

**WHAT IS
RELATIONSHIP ABUSE?**

Definition of Relationship Abuse:

- Relationship abuse is a pattern of assaultive and controlling behaviors used by one person against another in order to gain or maintain power in the relationship.
- Relationship violence is not about getting angry or having an occasional disagreement. In an abusive relationship, one partner has an ongoing pattern of intentionally behaving in ways that cause fear, degradation and humiliation to control the other person.
- Forms of relationship abuse can be verbal, emotional, psychological, physical and sexual. Relationship abuse can include threats, intimidation, belittling words and actions, violence and sexual coercion.

Patterns of Abuse:

Relationship violence is not a one-time incident. The abuse generally occurs in a cycle that will repeat itself.

Stage 1: Tension building

Things get tense between you and your dating partner. The abuser becomes more irritable and may pick fights with you or yell at you for no reason. You feel like you can't do anything right and that things could blow up at any moment. You are especially careful not to "set him off."

Stage 2: Explosion

The abuser "explodes" in an outburst of anger or violence that can include emotional, verbal, sexual and/or physical abuse. Examples: The abuser might scream and yell in a way that scares or humiliates you; threaten to hurt you; shove, hit or kick you; slam you against a wall, grab your neck, etc.; rape you or force you to go further sexually than you want to.

Stage 3: Honeymoon

The abuser apologizes and promises that it will never happen again. He may try to make up by telling you he loves you or buying you flowers or other gifts. The abuser may shift the blame for the explosion to someone or something else, possibly saying that you did something to cause the abuse or saying he was drunk or stressed out.

The victim may stay in the relationship because she believes him and sees the honeymoon phase as the "real him."

Abusive episodes are rarely isolated. The pattern of abuse usually continues, with abusive incidents increasing in frequency and severity over time.

Name: _____

**TEN SIGNS OF
RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

According to psychologist and relationship expert Dr. Jill Murray, the ten signs of relationship abuse can be divided into two categories as follows:

Emotional/Verbal Abuse:

1. Isolating your partner from friends, family and outside activities that don't include you
2. Calling your dating partner insulting names or using degrading terminology to describe her
3. Showing jealousy and possessiveness about your dating partner
4. Controlling how your dating partner dresses, how much makeup she uses, with whom she talks; giving unsolicited advice; excessive text-messaging and using your cell phone to check up on her
5. "Crazy-making" and rule-changing behaviors; threats of self-harm if your dating partner leaves you
6. Having different standards for your dating partner than you do for yourself

Sexual/Physical Abuse:

7. Roughhousing or play-wrestling
8. Holding your dating partner's hand too tightly or putting your arm around her waist or shoulders too tightly
9. Pushing, shoving, hair-pulling, grabbing, restraining and other violent behaviors that are painful, even if they don't leave marks or bruises
10. Touching your dating partner's body in ways that are not consensual or make her feel uncomfortable; making threats (implied or real) to leave the relationship if your dating partner doesn't consent to sexual activity