

What is dating & relationship violence?

Definitions & Examples:

Dating and relationship violence is defined as a pattern of behavior in which an intimate partner uses physical violence and/or emotional, sexual or economic abuse to control the other partner in the relationship. Dating and relationship violence on college campus often remains invisible. Violent and abusive behavior can exist in any relationship - short term, long term, between same sex partners; regardless of race, ethnicity, ability and class. This violence is also called domestic violence, intimate abuse and spousal abuse.

A survivor may experience abuse in a variety of ways. The following is a limited snapshot of how abuse can work in relationships.

- **Physical violence** includes: kicking, pinching, hitting, choking, biting, shaking or otherwise using physical force to restrain or hurt a partner. Other examples include withholding access to necessary medical equipment or medication.
- **Emotional violence** (or “verbal abuse”) includes using humiliation, name-calling, “crazy making” intimidation, isolation and threats of physical force or threats against one’s family, friends, or pets, or threats of suicide. This may also include destroying or stealing property; including textbooks, cars, etc. and harming pets. Other examples include threatening to take away children, to reveal secrets or private information about a person, or to mock tradition, culture, gender identity or different abilities.
- **Sexual violence** is forcing a partner to engage in sexual acts against one’s will.
- **Economic abuse** includes withholding financial resources to intimidate, threaten or control a partner. Other examples are: spending one’s financial aid money or using some one’s credit card without permission.

Is your relationship abusive?

Answering yes to some of the following questions may indicate that your relationship is abusive. *This check list is not a complete list of abusive behaviors, but is meant to serve as guide to recognizing abuse in relationships.*

- Does your partner’s temper scare you?
- Are you afraid to disagree with your partner?
- Do you apologize for your partner’s behavior when you are treated badly?
- Is your partner charming in public but menacing in private?
- Have you been hit, kicked, shoved or had things thrown at you?
- Is your partner violent when he/she drinks or uses drugs?
- Does your partner ridicule, criticize, or insult you?
- Does your partner threaten you or talk about and/or display weapons?
- Do you not see friends or family or do things because of your partner’s jealousy?
- Has your partner forced unwanted sex on you?
- Do you have to justify everything you do, every place you go and every person you see to avoid your partner’s temper?
- Has your partner threatened to commit suicide?

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