

ABUSE ¹

TYPES OF ABUSE ²

Physical abuse,

including assault and any deliberate act resulting in physical injuries, including beatings in the guise of corporal punishment but which are delivered with fists or to the child's head.

Sexual abuse,

including incest, rape, buggery or any paedophile activity for the gratification of the abuser. The abuser usually has a sexually dysfunctional or unsatisfying relationship with their partner; sexual relations may be violent or inadequate or non-existent, and the child becomes a convenient substitute.

Tactile abuse,

where there is little or no physical contact between parent(s) and the young child, and any contact tends to be violent, punitive, unjust and inappropriate. Physical contact seems to be especially important in the first five or six years. Some children enjoy a cuddle into their teens. Sadly, with abuse coming into the open, many parents (especially fathers) now fear that physical contact with children may be regarded and misconstrued as abuse

Existence abuse

where the existence and rights of the child are ignored
neglect of needs:

physical (food, clothing, shelter)

intellectual (education)

psychological (self-development, self-confidence, self-esteem, maturity)

behavioural (company, friendship, interpersonal and communication skills, relationships)

ignoring the child's existence

rejection as an only child

ignoring one child and loving all others (rejection)

ignoring the child as a separate human being and using the child as an extension of one's own existence (as in MSBP, Munchausen Syndrome By Proxy - almost killing the child then rescuing them in a dramatic attention-seeking manner by

¹ ABUSE websites: <http://abigails.org/index.htm>

Domestic abuse is a pattern of coercive, intimidating, violent, or cruel behavior used to control an intimate partner or family members. It destroys lives, families, and relationships, and tears at the fabric of our society. The Olympia Union Gospel Mission (OUGM) ministers to domestic abuse needs in a variety of ways, on the basis of biblical truths about domestic abuse issues. We encourage you to visit our Bible studies and lessons to see what the Bible says about abuse as sin; domestic violence dynamics; victim safety; submission; forgiveness; divorce and remarriage; godly boundaries; and much more. Some other sites on Domestic Violence - <http://new.abanet.org/domesticviolence/Pages/default.aspx> and <http://www.womenslaw.org/>

² www.crosscreekcounseling.com/Child-Abuse/

arriving at hospital casualty at the last minute, then revelling in the adulation of the concerned mother who nearly lost her child)
abandonment

Religious abuse or cult abuse

The child is forced to accept the narrow, exclusive religious views of the parent or guardian to the exclusion of any other belief or possibility of any belief
Any behaviour by the child not in line with the parents' rigid religious zeal is met with punishment and abuse
The child is starved of development in interpersonal skills and relationships in the name of religion
The child is subjected to strange, unnatural and often perverse beliefs on sexual matters and sexual development in line with the religious belief
The child is discouraged or prevented from associating with any person not sharing the religious belief of the parent or guardian

Emotional abuse

refusal or unwillingness or inability to express love
deliberate withholding of love
conditional love (eg "I don't love you when you behave like that")
loving one child to the exclusion of all others
cocooning and smothering, denying the child the opportunity to develop as a separate individual
being forced into any conflict between parents
being used as a pawn by warring parents
being forced into a caring or caretaker role at an inappropriate age
witnessing alcohol or substance abuse, especially on a regular basis, perhaps
being forced to participate
witnessing violence between parents or adults

Psychological abuse

constant criticism of a trivial and unjustified nature
unjustified blame, often for things which have no connection with the child (scapegoating)
refusal to value
refusal to acknowledge the child and their achievements
refusal to praise
inconsistency in judgment
unclear, shifting and inconsistent boundaries, sometimes no boundaries, at other times very tight boundaries
refusal to make eye contact with the child over a long period
refusal of parents to agree with or support each other when dealing with children
unpredictable behaviour on the part of the parents

Common Symptoms

Abuse's Potential Repercussions:

Memory blocks
Flashbacks
Nightmares
Insomnia
Fear
Guilt
Anger
Anxiety
Anorexia
Bulimia
Compulsiveness
Depression
Headaches
Distance from
God
Isolation
Loneliness
Lack of self-
control
Low self esteem
Over criticalness
Panic attacks
Shame
Perfectionism
Sexual problems
Substance abuse
Tiredness
Suicidal
tendencies
Repeated
victimization
Over eating

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

QUESTIONS THAT MAY HELP YOU TO KNOW WHETHER YOU ARE EXPERIENCING PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Does your partner ...

- seem irritated or angry with you several times a week?
- yell at you, call you names, tell you there is something wrong with you, or make comments that hurt you?
- cause you to feel confused, frustrated, upset, or on guard all the time?
- disrespect, criticize, blame, belittle, dominate, or threaten you?
- cause you to doubt yourself or distrust your own feelings and perceptions?
- embarrass you in front of others, perhaps even your children?
- look at you or act in ways that scare you?
- control what you do, who you see or talk to, or where you go?
- stop you from seeing or talking to friends or family?
- take your money, make you ask for money, or refuse to give you money?
- make all the decisions?
- tell you you are a bad parent or threaten to take away or hurt your children?
- act like the abuse is not big deal, it's your fault, or even deny doing it?
- destroy your property or threaten to kill your pets?
- intimidate you with guns, knives, or other weapons? (very dangerous!)
- do things to keep you from getting the sleep you need?
- threaten to commit suicide or say he can't live without you? (very dangerous!)
- threaten to kill you? (very dangerous!)

These behaviors are not normal in a relationship. They are unhealthy, unloving, and disrespectful.

THE CONTINUUMS OF ABUSE ³

Abuse often becomes more severe and/or more frequent over time. The Continuums of Abuse illustrate how physical, psychological, sexual, and social abuse can progress in their harm and danger.

³ <http://www.abigails.org/a-continuums.htm>

Physical Abuse (in order of increasing danger)

- Holding down, blocking, pinning
- Pushing or shoving
- Shaking or jerking
- Slapping and bruising
- Throwing objects
- Punching
- Kicking
- Black eyes, cuts, chipped teeth
- Burning with hot drinks, cigarettes, etc.
- Causing serious falls
- Choking
- Severe beatings
- Broken bones
- Hitting with objects
- Back injuries, paralysis
- Internal injuries
- Use of weapons
- Death

Psychological Abuse (in order of increasing severity and danger)

- "Jokes" or put-downs that demean the victim
- Acting like the victim's feelings, needs, and ideas don't matter
- Enforcing rigid roles and rules for women
- Controlling through jealousy
- Isolating the victim
- Insults and name-calling
- Yelling and raging
- Humiliation, throwing food
- Fist through wall
- Threats and intimidation
- Destruction of her property
- Hurting or killing pets
- Displaying guns, sleeping with guns
- Depriving the victim of sleep
- Abuser threatens suicide
- Tries to get the victim to commit suicide
- Threatens to kill her and/or the children
- Death

Sexual Abuse (in order of increasing severity and danger)

Anger at women
Sexual jokes and put-downs
Embarrassing comments
Treat woman as a sexual object; sex expected as a duty
Withholding sex to punish
Touching victim in ways that feel "uncomfortable" Promiscuity and sexual "affairs"
Sex after or together with violence or abuse
Forced by violence or threats into sexual acts the victim doesn't want to do
Marital rape
Incest with children
Sadism
Death of victim

TYPES OF VERBAL ABUSE ⁴

Belittling

Belittling "puts down" the victim and invalidates her opinions or feelings. Or it may be designed to tell the victim that her concerns or accomplishments are insignificant. Belittling statements may be patronizing put-downs such as, "Well, that's nice that it gives you something to do."

Some belittling statements include:

- You can't take a joke.
- You're too sensitive.
- You don't know what you're talking about.
- You're making a big deal out of nothing.
- You always have to have something to complain about.

Countering and Correcting

Countering shuts down the discussion and opposes denies the victim's reality. The abuser argues against her thoughts, her opinions, and her reality. By negating her views, the abuser feels he is maintaining his control and dominance over her.

Abusive "Jokes"

Put-downs disguised as jokes often refer to woman's gender, to her mental abilities, or to her competency. This can include statements such as:

- You need a keeper!

⁴ <http://www.abigails.org/Sin/types-of-verbal-abuse.htm>

- What else can you expect from a woman?
- You couldn't find your head if it wasn't attached.

Holding Out

The abuser who refuses to share himself with his partner, who ignores or refuses to listen to her, or who refuses to share information is violating the premise of a relationship. Holding back emotional support erodes confidence and determination. Holding out includes refusal to communicate, and statements such as:

- There's nothing to talk about.
- You wouldn't be interested.
- It's none of your business.

Side-Tracking and Shutting Down

Forcing the discussion off track, shutting it down, or changing the subject are ways to control and frustrate the conversation. Sometimes accusing and blaming are used to hijack the discussion and throw the victim off balance. Some shutting-down statements are:

- You're just trying to have the last word.
- I don't want to talk about it anymore.
- Just drop it!

Transferring Blame

Many abusers blame their partner for their anger, irritation, or insecurity. Telling the victim that the abuse is her fault confuses her and puts her on the defensive. An abuser may accuse the victim of the very actions done by the abuser himself. (This can be very "crazy-making.") Some blaming phrases include:

- It's all your fault.
- You're just trying to pick a fight.
- If you weren't so...

Faultfinding

Most statements that begin with the word "you" or "always/never" signal abusive faultfinding and criticism. Faultfinding veiled in help or advice is abusive.

- You're always so....
- Why can't you just...?
- You should just let me do that.

Intimidation

Intimidation can come through words or actions that threaten or imply harm or loss. It is designed to control and gain power through fear.

Insulting and Labeling

Insulting names and personal "labels" are abusive, as are demeaning sexual references.

- Dingbat, air-head

- Slut, bitch, broad
- Stupid, ugly, fat

Selective Memory

Abusers may "conveniently forget" or alter the facts. This selective memory can be used to deny, twist, and rewrite reality (this is also "crazy-making"). Selective memory is signaled by statements such as:

- I don't know what you're talking about.
- I never said that.
- You're making that up.

Commanding

When a partner commands or demands instead of respectfully requesting, he denies the worth and independence of the victim.

Lashing Out

Lashing out at someone is never justified. Angry verbal attacks, yelling, raging, and temper tantrums can be effective ways to intimidate and control others.

CODEPENDENT / CODEPENDENCY

"Co-dependency can be defined as the tendency to put others needs before your own. You accommodate to others to such a degree that you tend to discount or ignore your own feelings, desires and basic needs. Your self-esteem depends largely on how well you please, take care of and/or solve problems for someone else (or many others)." ⁵

Co-dependency is a learned behavior that can be passed down from one generation to another. It is an emotional and behavioral condition that affects an individual's ability to have a healthy, mutually satisfying relationship. It is also known as "relationship addiction" because people with codependency often form or maintain relationships that are one-sided, emotionally destructive and/or abusive. The disorder was first identified about ten years ago as the result of years of studying interpersonal relationships in families of alcoholics. Co-dependent behavior is learned by watching and imitating other family members who display this type of behavior. ⁶

"The irony is that as much as a "codependent" feels responsibility for others and takes care of others, she believes deep down that other people are responsible for her. She blames others for her unhappiness and problems, and feels that it's other people's fault that she's unhappy.

⁵ How the Co-dependency Movement Is Ruining Marriages by Willard F. Harley, Jr.; http://www.marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi8110_cod.html

⁶ <http://mentalhealthamerica.net/go/codependency>

Another irony is that while she feels controlled by people and events, she herself is overly controlling. She is afraid of allowing other people to be who they are and of allowing events to happen naturally. An expert in knowing best how things should turn out and how people should behave, the codependent person tries to control others through threats, coercion, advice giving, helplessness, guilt, manipulation, or domination." ⁷

Symptoms of Codependency: ⁸

Inability to know what "normal" is.
Difficulty in following a project through.
Difficulty having fun.
Judging self, others without mercy.
Low self esteem, often projected onto others. (eg: Why don't *they* get their act together!)
Difficulty in developing or sustaining meaningful relationships.
Belief that others cause or are responsible for the codependent's emotions.

(Codependents often use language like "you make me feel _____", or "I was made to feel like_____")

Overreacting to change. (or intense fear of / inability to deal with change.)
Inability to see alternatives to situations, thus responding very impulsively.
Constantly seeking approval and affirmation, yet having compromised sense of self.
Feelings of being different.
Confusion and sense of inadequacy.
Being either super responsible or super irresponsible. (Or alternating between these.)
Lack of self confidence in making decisions, no sense of power in making choices.
Feeling of fear, insecurity, inadequacy, guilt, hurt, and shame which are denied.
Isolation and fear of people, resentment of authority figures.
Fear of anger or bottling anger up till it explodes.
Hypersensitivity to criticism.
Being addicted to excitement / drama. (Chaos making.)
Dependency upon others and fear of abandonment.
Avoidance of relationships to guard against abandonment fears.
Confusion between love and pity.
Tendency to look for "victims" to help.
Rigidity and need to control.
Lies, when it would be just as easy to tell the truth.

Are you codependent?

Melody Beattie, author of *Codependent No More* developed this check list:

⁷ <http://www.recovery-man.com/coda/codependency.htm>

⁸ <http://www.recovery-man.com/coda/symptoms.htm>

Do you feel responsible for other people--their feelings, thoughts, actions, choices, wants, needs, well-being and destiny?
Do you feel compelled to help people solve their problems or by trying to take care of their feelings?
Do you find it easier to feel and express anger about injustices done to others than about injustices done to you?
Do you feel safest and most comfortable when you are giving to others?
Do you feel insecure and guilty when someone gives to you?
Do you feel empty, bored and worthless if you don't have someone else to take care of, a problem to solve, or a crisis to deal with?
Are you often unable to stop talking, thinking and worrying about other people and their problems?
Do you lose interest in your own life when you are in love?
Do you stay in relationships that don't work and tolerate abuse in order to keep people loving you?
Do you leave bad relationships only to form new ones that don't work, either?

About Codependency and Recovery from Addictions: ⁹

Addictions and Codependency are family and relationship issues as well as a primary illness for the addict. Modern treatment methods address the entire family and relationship structure.

Ironically, *codependency isn't about other people* - it's about the relationship with the self. Codependents often believe that if the addict in their life sobered up their problems would go away.

Countless addict / alcoholics find their relationships end or change radically when they get clean and sober. The family / relationship dynamic was predicated on the addict being "the sick one." As the addict gets well they may find their partners and family members have no idea how to adjust to the changes.

Enabling codependents may subvert the addict's recovery so the unhealthy relationship dynamics can be preserved.

Addicted codependents who hid behind another's more dramatic problem may leave the relationship rather than give up their own using. Addicted codependents often progress in their own addictions more rapidly when their partner enters recovery. (Since the change in the relationship is stressful.)

Codependents in denial cannot adjust to the relationship changes that occur when their partner begins recovery. They may move on to other addictive relationships so they can cling to their own dysfunctional patterns. (The controlling codependent is often lost without someone to blame, fix and control.) How many times have you

⁹ http://www.recovery-man.com/coda/add_coda.htm

heard of people who leave one alcoholic only to enter a relationship with another one?

All people involved in the addictive cycle need a solid recovery program if relationships are to be preserved and they are to lead happy, fulfilling lives.