

Legacy of Healing Advocacy Center & Safe House
7720 Waterworks Road
Tulalip, Washington 98271
Phone: (360) 716-4100

Legacy of Healing Advocacy Center & Safe House

Intimate Partner Violence Characteristics:

If your partner has one or more of the following characteristics, you are in danger. The more characteristics from this list that your partner has, the more likely it is that emotional, physical or sexual violence will be used to control you.

Be cautious. Seek Support. Call Legacy of Healing Advocacy Center & Safe House at 360-716-4100 for information, safety planning, or emergency shelter for you and your children.

Quick Involvement: Many abusers push for immediate commitment. He says: "I've never felt like this about anyone before," or "You are the first person who ever understood me."

Jealousy: An abuser is suspicious and controlling of his partner. He is unreasonably jealous and accuses her of flirting or having affairs. He is angry and jealous when his partner spends time with family or friends.

Rigid Sex Roles: An abuser has rigid ideas of what is a woman's "place." He sees women as being inferior.

Controlling Behavior: Abusers often make all the decisions in the relationship - which friends can visit, what movie to see, where they are going to live. Abusers often tell their partner what to wear, how to parent the children. Abusers often control all the money.

Isolation: Abusers often cut their partners off from family and friends. They say, "Those people are a bad influence on you," or "I miss you so much when you're gone - I want you home with me." Abusers often prevent their partners from using the car or the phone. Frequently abusers do not allow their partners to have a job, go to school, or go anywhere alone.

Blames Others: Abusers do not take responsibility for their actions or feelings. Someone else is always responsible. "My boss is out to get me." "If you hadn't pushed my buttons, I wouldn't have hit you." "I can't help getting angry - you make me mad."

Makes Excuses: Abusers make excuses for their behavior. "I was abused as a child." "I had no choice - you made me lose my temper."

Minimizes: An abuser minimizes his behavior. He says: "I was only joking. You are too sensitive." "I didn't hit you that hard."

Acts Like the Victim: When an abuser doesn't get what he wants, he believes he is the victim. He accuses his partner of being abusive if she defends herself.

Abusive to Children: Abusers often expect children to act much older than they are. They punish babies for crying, demand small children to sit quietly for long periods of time. They ridicule or "tease" children. A very high percentage of abusers also abuse children. Even if the abuser does not physically harm the children, if one of their parents is being threatened or hurt, the children are being abused.

Abusive to Animals: In homes where an animal is being abused, it is almost certain there is also domestic violence in the home.

Using "Playful" Force: What may first appear to be playful wrestling, quickly becomes something else. The abuser holds her down and then taunts her when she can't break free. He is letting her know that he is stronger than she is and he can overpower her.

Using Force During Arguments: Abusers often prevent their partners from leaving the room during an argument or hold them down. There is a very high probability they will use further and perhaps greater violence in future arguments.

Using Force in Sex: Abusers often like to act out "harmless" fantasies of rape and domination during sex. Or, they are more overt and rape their partner. Abusers often keep their partners up all night begging for sex until they finally give in. Abusers often have sex with their partner while the partner is sick, exhausted, or asleep.

Past Abuse: If the abuser has been abusive in a past relationship, he will likely be abusive again. "I hit my last girlfriend, but I was really stressed out and it was only once." Stress doesn't cause violence. If he made the choice to be abusive before, there is a good possibility he will choose violence again.

Threats: Threats should be taken seriously. Threats such as "I'll take the children away from you" and "I'm going to break your neck" are intended to control her behavior. Threats are not just "figures of speech" - they are ideas thought of by the abuser and they could be carried out.

Destroying Property: Abusers often put their fists through the wall or destroy their partner's beloved objects. The message in this behavior is, "I could hurt you like this too."