IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE: Computer use can be monitored by an abuser, even when you attempt to conceal or clear it. If you need assistance but are worried that your Internet use is being monitored, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1−800−799−7233 or TTY 1−800−787−3224. For more about Internet and social media safety in abuse situations, visit Tech and Social Media Safety (http://www.thehotline.org/help/tech-social-media-safety/).

Am I Being Abused? A Quick Checklist

Another aspect of abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV) is that abusive behaviors are usually not noticeable or predictable at the start of a relationship—they may “sneak up” on us.

In fact, the potential for unexpected experiences of abuse to occur exists in any relationship. Typically, the abuser’s need for power and control emerges and intensifies as the relationship develops.

Have you ever wondered if your own relationship might be abusive? Perhaps you are not sure because no physically harmful touch (as described below) has occurred. It is important to keep in mind that there are multiple kinds of abuse, and not all are physical in nature. We’ve put together this quick abuse checklist as a 2-minute “check-in” and guide to help you determine if your partner has become abusive in your relationship.

Quick Abuse Checklist

Am I being ...

- physically attacked and/or physically forced to do anything I don’t want to do?
- repeatedly and intentionally insulted, shamed, threatened, and/or isolated?
- forced, threatened, and/or pressured into sexual activity I do not want?
- denied fair access to my/our money and financial information?
- denied the right to control my choices around birth control and reproduction?
- being controlled and/or harassed via technology?

Do I...

- sometimes feel scared of how my partner will act?
- constantly make excuses to other people for my partner’s behavior?
- believe that I can help my partner change if only I changed something about myself?
- believe the critical things my partner says to make me feel bad about myself?
- feel like I’m walking on eggshells to avoid conflict or making my partner angry?
- feel like no matter what I do, my partner is never happy with me?
- always do what my partner wants me to do instead of what I want?
- feel like there is no way out, so I stay with my partner because I am afraid of
what he/she would do if I broke up?

Am I living in a situation in which…

- my partner has access to weapons and I fear he/she might use them to hurt me
- my partner has threatened to hurt or kill me, himself, or others
- my partner expresses ownership of me (i.e. “If I can’t have you, no one else can.”)
- my partner believes he/she is about to lose me, or that I am about to leave
- there is a history of numerous calls to law enforcement
- my partner has less regard for legal or social sanctions

An affirmative “YES” in response to ANY of the questions above indicates that you are living through what many professionals refer to as “Intimate Terrorism.”

Intimate Terrorism is a form of abuse that occurs when violence and a number of pre-conceived tactics are used to gain power and keep control over an intimate partner. There are six types of abuse associated with “Intimate Terrorism” (physical, emotional, sexual, financial, reproductive coercion, and digital). For more information about these types of abuse, go to “What is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) (http://smartcouples.ifas.ufl.edu/dating/intimate-partner-violence-and-abuse/what-is-intimate-partner-violence/)?” This information will help you gain understanding about your situation and the experiences associated with each type of abuse.

Although all affirmative responses to each set of questions above demand serious attention, the last set of questions in particular presents the greatest sense of urgency in terms of seeking assistance. Please go to “How Do I Get Help if I Am Being Abused? (http://smartcouples.ifas.ufl.edu/dating/intimate-partner-violence-and-abuse/how-do-i-get-help-if-i-am-being-abused/)” to find resources for immediate assistance.

References

