

Red Flags



“Red flags” are words or actions said or done by one intimate partner that signal to the other partner that their interactions are possibly unsafe or harmful.

Domestic violence does not look the same in every relationship because every relationship is different. But one thread most abusive relationships have in common is that the abusive partner exhibits many different types of behaviors to gain more power and control over their partner. Coercive and controlling behaviors don't always appear overnight, but rather emerge and intensify as the relationship grows.

The following are some questions that you can ask yourself, a friend, or a family member who is concerned that their relationship is abusive. Answering “yes” to any of these questions does not automatically mean that your partner is abusive. **However, if you are experiencing one or more of the red flags, you can call our crisis hotline at 800-273-8712 to talk about what is happening in your relationship.**

- Do you feel nervous around or are you scared of your partner?
- Do you have to be careful to control your behavior to avoid your partner's anger?
- Does your partner criticize you, or humiliate you in front of other people?
- Is your partner always checking up on you or questioning you about what you do when you are not around your partner?
- Do you feel pressured by your partner when it comes to sex (pressuring you to have sex when you don't want to or do things sexually you're not comfortable with)?
- Does your partner repeatedly and wrongly accuse you of seeing or flirting with other people? Does your partner's jealousy stop you from seeing friends or family?
- Does your partner make you feel like you are wrong, stupid, crazy, or inadequate?
- Does your partner tell you that if you changed, he or she wouldn't treat you like this?
- Does your partner say, “I will kill myself if you break up with me” or “I will hurt/kill you if you break up with me”?
- Has your partner ever threatened to destroy your property or harm your pet?
- Does your partner control all of the money in your relationship or has that person ever taken your money or refused to give you money for expenses?
- Does your partner make excuses for the abusive behavior? For example: saying, “It's because I was drunk/high,” or “I can't control my temper,” or “I was just joking”?
- Has your partner ever told you that you are a bad parent and/or threatened to take your children away?