



SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Ascend Domestic
Abuse Service for
Women - North Tipperary



One of the reasons people get caught up in unhealthy relationships is that abusers can be charming. They can appear confident, attentive and sweet, and they have an intoxicating energy when pursuing you.

Some of the most common warning signs of abuse are some of the things that books, movies and TV shows teach us from a young age are signs of romance and love.

We aren't taught to look for the steady, calm, rational person who takes their time getting to know us. We are taught that crazy, passionate love is ideal. I believe that the twisted cultural idea of intense infatuation as true love is damaging to our expectations and relationship experiences.

These are some indicators that you may be dating someone who has the potential to become abusive:

REFERENCE Bonnie Koehn, Contributor, Huffington Post | Mother, Writer, Life Juggler, Advocate | Early Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship

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LOVE-BOMBING

They're full of compliments and offer intense attention when trying to win your heart. They will tell you you're unlike anyone else they've ever met. They can't live without you and have never loved anyone as much as you.

THEY WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU

Interest is good. Invasions of privacy are not. Where are you? Where are you going? When will you be back? Can I read your texts? What's your Facebook password? If you hear a lot of questions like these, be careful. Don't be afraid to say no. Expect your boundaries to be respected. Pay attention to the response you get when you ask for privacy. It should be accepted without question.

ISOLATING

We all go into a bit of a love cave at times. Eventually we come out and want to show off our new relationship. Pay attention to how your partner behaves around your friends. Are they possessive? Does she/he cling to you? Always rushing you to leave? Making excuses to avoid social events to get alone time? Are they critical of your friends and family? Do you feel guilty when you want to spend time with people away from your partner? If you're missing your friends and he/she doesn't encourage you to see them, that's a problem. Abusers may also wage war against your people; inventing drama or conflict in order to make you feel they are the only one you can trust.

SHOULD'S

Comments about how you should or shouldn't cut your hair; whom you should see, what job you should take, how you should speak, etc. are an indication that your partner believes they know more than you do about yourself and your life. This attitude will increase over time until you no longer know who you are.

PERMISSION

There is a difference between being considerate about what your partner might prefer and feeling like you have to ask permission in order to avoid consequences like sulking, withdrawal of affection, silent treatment, or a verbal lashing.

HOT/COLD

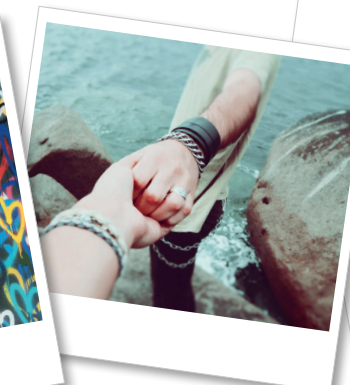
Abusers will often run hot and cold emotionally and physically; withdrawing when you don't say or do what they want you to do, and returning at warp speed as soon as you "do the right thing".

MANUFACTURING JEALOUSY

Abusive people will create situations designed to make you feel jealous or feel that your relationship is threatened. They thrive on making you feel insecure and are skilled at making even the most confident person question where they stand.

CONSTANT TOGETHERNESS

If you find that you can't get a minute alone, take note. You should be able to shower alone, lock the bathroom door, sleep alone, and have time to yourself without being made to feel that you are rejecting someone.



PICKING FIGHTS

Abusers like to assess how much you will take. They will start out testing you with small arguments to see if you'll forgive them. They increase so gradually that you don't realise you're falling deeper into an abusive situation. The common element of these tests is that they usually make no sense. You will not be able to figure out what you've done wrong or why you're apologising.

VIOLENCE OF ANY KIND

An abuser may test the limits of abuse for a few years before it becomes physical. Often violence occurs once there is a certain level of commitment. Statistically, initial acts of violence occur just after an engagement, a wedding, or the conception or birth of a child. If you see any signs of violence (physical fights, roughness with a pet or child, cruelty to strangers, damaging your belongings) before these milestones, get out as soon as you can. It will only get worse.

CRITICISM

... of anyone and anything, all the time. They want the world and everyone around them to be perfect, but their own minds are a mess. They can't make sense of their own stuff, so they focus their fixing energy onto others. They want to talk about what everybody else is doing wrong.

COMMENTS ABOUT EXES

If your partner describes their fights with exes as "passionate", ask questions and find out what "passionate" means. Does this mean that fights were aggressive or abusive? If they describe their exes using derogatory terms, question it. Even if things ended badly, degrading a past partner isn't OK. Assume that whatever is said about an ex will one day be said about you.

SUPERIORITY

This can look like confidence at first, but with an abuser it can turn out to be egomania or abrasive arrogance. Healthy people have no need to belittle others. They feel that everyone is equal and that there is room in the world for everyone to be great.

If any of these behaviours sound familiar to you, please talk to someone about it. The sooner you get some support, the better.

People are love optimists and can spend years hanging on promises, but sadly, it is just not statistically likely that an abuser will change. The world is full of healthy people and happy relationships. Don't be afraid to trust yourself and start again. It's not easy to walk away from an abusive relationship, but I promise you, life is better on the other side.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

YOUNG PEOPLE IN NORTH TIPPERARY ANSWERED THIS QUESTION FOR US:

- ♥ Honesty
- ♥ Fun
- ♥ Supportive
- ♥ Trust
- ♥ Feeling Safe
- ♥ Respect
- ♥ Love
- ♥ Chemistry
- ♥ Equality
- ♥ Consent
- ♥ Good Communication
- ♥ Acceptance
- ♥ Independence



If you or somebody you know has been affected by domestic abuse you can contact the following services for support:

ASCEND DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE

confidential helpline 086 828 3399

BARNARDOS

0504 20018

CARI (for children and families who have been affected by child sexual abuse)

1890 924 567

PIETA HOUSE

0505 22568

SAMARITANS

1850 609 090

RAPE CRISIS MIDWEST

1800 311 511

CHILDLINE

1800 66 66 66 or text talk to 50101

SPUNOUT.IE

is Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people.

TLC KIDZ a programme for children and mothers who have been affected by domestic abuse

0504 20018

GARDAI

Roscrea 0505 24230

Nenagh 067 50450

Templemore 0504 32630

Thurles 0504 25100

MOVE 065 684 8689

AMEN 0818 222 240

YOUR OWN GP

CSMT (COMMUNITY SUBSTANCE MISUSE TEAM)

this is a multi-disciplinary team responding to under 18's with substance misuse issues in the Mid West.

CSMT work with youths, families and the wider community to lessen the impact of substance misuse.

061 317 688

SOCIAL WORK DUTY AND INTAKE

067 46660



For information or an appointment
with Ascend Domestic Abuse
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 [www.facebook.com/
AscendDomesticAbuse](https://www.facebook.com/AscendDomesticAbuse)