



You are not alone

How Do I Know if This Relationship Is Abusive

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Abuse can take many forms. It can be emotional, psychological, social, sexual, financial and/or physical. Sometimes a number of these kinds of abuse occur at the same time.

It is deliberate and purposeful violence, abuse and intimidation perpetrated by one person against another in an intimate partner relationship. It happens between two people when one person exercises power over the other person. It usually causes fear, physical and/or psychological harm. It may be a single act or a series of acts.

You may be experiencing abuse in your intimate partner relationship if:

Your partner:

- gets jealous when others are around
- destroys or threatens to destroy your possessions
- puts you down, calls you names or threatens you
- blames you when things go wrong
- pushes you
- hits you
- hits the walls
- yells at you
- harms or threatens to harm your pet
- threatens to harm your family or friends
- threatens suicide or self-harm

You feel you have to:

- ask permission to spend money or go out
- take the blame when things go wrong
- do what your partner wants
- make excuses for your partner's behaviour

You feel:

- afraid to make decisions out of fear of your partner's reaction or anger
- isolated from friends, family and activities
- afraid to express your opinions
- afraid to say no
- afraid to leave the relationship

If these examples sound familiar, you may be experiencing abuse.

Some forms of abuse are criminal offences in the Criminal Code, including:

- physical assault (such as hitting, punching, strangling)
- sexual assault
- threats to harm or kill
- forcibly withholding food and medical treatment
- taking another person's source of income through fraud or threats
- stalking or criminal harassment (creating fear by repeatedly following, communicating or attempting to communicate with a person)
- forced labour
- forced prostitution (human trafficking)

Remember that abuse is never acceptable and physical and sexual abuse are crimes under Canadian law. If you have questions, reach out for support. Assistance and information is a phone call away.

Sources:

1. Government of Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Domestic Violence Action Plan. 2010.
2. Lynda Ceresne, Barbara Cottrell, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Making Changes, 9th Edition. 2015.
http://women.gov.ns.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Making%20Changes_9thed_D4www_FINAL.pdf