

# Self Quiz: Am I in an Abusive Relationship?

By Toby D. Goldsmith, M.D., and Maria Vera, Ph.D.

Below are some questions and checklists to help you determine if you are in an abusive relationship. Answer the questions honestly. If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may be a victim of abuse.

1. Do you feel anxious or nervous when you are around your partner?
2. Do you watch what you are doing in order to avoid making your partner angry or upset?
3. Do you feel obligated or coerced into having sex with your partner?
4. Are you afraid of voicing a different opinion than your partner?
5. Does your partner criticize you or embarrass you in front of others?
6. Does your partner always check up on what you have been doing, and not believe your answers?
7. Is your partner very jealous and does he accuse you of having affairs?
8. Does your partner tell you that he will stop beating you when you start behaving yourself?
9. Have you stopped seeing your friends or family because of your partner's behavior?
10. Does your partner's behavior make you feel as if you are wrong?
11. Does your partner threaten to harm you?
12. Do you try to please your partner rather than yourself in order to avoid being hurt?
13. Does your partner keep you from going out or doing things that you want to do?
14. Do you always feel that nothing you do is ever good enough for your partner?
15. Does your partner say that if you try to leave him, you will never see your children again?
16. Does your partner say that if you try to leave, he will kill himself or you?
17. Is there always an excuse for your partner's behavior? ("The alcohol or drugs made me do it? My job is too stressful? If dinner was on time I wouldn't have hit you! I was just joking!")
18. Do you lie to your family, friends and doctor about your bruises, cuts and scratches?

In addition to those questions, consider the following two checklists. The first list includes signs of emotional abuse. You are probably the victim of emotional abuse if your partner:

- Repeatedly gives you destructive criticism, verbal threats and browbeating.
- Always claims to be right.
- Excludes you from making decisions and claims to be the head of the household.
- Abuses your trust by lying, hiding important information and papers, cheating or being inappropriately jealous.
- Minimizes or denies abusive behavior.
- Constantly shows disrespect, puts you down or embarrasses you in front of others.
- Harasses you by following you or checking up on you.
- Prevents you from seeing your relatives or friends or insists on going everywhere with you.
- Monitors your phone calls.

The next list includes signs of physical abuse. You are a victim of physical abuse if your partner:

- Intimidates you through angry or threatening gestures.
- Destroys your belongings or household items.
- Coerces you to have sex or perform sexual acts against your will.
- Kicks, bites, stabs, pushes, burns or chokes you.
- Uses weapons to threaten or harm you or others you love.

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, or experience these forms of emotional and physical abuse in your relationship, you should seek help. Abuse is not acceptable behavior and is not something you should just learn to live with.

Don't be a victim that keeps this a silent disease. Seek help from relatives, friends, law enforcement or community resources. With their help, you may be able to stop the abuse or, if necessary, leave the relationship. Realize that once the abuse has started, it will nearly always get worse.

**Last reviewed:** By John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on 9 Oct 2013