

Types of abuse and examples

There are different types of abuse that perpetrators use against their victims, most abuse will overlap. Types of abuse include; physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, emotional and mental, financial and spiritual.

Physical

Physical abuse is the use of physical force against someone, in a way that injures or endangers that person. Domestic abuse rarely starts at physical assault; perpetrators will use physical abuse when they feel they are being challenged.

Examples of physical abuse include:

- Punching
- Hitting
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Strangling
- Restraining
- Burning
- Scalding
- Stabbing
- Head butting
- Biting
- Nipping
- Squeezing
- Shoving
- Suffocating
- Pushing
- Grabbing
- Choking
- Throwing
- Breaking bones
- Using weapons
- Poisoning
- Throwing things
- Force feeding
- Attempts to kill
- Reckless driving
- Pulling hair
- Murder

Sexual

Any situation in which someone is forced to participate in unwanted, unsafe or degrading sexual activity, even when it's with a partner the person is also having consensual sex is sexual abuse. Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Rape (forced penetration)
- Sexual assault (vaginal, anal or oral)
- Sexual assault using objects; sex toys, broken glass, bottles, etc
- Forcing sex in ways that hurt, or following a physical beating
- Forcing sex with others
- Forcing sex in front of others
- Making her watch or mimic pornography
- Unwanted fondling
- Videoing / photographing her doing sexual acts

- Pinching or biting breasts and buttocks
- Name calling e.g. frigid, whore
- Criticising her sexually
- Forcing her to strip, or forcefully stripping her
- Sadistic sexual acts
- Forcing her into prostitution
- Withholding sex and/or affection
- Making sex conditional on her behaviour
- Minimising or denying her feelings about sex or sexual preferences
- Forcing or coercing her to act out fantasies she is not comfortable with

Psychological violence

Psychological includes verbal, emotional and mental abuse. The abuse can use both verbal and non-verbal communication. The impact of psychological abuse is often deeper and longer lasting than physical abuse. Examples of this kind of abuse include:

- Name calling
- Constant insults
- Shaming and humiliating her in public, with put-downs disguised as jokes
- Nasty, hurtful sarcasm
- Only engaging in conversation with her when he decides the time is right
- Silences and sulking for days
- Blocking and diverting her if she wants to say something
- He decides what subjects can and cannot be discussed
- Trivialising and minimising anything she says and making it seem insignificant
- Twisting and turning every situation around so it's always her fault
- Screaming and shouting at her in private or public
- Criticism or constantly correcting everything she says or does
- Refusing to listen to anything she has to say
- Not allowing her to voice her opinion or have an opinion of her own
- Denial – pretending he hasn't said or done something
- Laughing or making fun of her inappropriately
- Leaving nasty messages (texts, voicemail, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Accusing her of unfaithfulness, not trying hard enough or purposely doing something to annoy
- Blaming her for his failures, or other forms of abuse

Emotional / Mental

Emotional and mental abuse is often subtle and in some cases victims don't recognise they are being abused. This kind of abuse will wear victims down, often over a long period of time, until they take responsibility for their abuser's actions and behaviour towards them, or simply accept it.

Financial

In addition to hurting victims emotionally and physically, perpetrators may also hurt them financially. Examples of economic or financial abuse include:

- Controlling all the finances
- Not allowing her to see any bank statements, bills, or any financial transactions
- Putting all the bills in her name then not paying them – destroying her credit or chance to set up her own bank account if she leaves
- Withholding money or credit cards
- Not allowing her to have her own bank account
- Not paying bills and spending the money on himself (alcohol, gambling, trips out, treats for himself)
- Giving her an allowance which is not sufficient to buy what she needs
- Making her account for every penny she spends and inspecting all receipts
- Stealing or selling her possessions or taking money
- Exploiting her assets for his personal gain
- Preventing her from working or choosing her own career
- Making her work from home so he can “keep an eye on her”
- Sabotaging her job (making her miss work, calling constantly)
- Making her beg for money
- Setting up financial loans, credit cards, hire purchase agreements by forging her signature or making her sign the paperwork
- The perpetrator refusing to work or contribute to the financial running of the family and house

Spiritual

Spiritual abuse can be hard to detect, especially if you are not knowledgeable in that particular religion, culture, beliefs and traditions. Examples of this include:

- Using her religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate her
- Preventing her from practising her religious or spiritual beliefs
- Ridiculing her religious or spiritual beliefs
- Forcing the children to be brought up in a faith that mum has not agreed to
- Threats to harm or kill in the name of 'honour'
- Using religious teachings or cultural tradition as an excuse for violence
- Denying access to ceremonies, places of worship, land or family
- Forcing her to do things against her beliefs
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation