

Abusive Behaviors

The following types of behaviors are considered abusive:

Intimidation - The abuser frightens the victim with the following:

- certain "looks"
- gestures
- actions - such as smashing things
- destruction of victim's property or pets
- weapons

Emotional Abuse - To cause emotional abuse, the abuser typically does the following:

- makes the victim feel guilty
- calls the victim names
- embarrasses, humiliates, or demeans the victim
- plays mind games
- tells the victim they are crazy - does or says things that make the victim feel that they are crazy.

Isolation - To cause isolation, the abuser does the following:

- keeps the victim from going places they would like to go, such as visiting family or friends, attending social groups, etc.
- listens to phone conversations or opens mail
- follows the victim around and/or questions them about their whereabouts, using jealousy to justify actions

Minimizing, Denying and Blaming - This occurs when the abuser does the following:

- makes light of the abuse, saying it wasn't that bad
- says the abuse didn't happen
- says the abuse was the victim's fault

Excessively Dominant Partner - This is when the abuser does the following:

- acts like the "master of the house"
- treats the victim like a servant
- makes all the "big" decisions
- defines the victim's role/job
- patronizes, or in any other way, treats the victim like a child, not as an equal adult

Economic Abuse - This becomes abuse when one partner does the following:

- prevents the other from working outside the home
- makes the partner ask for money
- limits the money the partner has
- makes the partner account for every expenditure
- doesn't allow the partner to access information about the family finances

Uses Children - The use of children to abuse a partner occurs when the abuser does the following:

- makes the victim feel guilty about the victim's parenting skills and ability
- makes the victim responsible for all the children's misbehavior or mistakes
- undermines the victim's authority and effectiveness with the children through criticism
- states or implies to the children that the victim is stupid or dumb - can't do anything right
- threatens to take the children away or kill them
- tells the victim that the Department of Child and Family Services will take the children away

Coercion and Threats - Some common threats used to coerce the victim into compliance are as follows:

- threatens to take the children away
- threatens to destroy property
- threatens to harm family or friends
- makes physical threats and/or actions toward the victim
- threatens to leave the victim
- threatens to commit suicide

Information courtesy of the Department of Child and Family Services