

# TWU Counseling Center

## Relationship Violence Signs to Watch For

*There are ways to spot potential abusers, but often, we do not see the warning signs. Here's a checklist to help you identify possible abusers.*

\*Comes on too strong too soon. Beware of the person who loves instantly and wants to see you all the time. They are responding to their fantasies, not the real you. Coming on like a whirl-wind saying "you're the only person I could ever talk to", "I've never felt loved like this by anyone". They need someone desperately, and will pressure you to commit to them.

\*He has very traditional ideas about how men and women should be. Watch out for the man who thinks a woman should stay at home, take care of her husband, and follow orders. Unrealistic expectations could include "If you love me, I'm all you need – you're all I need".

\*Tends to use force or violence to end problems. If they over-react to little problems, like not being able to find a parking space, that's a bad sign. Other signals include throwing things, punching walls, and being cruel to animals when they are angry.

\*Thinks poorly of herself/himself. Abusers are insecure people with low self-esteem but most act tough to cover up their feelings of inferiority.

\*Is jealous. They may keep tabs on you and want to know where you are at all times. They are jealous of others as well as your friends and family. They may accuse you of flirting. They may give you a hard time for being involved in activities or work for fear that you will meet someone else.

\*Is completely self-centered. They think only about fulfilling their own needs.

\*Has extreme highs and lows. When they are in a good mood, they're kind, but other times they can be volatile and cruel. Take the slightest setbacks as personal attacks. Rants and raves about the injustice of things that have happened to them.

\*Blames others when things don't work out. When anything happens to them (ie: poor grades, not being able to keep a job), it is someone else's fault. Eventually they will start blaming you, too, when things go wrong.

\*Is the product of a violent family. Children from violent homes often grow up believing that violence is normal behavior.

\*Behaves badly with others. Even if they are nice to you, observe the way they treat others. The way they function with the rest of the world is the way they will ultimately function with you.

\*Treats you roughly at times. Abuse during dating is a guarantee for later abuse and more violent abuse. Do not think that marriage will change him/her for the better. It will almost certainly change them for the worse.

\*Makes you feel scared, threatened. Are you afraid to break up with this person because they might hurt you? Have you changed your life around to try to keep them from becoming angry?

\*Tries to control your every move. They are angry if you are "late" to meet them after a trip to the store or an appointment. If you are not available to see them when they want, they may question you closely about who you will be with or your plans. They may try to interfere with your right to make personal decisions about school, clothing or going to church. They act like they want to own you.

\*Blames others for their feelings. Will tell you "You make me mad," "You're hurting me by not doing what I ask," "I can't help being angry".

\*Verbally abuses you. Cursing you, running down your accomplishments, tells you that you are ugly, stupid, boring, have no personality, telling you that no one else would want you.

\*Dr. Jeckyll & Mr. Hyde. Charming in public, abusive in private.

## DATING VIOLENCE TESTS

### Are you an abuser?

- Do you feel that you own your boyfriend/girlfriend?
- That you two own each other?
- Do you believe that your partner needs to be told what to do, and told what is good for them?
- Do you feel that your partner will respect you more if they're a little afraid of you?
- Do you expect your partner to follow your orders or advice?
- Do you believe that a physical fight "clears the air"?
- Have you ever used threats (of injury, suicide, or taking something away) to control your partner?
- Have you ever "played rough" with your partner after they've asked you to stop?
- Have you ever hit your partner?

*Many people can answer "yes" to these questions – even the last one – and not think there's a problem. Unfortunately, "yes" answers to the first seven questions often lead to a "yes" answer on the last.*

*If you answered yes to any of these questions you need to seek help.*

Think about your overall attitudes about male/female relationships. Try to think of what your first reaction is when you hear about a person who has been arrested for beating their partner: do you sympathize with the abuser or with the victim?

Look at how you handle feelings of pressure, jealousy, rejection and anger. Do the people you know behave and/or believe the same way you do? Do people indicate to you that your behavior is inappropriate? If *you* were treated by someone the way you treat others in response to these feelings, would you be happy?

### Are you abused?

Does your partner...

- Isolate you from people you care most about or from friends you had before you began dating?
- Frequently embarrass or make fun of you in front of other people?
- Use intimidation to make you do what he/she wants?
- Make you feel there is "no way out" of the relationship?
- Make you perform sexual acts that you don't enjoy?
- Threaten you with force, words or weapons?
- Use alcohol/drugs as an excuse for saying hurtful things or abusing you?
- Get extremely angry frequently and you don't understand why?
- Not believe he/she has hurt you or blame you for what he/she has done?
- Physically force you to do what you do not want to do?

*If you answer yes to one or more of these you need to seek help.*

### Resources for Students

Counseling Center                      Friends of the Family  
898-3801                                      387-5131

TWU Police  
898-2911

**TWU**  
**Counseling Center**  
**Locations:**

*Denton*  
*West Jones Hall*  
*940-898-3801*

*Dallas-Parkland*  
*FPH 120*  
*214-689-6655*

*Dallas-Presbyterian*  
*DPB 16*  
*214-706-2416*

*Houston*  
*Suite 2250*  
*713-794-2059*