim from disclosing abuse to medical providers
- Over/under medicating victim
- Refusing victim treatment for injuries
- Taking away victim's medical devices (inhaler, wheelchair, walker, etc.)
- Refusing to care for sick or injured victim
- Coercing victim to use alcohol or drugs

Deprivation & Isolation

- Depriving victim of basic necessities
- Sabotaging housing, schooling, transportation, job, activities, personal connections, etc.
- Cutting off utilities
- Limiting or ending outside activities
- Refusing victim contact with friends/family
- Sewing discord between victim and others
- Refusing access to outside services
- Aggravating circumstances that force partner and children to become homeless
- Depriving victim of sleep
- Characterizing victim to others as uncooperative, difficult or paranoid

Economic Control

- Trying to make victim financially dependent
- Destroying victim's credit rating
- Misusing victim's social security to gain access to credit, utilities, etc.
- Refusing to contribute to household income
- Squandering household finances, to the detriment of the victim
- Withholding money, or access to money
- Making demands on how victim spends, or making victim justify how money was spent
- Confiscate victim's earnings
- Harassing victim at job until victim is fired
- Removing victim from accounts or deeds to assets, or demanding access to victim's accounts or assets

Monitoring & Stalking

- Following victim for no reason, causing fear
- Tracking mileage on victim's car
- Checking phone bills for unrecognized or "forbidden" phone numbers
- Monitoring victim's computer usage
- Reading victim's mail, e-mail, etc.
- Asking victim's friends/family/co-workers for information about her/his daily routine
- Harassing victim constantly
- Deciding what partner should wear
- Demanding to know partner's whereabouts
- Telling partner where s/he can/can't go
- Deciding with whom partner has contact
- "Checking up" on partner all the time
- Making partner account for every minute away
- Using surveillance technology to track victim

Spiritual Conflict

- Mocking victim's moral values
- Creating situations to "test" victim's moral boundaries
- Making fun of victim's faith
- Misusing religious texts to justify abusive actions or demands
- Refusing to let victim attend services
- Sabotaging, limiting or deciding the victim's faith practices
- Forcing victim to violate religious beliefs or participate in or witness ritual sacrifice
- Claiming to be all-powerful, all-knowing
- Enlisting spiritual leaders in campaign to separate victim from spiritual supports (i.e.-clergy person as character witness for abuser in court actions)

Legal Harassment

- Coercing victim into doing illegal acts
- Threatening to call police or child protection
- Using children as pawns in legal battles
- Threatening costly or lengthy legal battles
- Repeatedly filing costly and frivolous motions
- Refusing to make court-ordered child support or alimony payments
- Ignoring court directives such as restraining orders, division of property, etc.
- Threatening to press charges or otherwise compromise victim's legal standing
- Threatening harm if victim cooperates with law enforcement or child protection
- Refusing to allow an immigrant victim to gain citizenship, or threatening with deportation

Psychological Torment

- Playing mind games
- Causing intense emotional pain
- Making gestures or movements that are meant to frighten or intimidate victim
- Threatening to harm victim or loved ones
- Threatening to kidnap victim/loved ones
- Threatening to use weapons on victim
- Abusing or killing family pets
- Destroying victim's personal belongings
- Driving recklessly with victim in the car
- Punching walls, or throwing things at victim
- Making victim feel like s/he's going crazy
- Minimizing or denying victim's injuries
- Referring to victim by title or nicknames, rather than given name; objectifying victim

Sexual Coercion & Force

- Refusing to take "no" for an answer
- Manipulating victim into unwanted sex
- Hurting or mutilating victim's genitals
- Coercing victim to have unprotected sex
- Demanding or forcing sex acts that victim finds painful or humiliating
- Exposing victim to pornography
- Exposing unknowing victim to STDs
- Forcing "make up" sex
- Degrading victim sexually or using sexual names ("cunt," "whore," "frigid," "impotent")
- Accusing victim of infidelity
- Threatening to "out" the victim
- Having sex with victim while s/he's sleeping
- Refusing to take responsibility for birth control methods, or forbidding birth control
- Using dangerous and inappropriate objects (guns, bottles, knives, etc.) as "sex toys"

Physical Assault

- Spitting on victim
- Grabbing or pinching
- Shoving or pulling
- Slapping or hitting (w/ or w/o objects)
- Elbowing or kneeing
- Head-butting or hair-pulling
- Biting or burning
- Twisting victim's arms, fingers, etc.
- Kicking or punching
- Strangling or smothering
- Restraining/preventing victim from leaving an unsafe situation or calling for help
- Brandishing a weapon in a threatening or menacing manner
- Stabbing victim or objects near victim
- Shooting at or near victim

Grooming & Luring

- Promising to change abusive behaviors
- Temporarily changing abusive behaviors
- Offering gifts, special favors or privileges
- Keeping old or making new promises
- Bribing to maintain victim's silence
- Complying with victim requests for counseling, help with household duties
- Temporarily allowing contact with family or friends
- Enlisting friends, family or community members to entice or cajole victim back into relationship

Does Alleged Victim...

- Call out from school/work a lot?
- Always have to make plans around the other person?
- Report that her/his efforts are never good enough for the other person?
- Report having to read the other person's mind?
- Report the other person has a Jeckyl/Hyde personality?
- Report walking on eggshells all the time?
- Feel tired or sick frequently?
- Constantly make excuses for the other person's actions and behaviors?
- Frequently voice feeling sad, ashamed, worthless, or deserving of abuse?
- Report feeling afraid or abused?

The Stakes Are Higher for Victim if Abuser:

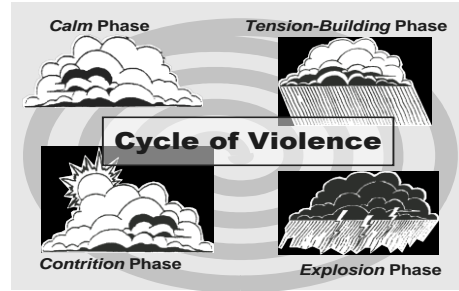
- Threatens/plans injury, suicide or homicide
- Has access to weapons, and has used them in threatening/menacing manner
- Abuser has assaulted victim in the past
 - In public
 - Caused injuries
 - Strangled/attempted strangulation
- Is violent towards children or pets/animals
- Shows extreme jealousy/possessiveness
- Exhibits past or present stalking
- Uses/abuses substances
- Is unemployed
- Recently has escalated violent behaviors
- Police intervention has been required

Other possible risk factors include:

- Abuser assaults include sexual assaults
- Abuser has history of victimizing previous partners, or was physically/sexually abused as child
- Abuser has held family members hostage
- Abuser suffers from/has been treated for depression

The above behaviors are indicators of increased risk of harm for the victim. Safety planning should be done immediately, and updated regularly, if the victim discloses any of these indicators.

This brochure was developed by
Kathy Jones, Survivor and Advocate,
to educate the community about domestic
and family abuse.



Calm Phase: the abuser acts like abuse has never happened, blames the victim for provoking the abuse, or denies and minimizes the abuse. The abusive person may keep some of the promises made during the Contrition phase.

Tension-building: the abuser begins using monitoring, coercive and controlling tactics, under the guise of anger. Communication breaks down, and the victim may feel a need to keep the batterer calm (often described as "walking on eggshells"). The tension becomes overwhelming; sometimes the victim may precipitate an attack to end it.

Explosion: the assault occurs (sexual, physical, intense emotional or psychological assault).

Contrition: the abuser apologizes for the assault, and promises it won't happen again. He will often give gifts, or makes promises to change. The victim is lured back in, and hopes that the abuse is over.

Indicators of Healthy Relationships

- Patience
- Kindness
- Gentleness
- Sharing
- Supportive
- Respect
- Treating the other as equally deserving of "inalienable human rights"
- Openness and honesty
- Trust and trustworthiness
- Caring and compassion
- Taking responsibility for own behaviors
- Two-way communication
- Working together for each other's best interests, and accommodating each other
- Collaborative resolution of conflict
- Encouraging outside relationships, interests and independent goals

Shades of Gray



The Many Faces of Abuse