

Am I in an abusive relationship?

IS THIS ABUSE ??? There are all kinds of abuse: physical, which may be the easiest to identify, but there is also sexual, emotional, mental, psychological, financial, and spiritual abuse, and the list goes on.

Pattern of Abuse

What we do know is that with most forms of abuse, we see a pattern. We call it the ***cycle of violence***.

CYCLE ↻
OF
VIOLENCE

Phases of Abuse

It starts with the ***calm phase***, or the ***honeymoon phase***. This includes ***enticement*** behaviour. Your abuser might take you places, give you gifts, make you feel amazing; or sometimes, enticement behavior is just no blow-ups.

Then we have the ***tension phase***. You are walking on eggshells; everything has to be perfect but no matter what you do, it just never is. You're always worrying, stressed, in fear of "what if", and you have that feeling that something bad will happen.

Then we have the ***crisis phase***. This is the blow-up. There are, threats, destruction. You fear for your safety or your children's safety. There may be drug and alcohol abuse, or screaming, yelling, throwing things, and/or physical violence.

RED FLAGS There are a lot of red flags that might indicate an abusive relationship. Some of these are:

Controlling behaviour: It's no longer up to you what you wear, your make-up, where you go, what you do or don't do, who you see.

Humiliation: Sometimes this can be overt – it happens in front of other people; but sometimes it's covert or hidden. Other people may think the abuser is charming or wonderful, but in private, it's *not* wonderful. The abuser is mean, uses demeaning words, tries to make you feel weak or small.

Guilt trips: “If you love me...” “I thought this meant something to you.” “You’re all I’ve got.”

Forcing responsibility: Your abuser forces **you** to take responsibility for **their** feelings or behaviours. “You make me so angry!” “Everything is your fault.” “Just look what you make me do.”

Use of ultimatums: Using the children, money or other things to force you to do or not do things. “I’ll kill myself if you leave me.” “I’ll take the kids away if you do this or that.” “I’ll keep the credit cards, and you’ll have nothing.”

Physical violence: This can be preventing you physically from leaving the room or the home, pushing, shoving, throwing things, spitting, breaking things, hitting you, beating you, choking you, forcing you sexually.

Short temper: They can be yelling, explosive, unpredictable. You walk on eggshells. The goalposts are always moving – your abuser is never satisfied. They are scary. It makes you subservient, because you never know what will set them off.

Constantly checks up on you: Do they know your phone or computer passwords? Do they check your phone, or call you while you’re out? Do they make you send pictures to prove no one is with you or that you’re where you say you are? Do they make you share your location on your device?

Forces you: to do things you don’t want to do, or to not do things you do want to do. They may make you miss a birthday party to go with them to do something else. They may force you do something sexually, or to give them money. Perhaps they make you quit school or your job. They may make you be isolated, not permitted to see friends or family, or to experience your spiritual life, or do anything that is good for you.

WANNA
TALK?

DO YOU FIND YOURSELF MISSING WHO YOU ARE? When you look back do you feel supported, loved and like your feelings and goals matter?

FAMILY SERVICE 
SASKATOON

If you want to talk about this, there is support available. **Call us at 306 -244-0127 in Saskatoon.**

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