



# Warning signs

Anyone can choose to use violence. Although both men and women can be abusive, a high percentage are men. Those who use violence often refuse to accept responsibility for the abuse and attempt to rationalize or blame the other person or people for causing it.

## Signs of Potential Danger

**Jealousy:** of your friends, family, co-workers—any other relationship you may have.

**Violent behavior:** fights at parties, on the street, or in bars.

**Controlling behavior:** monopolizing your time; not allowing you to make decisions about your clothes, how to wear your hair, spending money, or looking for a job.

**Verbal abuse:** calling you hurtful and harmful names; putting you down either in private or in public.

**Mood swings:** a personality that is “up and down.” You don’t know what suddenly will make them mad. They may be happy one minute and angry the next minute.

**Isolation:** from friends, family, neighbors. You fear that if you say “hello” to a friend, they will get jealous and angry.

**Blaming:** those who use abuse blame you and/or others for their problems, for example, losing a job.

**Unrealistic expectations:** an abusive person can be overcritical. They may expect you to be the perfect partner, lover, or friend.

**Hypersensitivity:** those using abuse often are easily insulted or hurt.

**Family history:** individuals using violence may have seen domestic violence in their own families. They may have been raised believing that domestic violence is a normal behavior.

**Sexist attitude toward the opposite gender:** people who use violence often believe in strict gender roles. They can insist that it is a woman’s job to care for the home and her partner.

**Threats of violence:** any threat or physical force that is used to control you—including the threat of suicide.