

Learn to recognize the signs of domestic violence

Domestic violence has different forms. The abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological and/or economic. The first step in helping a friend or family member who is in trouble is recognizing what domestic violence looks like.

People who abuse their partners may:

- Have trouble expressing emotions verbally
- Blame others for problems or feelings
- Be very jealous
- Criticize or put down their partner, especially in front of others
- Use verbal violence such as name-calling, cursing and yelling
- Use non-verbal threats, such as “the look”
- Control all the money in a relationship
- Downplay or deny their partner’s feelings or concerns
- Abuse alcohol or drugs
- “Blow up” over things that seem minor
- Break objects
- Abuse pets
- Use “the silent treatment” to control
- Use their partner’s past against him/her
- Use physical violence, such as hitting, shoving and choking
- Force or demand sex

People who are being abused may:

- Have injuries and give explanations that don’t make sense
- Wear inappropriate clothing to hide bruises or scars (ex: long sleeves in the summer)
- Not be allowed to visit with friends or family
- Not have access to the car keys
- Rarely be seen in public without their partner
- Often be absent from work, school or social events
- “Check In” often with their partner
- Go along with anything their partner says or does
- Be afraid of their partner’s temper
- Be afraid of making their partner jealous
- Abuse alcohol or drugs
- Have low self-esteem, even if they were once very confident people
- Be depressed or even suicidal

Not all of these signs are present in every abusive relationship. If you notice even one or two, there may be a problem. You may be the first person to see the signs.