

# WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic Violence is a pattern of power and control. Domestic violence comes in many forms, including emotional, verbal, physical, sexual, and/or financial abuse. It is a common myth that it is only domestic violence when there is physical abuse, in fact many victims never experience physical violence. **Emotional and verbal abuse are the most common forms of domestic violence and are often more damaging and difficult to recover from than physical violence.**

Many women ask if they are abused. The following checklists were developed by Ginny McCarthy, author of Getting Free to help the individual define the behaviors of their intimate partner.

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

*Emotional abuse is sometimes harder to define and recognize. How many of these things has your partner done to you?*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ignores your feelings.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ridicules or insults women as a group.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continually criticizes you, calls you names, shouts at you.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ridicules or insults your most valued beliefs, your religion, race, heritage, or class. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withholds approval, appreciation or affection as punishments. | <input type="checkbox"/> Refuses to socialize with you.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humiliates you in private or public.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeps you from working, controls your money, makes all the decisions.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly threatens to leave or tells you to leave.           | <input type="checkbox"/> Takes car keys or money away.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constantly accuses you of having affairs.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatens to hurt you or your family.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulates you with lies and contradictions (crazy-making).  | <input type="checkbox"/> Punishes or deprives the children if you leave him.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional blackmail.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tells you about his affairs.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refuses to work or share.                                     |  |

*Below are more in depth breakdowns of four facets of emotional abuse:*

## Verbal Abuse

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talks to you as if you were a child.            | <input type="checkbox"/> Constant put-downs.                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ridicules your appearance.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatens to kill you, himself or others.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threatens to take children and leave.           | <input type="checkbox"/> Belittles important things you've accomplished |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tells you that you are stupid, ugly and dumb... | <input type="checkbox"/> Tells you that you are an unfit mother.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrasses you in public.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tells your children hurtful thing about you.   |

## Isolation

---

- Won't let you have or use phone or listens in on phone calls.
- Won't allow you to attend family functions or to invite people over.
- Maintains a good public image so other won't believe you.
- Gets others to turn against you.
- Moves you away from family and friends.
- Insists you come home immediately after work.
- Creating conflict and drama with friends and family so you are embarrassed to be around them or avoid them to not cause trouble.

## Financial Control

---

- Doesn't provide enough money to buy groceries or pay other bills.
- Puts all bills solely in your name.
- Destroys your possessions.
- Makes you account for every penny spent.
- Controls the checkbook and/or all knowledge of assets/finances
- Doesn't provide adequate clothing, food or housing.
- Spends family funds on drugs or alcohol.

## Intimidation / Threats of Violence

---

- Being physical without actually hurting you
  - Raises his fist at you.
  - Punches walls.
  - Kicks in doors.
  - Destroys your personal things.
  - Blocking your path.
  - Driving recklessly.
  - Towering over you.
- Keeps you awake all night.
- Bullying (threatening to do or not do something to make you do what he wants)
  - Threatens to take the children and leave.
  - Threatens to kill you, himself or other loved ones.
  - Cruelty to animals and/or children
- Being on the offensive so you are constantly fearful of setting him off.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

---

- Pushes or shoves you.
- Holds you to keep you from leaving.
- Slaps or bites you.
- Hits or punches you.
- Throws objects at you.
- Locks you out of the house.
- Abandons you in dangerous places.
- Refuses to help when you were sick, injured or pregnant.
- Subjects you to reckless driving or keeps you from driving.
- Demands or pressures you for sex.
- Threatens or hurts you with weapons.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

---

- Criticizes you sexually.
- Insists on unwanted and uncomfortable touching.
- Withholds sex and affection.
- Demands you to strip or participate in sex acts that you are uncomfortable with.
- Publicly shows sexual interest in other women or has affairs with other women.
- Demands or pressures you to have sex after a beating or when you are sick.
- Commits sadistic sexual acts.