



What is emotional / verbal abuse?

Emotional abuse includes non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring or “checking in,” excessive texting, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or stalking.

There are many behaviors that qualify as emotional or verbal abuse:

- Calling you names and putting you down.
- Yelling and screaming at you.
- Intentionally embarrassing you in public.
- Preventing you from seeing or talking with friends and family.
- Telling you what to do and wear.
- Using online communities or cell phones to control, intimidate or humiliate you.
- Blaming your actions for their abusive or unhealthy behavior.
- Stalking you.
- Threatening to commit suicide to keep you from breaking up with them.
- Threatening to harm you, your pet or people you care about.
- Making you feel guilty or immature when you don't consent to sexual activity.
- Threatening to expose your secrets such as your sexual orientation or immigration status.
- Starting rumors about you.
- Threatening to have your children taken away.

Is Emotional Abuse Really Abuse?

A relationship can be unhealthy or abusive even without physical violence. Verbal abuse may not cause physical damage, but it does cause emotional pain and scarring. It can also lead to physical violence if the relationship continues on the unhealthy path its on.

Sometimes verbal abuse is so bad that you actually start believing what your partner says. You begin to think you're stupid, ugly or fat. You agree that nobody else would ever want to be in a relationship with you. Constantly being criticized and told you aren't good enough causes you to lose confidence and lowers your self esteem. As a result, you may start to blame yourself for your partner's abusive behavior.

Remember -- emotional abuse is never your fault. In fact, your partner may just be trying to control or manipulate you into staying in the relationship. Talk to someone you trust, like a parent, friend or teacher, about the situation and make a safety plan. **You can also chat with an advocate at WRAP by calling our 24/7 Help Line at 800-273-8712.**