

## Red Flags of a batterers personality

Many of the behaviors that society socializes us to interpret as caring, attentive, and romantic are actually early warning signs of the likelihood of future abuse. Behaviors to look for include the following:

**Jealousy.** An abuser will always say that jealousy is a sign of love. Jealousy has nothing to do with love; it's a sign of possessiveness and lack of trust. In a healthy relationship, the partners trust each other unless one of them has legitimately done something to break that trust.

**Controlling Behavior.** Abusers will exhibit angry behavior if their partner is 'late' coming back from the store or from an appointment. They may rationalize this behavior as arising from concern for the partner's safety and well being.

**Quick Involvement.** Many domestic violence victims only knew their abuser for a few months or weeks before they started living together. The abuser may come on like a whirlwind, and abusers are generally very charming at the beginning of a relationship.

**Unrealistic Expectations.** Abusive people expect their partner to meet all their needs and to handle everything for them: emotionally, physically, and sometimes, economically.

**Isolation.** The abusive person tries to cut their partner off from all resources. The partner's closeness to family may be derided as being 'tied to the apron strings'. The abuser will accuse people who are supportive of their partner of causing trouble, and they may restrict their partner's use of the car or phone.

**Blaming Others for Problems.** Abusers see themselves as victims and do not take responsibility for their own feelings or behaviors.

**Hypersensitivity.** Abusers are easily insulted, and may take the slightest setback as a personal attack. They will rant and rave about the injustice of things that are really just a part of living, such as having to get up for work, getting a traffic ticket, or being asked to help with chores.

**Cruelty to Animals or Children.** The abuser is a person who may punish animals severely and who is insensitive to their pain. He/she may be very critical of other people's children or of any children the partner brings into the relationship. They may punish children to get even with their spouse. About 60% of people who beat their partner also beat their children.

**'Playful' Use of Force in Sex.** This kind of person may like to act out fantasies where the partner is helpless, expressing the idea that rape is exciting. They may show little concern about whether or not their partner wants to have sex, using sulking or anger to manipulate them into it. They may initiate sex while the partner is sleeping, or demand it when they are ill or tired. They may want to 'make up' by having sex after they have just been physically or verbally abusive.

**Verbal Abuse.** The abuser will say things that are intentionally cruel, and will degrade, curse or belittle the victim's accomplishments.

**Rigid Sex Roles.** Abusers expect their partner to play the 'female' role, to serve them and obey them in all things.

**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.** Many victims are confused by their abuser's sudden changes in mood, and may think it indicates a special mental problem. Abusers may be nice one minute and explode the next. Explosiveness and moodiness are typical of people who beat their partners. Many victims feel that if their partner would just quit drinking or using drugs, the violence would stop. This is usually not the case. Abusive people continue the abuse even after they stop using alcohol or drugs, unless they also seek help for their abusive behavior.

**Past Battering.** These people say they have hit a partner in the past, but the previous partner made them do it. You may hear from relatives or ex-partners that the person has been abusive. A batterer will beat any person they are with if the relationship lasts long enough for violence to begin; circumstances do not turn a person into an abusive personality.

**Threats of Violence.** Most people do not threaten their mates. However, a batterer will say, 'Everyone talks like that' or 'It didn't mean anything'.

**Breaking Objects.** The abuser may beat on the table with their fist or throw objects around. This behavior is used as punishment and to terrorize the victim into submission.

**Use of Force During an Argument.** A batterer may hold their partner down, restrain them from leaving the room, push or shove them. They may pin them to the wall, saying, 'You're going to listen to me!'

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