

RED WOMEN RISING

WARNING SIGNS OF A POTENTIALLY ABUSIVE PARTNER



California Consortium for Urban Indian Health
CCUIH Strengthening The Organizations That Strengthen Our Communities



Jealousy

At the beginning of the relationship, partner will say that jealousy is part of love. Jealousy has nothing to do with love. It's a sign of possessiveness and insecurity.

Signs: Questions who their partner talks to. Accusations of flirting. Complains of how much time partner spends with others. Frequent phone calls/texts throughout the day. Unexpected visits. Unpredictable behavior. Checking car mileage. Asking friends to watch or spy on their partner. Falsely accuses partner of cheating on them. Monitors social media.

Controlling Behavior

At the onset of the relationship, the abuser will say that this behavior is because of concern for their partner's safety, or to guide them in good decision-making and time management.

Signs: Closely questions everything the partner does. Will not allow the partner to make personal decisions about the house, clothing, and/or who they spend time with. Anger if the partner is "late" coming back from the store or appointment. May keep all the money and/or make the partner ask permission to leave the house or room. Will tell their partner who to do, what to wear, what to say, who they can talk to, etc.

Fast Moving Relationship

Many domestic violence survivors dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were engaged or started living together.

Signs: Relationship start like a whirlwind, "love at first sight." Excessive flattery such as "you're the only person I can talk to" and "I love you more than anyone in the world." Abusive partner may state they need someone desperately. Pressure for commitment.

Unrealistic Expectations

Abusive partners are dependent on relationships for all of their needs. This is not healthy. No relationship is perfect and no one person can realistically be there "all the time."

Signs: Expects partner to be a perfect partner/spouse, parent, lover, and friend. May say things like "if you love me, I'm all you need, you're all I need." Expects partner to take care of everything emotionally for them. Expects their partner to perform all household tasks.

Isolation

The abuser tries to cut-off resources in effort to remove opportunities for the escape and systems of support. Without supportive friends with which to "trouble talk" about relationships, it can be hard to recognize signs of abuse. Resources include work or school, transportation, family, friends, places of worship.

Know The Signs, Protect Yourself

Signs: Friends are not allowed by the abuser; their relationships are viewed as unfaithful. Friendships are ridiculed or sabotaged. Accuses supportive friends to be “causing trouble.” Will not allow visits to or from partner’s family. Moves away from partner’s family and friends. Taking away the phone or the car. Insists their partner stop going to work or to school.

Blames Others for Problems

Abusers do not take responsibility for their abusive behavior or any negative situation; instead they will find someone else or some external factor to blame for the problem.

Signs: Mistakes are the fault of the abused partner. Says their partner upsets them or keeps them from concentrating. Abuser blames their partner for practically anything and everything that goes wrong.

Blames Others for Feelings

Abusers often do not understand or want to feel any negative emotions. When an abuser feels hurt, anger, or fear, they will want to find someone to blame to make the feeling go away.

Signs: Says “you make me mad”, “you’re hurting me by not doing what I ask”, and “I can’t help being angry.” Uses feelings to manipulate their partner.

Hypersensitivity

Abusers can be extra sensitive and may explode when they suspect an attack.

Signs: Easily insulted. Claims feeling

“hurt” when really feels anger. Takes the slightest set back as personal attacks. Will “rant and rave” about the injustice of things that have happened, things that are really just part of living like being asked to help with chores.

Cruelty to Animals or Children

Someone who punishes or threatens to hurt children and/or animals brutally or is insensitive to their pain or suffering. This is a red flag and message that they will hurt who or what you love and care about and a real threat that you may be next.

Signs: Expects children to be capable of doing things far beyond their ability (whips two year old for wetting their diaper). Hurts or abuse animals. Teases children until they cry. Hurts or kills their partner’s pets. Does not want children to eat at the table or expects them to stay in their room all evening away from adults. Child abuse is often found in homes with domestic violence.

“Playful” use of Force in Sex:

Media has display forceful sex as “sexy,” however it shows unhealthy desire for power and control over one’s partner. Sex is about intimacy and mutual consent. It is against the law to force someone into any sexual act.

Signs: Likes to throw down or restrain partner during sex. Wants to act out sexual fantasies where the partner is helpless. Ideas of “rape” excite them. Not concerned whether their partner want to have sex or not. Sulks or uses anger to manipulate partner into having sex. Start



having sex with partner while partner is sleeping or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol. Demands sex when partner is ill or tired. Threatens to post private pics on social media.

Verbal Abuse

Abuse is not only physical. Abuser will often criticize and demean their partners with same calling and insults, make them feel crazy, “gaslighting.”

Signs: Says cruel and hurtful things. Constantly degrades their partner. Curses. Belittles accomplishments. Says their partner is stupid and incapable of functioning without them. Very critical about everything.

Rigid Gender Roles

Abusers will use stereotypical gender roles to restrict and control their partners.

Signs: Abusers see their partner as inferior to them, less intelligent, and unable to be a whole person without them. For example, some abusers expect their partners to serve and obey them in all things even things that are criminal in nature. Abusers may restrict their partners from working or going to school.

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde

This is a reference to a fictional character that had both a “good” and “evil” side.

Signs: Sudden changes in mood, a “roller coaster of emotions.” Explosiveness. One-minute the abuser is nice and the next minute there’s an explosion. Charming in public, and abusive when alone with you.

Past Battering

If someone has a history of abusive relationships, they are likely to abuse again (unless they abuser seeks intervention and takes responsibility for their own behavior). Situational circumstances do not make a person abusive. (Many people lose their jobs, for example, and choose to not abuse their partner, even though they are feeling angry, stressed, helpless, etc.)

Signs: Many abusers have abused partners in the past. Abusers reasons that past abuse was because “my partner made me do it.” Relatives or ex-partners may admit past abuse. If they have abused a past partner, it is a red flag that they will abuse future partners.

Threats of Violence

Threat are meant to control and manipulate. Displays weapons.

Signs: Threatens, “I’ll kill myself if you leave me”, “I’ll kill you”, or “I’ll take the kids.” Excuses threats by blaming you, “If you hadn’t....then I wouldn’t have to...).

Know The Signs, Protect Yourself

Breaking or Striking Objects

Used as a punishment, to terrorize and threaten the partner into submission.

Signs: Beats on table with fists. Throws objects near their partner. Breaks partner's special possessions.

Forcing during an Argument

Arguments and discussions are a natural part of all relationships, but force or restraint changes an ordinary argument into possible abuse.

Signs: Hold a partner down. Physically restraining partner from leaving the room and say "you're going to listen to me." Pushing or shoving. Cornering partner against a wall.

