



# ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY

## A. NOT PHYSICALLY VIOLENT

- 1. sulk, refuse to talk to you
- 2. withdraw affection or sex to punish you
- 3. stomp out in order to punish you
- 4. scream, insult or swear at you
- 5. verbally pressure you to have sex
- 6. threaten punishment other than physical (ex. having an affair, withhold money/dates/affection)
- 7. threaten to leave relationship
- 8. threaten to tell others that you have had sex with him/her if you refuse to do so

## B. INDIRECT THREATS OF VIOLENCE

- 1. prevent you from leaving
- 2. prevent you from seeing certain people/friends

## C. DIRECT THREATS OF VIOLENCE

- 1. direct anger at or threaten pets
- 2. threaten to hit or throw something at you
- 3. throw, hit or kick something
- 4. drive recklessly to frighten you
- 5. direct anger at or threaten your friends/family
- 6. destroy your special/significant property

## D. DIRECT VIOLENCE

- 1. throw something at you
- 2. push, carry, restrain, grab, shove, wrestle with you
- 3. slap or spank you
- 4. bite or scratch you
- 5. throw you bodily
- 6. spit at you

## E. SEVERE VIOLENCE

- 1. choke or strangle you
- 2. physically force sex on you
- 3. punch or kick you
- 4. burn you
- 5. beat you unconscious
- 6. threaten you with a knife, gun or other weapon
- 7. use any weapon against you

**If you checked any of the items above, you may need to look at our relationship and find alternatives**

# Boundaries Needed in Healthy Relationships

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## **1. You need to put limits on your time in relationships.**

You need to establish a good sense of time management so that you do not give all of your time over to the establishment and maintenance of your relationships with your relationship partners. You will need to develop a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly schedule for your time. You will need to set aside time enough for your work, sleep, self-nurturing activities, relationship nurturing times, family involvement, friends involvement, support group(s), recovery work, spirituality endeavors, exercise, having fun, leisure time, vacation times, alone time and relationship partners time. You cannot afford to give away precious time to your relationships which needs to be spent in the necessary activities which insure that you are not lost or swallowed up in them.

## **2. You need to put limits on the money you spend in your relationships.**

You need to establish a budget for your money so that you do not spend inordinate sums of money in the establishing or maintaining relationships. You need to be clear that your money will not be used to rescue or save your partners from fiscal irresponsibility. You need to be clear that your money will not be squandered on high risk activities such as gambling or "get rich quick" schemes. You need to be clear that you will not foot the bill to support fully partners who are not willing to take responsibility to find a job or get a better paying job for which they are qualified. You need to set limits as to how long you will fund your relationship partners who are out of work before the funding is pulled. You will need to be clear that your money will not be spent to cover legal costs if your partners are purposefully involved in illegal activities. You will need to maintain a budget so that you do not over spend and get yourself into unreasonable debt.

## **3. You need to set limits on your external resources in your relationships.**

You need to set limits for the use of your house, car(s), or other pieces of property you own. If you own a business or have a supervisory position on your job you need to set limits on how much your partners can become involved in your work. You need to set limits on how much you will have to do in terms of chores or work load to take care of your partners' needs. You need to set limits on how much your partners will have access to your family, friends and support system. You will need to set limits as to how involved you will allow your partners to become in your individual recovery and spiritual renewal support group(s) activities.

#### **4. You need to set limits on your internal resources in your relationships.**

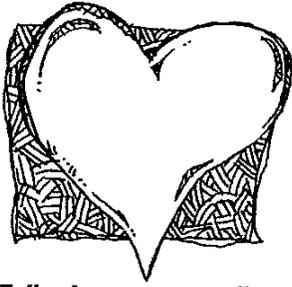
You will need to set limits on how much of your talents, skills and abilities or internal resources you are willing to expend on your relationships. You need to be clear with your partners how much of your internal resources you are willing to share or give away to establish or maintain the relationships. You need to be clear with yourself that your skills and abilities are commodities which others pay for (be it on the job or in the market place) and that you do not have to give them away for free just to keep partners in relationships. You are not required to give and give in relationships of your talents, skills and abilities without expecting something substantial in return. You need to set limits on how much you will give before you will stop giving of yourself.

#### **5. You need to set limits on your emotions in your relationships.**

You will need to set limits on how much you will emotionally invest in your relationships. You will need to recognize the emotional hooks which keep you stuck in your relationships. You will need to set limits on how "hooked" you will allow yourself to become. You will need to set time limits on how long you will allow a hook to go on in relationships. You will need to develop a sense of emotional detachment so as not to get hooked and drowned in an unhealthy enmeshment in relationships. You will need to develop emotional limits so that you will be able to figure out where you begin and end and where your relationship partners begin and end.

#### **Step 5: Take steps to set boundaries in your relationships**

You are now ready to **take the steps** to establish healthy boundaries with your relationship partners. This involves actualizing the 5 areas of boundaries for a healthy relationships. You will need to do the following boundary development tasks.



# How Healthy Is My Relationship?

Following are two lists, one of healthy relationship characteristics and one of unhealthy traits. Many relationships have a combination of both. The point of this exercise is to figure out what things in your relationship are healthy or unhealthy, so you can gain appreciation for the best things and decide what you want to change. Read both lists, and check the heart next to every statement that is true about your relationship.

I am evaluating my relationship with: \_\_\_\_\_

## IS IT HEALTHY?

Check the heart if you and this person...

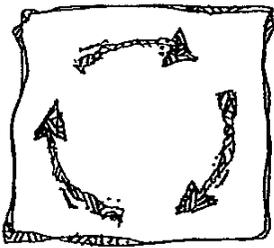
- ♥ Have fun together more often than not
- ♥ Each enjoy spending time separately, with your own friends, as well as with each other's friends
- ♥ Always feel safe with each other
- ♥ Trust each other
- ♥ Are faithful to each other if you have made this commitment
- ♥ Support each other's individual goals in life, like getting a job or going to college
- ♥ Respect each other's opinions, even when they are different
- ♥ Solve conflicts without putting each other down, cursing at each other or making threats
- ♥ Both accept responsibility for your actions
- ♥ Both apologize when you're wrong
- ♥ Have equal decision-making power about what you do in your relationship
- ♥ Each control your own money
- ♥ Are proud to be with each other
- ♥ Encourage each other's interests - like sports & extracurricular activities
- ♥ Have some privacy - your letters, diary, personal phone calls are respected as your own
- ♥ Have close friends & family who like the other person and are happy about your relationship
- ♥ Never feel like you're being pressured for sex
- ♥ Communicate about sex, if your relationship is sexual
- ♥ Allow each other 'space' when you need it
- ♥ Always treat each other with respect

## IS IT UNHEALTHY?

Check the heart if one of you...

- ♥ Gets extremely jealous or accuses the other of cheating
- ♥ Puts the other down by calling names, cursing or making the other feel bad about him or herself
- ♥ Yells at and treats the other like a child
- ♥ Doesn't take the other person, or things that are important to him/her, seriously
- ♥ Doesn't listen when the other talks
- ♥ Frequently criticizes the other's friends or family
- ♥ Pressures the other for sex, or makes sex hurt or feel humiliating
- ♥ Has ever threatened to hurt the other or commit suicide if they leave
- ♥ Cheats or threatens to cheat
- ♥ Tells the other how to dress
- ♥ Has ever grabbed, pushed, hit, or physically hurt the other
- ♥ Blames the other for your own behavior ("If you hadn't made me mad, I wouldn't have...")
- ♥ Embarrasses or humiliates the other
- ♥ Smashes, throws or destroys things
- ♥ Tries to keep the other from having a job or furthering his/her education
- ♥ Makes all the decisions about what the two of you do
- ♥ Tries to make the other feel crazy or plays mind games
- ♥ Goes back on promises
- ♥ Acts controlling or possessive - like you own your partner
- ♥ Uses alcohol or drugs as an excuse for hurtful behavior
- ♥ Ignores or withholds affection as a way of punishing the other
- ♥ Depends completely on the other to meet social or emotional needs

***This list is a way of identifying some of the healthy and unhealthy characteristics of your relationship - it does not cover every possible situation. You may want to share this list with someone in your support system, and talk about where you want to make changes in your relationship and how you can begin to do this.***

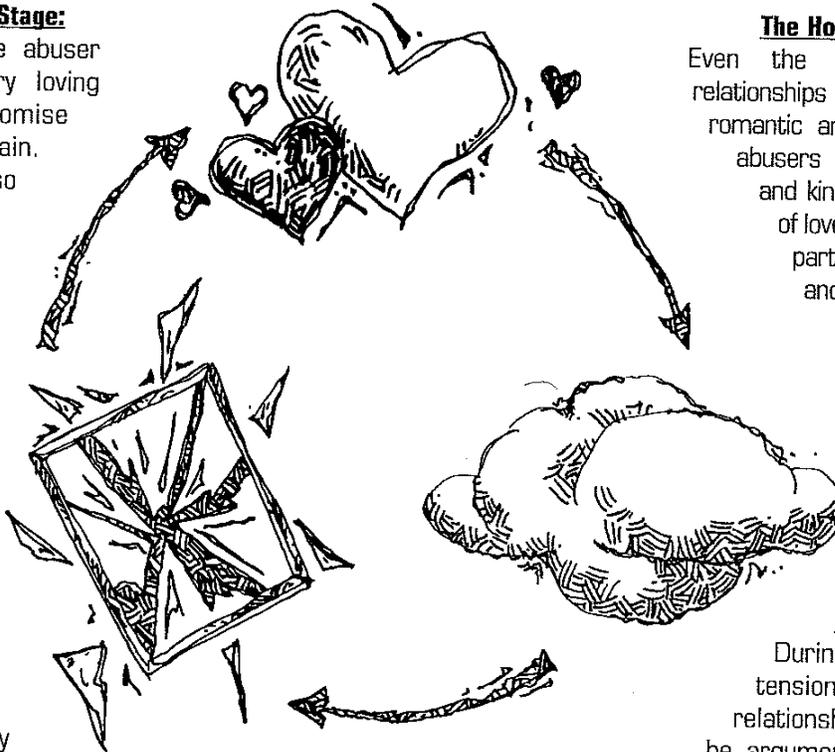


# The Cycle of Abuse

*Although not all abusive relationships follow the same pattern, there is a cycle that is similar in many abusive relationships. It looks something like this.*

### **Back to The Honeymoon Stage:**

After the 'blow up' the abuser may apologize, be very loving and kind, and promise it won't happen again. Because the abuser is so convincing, the partner will often try to 'forgive and forget.' Unfortunately, the cycle usually repeats itself and the abuse gets worse.



### **The Honeymoon Stage:**

Even the most abusive relationships usually start out romantic and loving. Many abusers act very sweet and kind, express a lot of love and make their partners feel special and cared for.

### **The Blow Up Stage:**

This is when the abuse is at its worst, and it may include extreme physical or sexual violence.

### **The Tension Building Stage:**

During this phase, tension builds in the relationship. There may be arguments, emotional abuse or minor physical abuse like grabbing or pushing.

Have you experienced this cycle in your relationship? If so, briefly write down the behaviors you saw during each of the phases. Or think of a relationship from a movie, book or TV, and write down examples of behaviors you saw at each stage of the relationship.

1. The Honeymoon Stage (beginning of the relationship): \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Tension Building Stage: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Blow Up Stage: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The Honeymoon Stage (after the blow up): \_\_\_\_\_



# Focus on Emotional Abuse

**Emotional abuse is a way of hurting someone without necessarily being physical. It's when one person in a relationship tries to control the other person's feelings or thoughts in order to gain power over them.**

**I am evaluating my relationship with:** \_\_\_\_\_

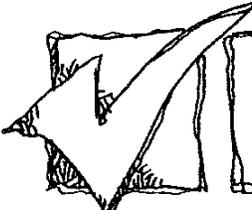
*Some examples of emotional abuse (also called mental, verbal or psychological abuse) are listed below.  
Check any that you have done to this person, or that this person has done to you.*

**I have done to this person      They have done to me**

- ▼ Put-downs; Calling names, telling them they're stupid or ugly, telling them they're not good enough or no one could ever love them
- ▼ Frequently cursing or yelling at the other person
- ▼ Threatening or intimidating - making the other person feel nervous or scared for themselves or someone they care about
- ▼ Frequently criticizing or correcting the other person - the way they look, talk, act, etc.
- ▼ Lying or cheating
- ▼ Playing mind games or making the other person think they're crazy
- ▼ Putting responsibility for your behavior on the other person
- ▼ Making fun of or putting down the other person's family, culture, religion, race or heritage
- ▼ Embarrassing or humiliating the other person, especially in front of other people
- ▼ Withholding affection as punishment - not giving them love if they don't do what you want them to do
- ▼ Controlling behavior - telling the other person what to do, what to wear, who to hang out with, etc.
- ▼ Making all the decisions in the relationship and ignoring the other person's feelings
- ▼ Guilt trips - trying to make the other person feel guilty when you don't get your way, especially by threatening to hurt yourself or commit suicide
- ▼ Keeping the other person from spending time with their friends or family members, or from work or other activities that are important to him/her
- ▼ Using the children to get the other person to do what you want
- ▼ Being extremely jealous, and using jealousy to justify controlling behavior
- ▼ Threatening to break up with the other person if you don't get your way
- ▼ Saying you don't love the other person just to get him/her to do what you want
- ▼ Accusing the other person of cheating on you as a way of manipulating him/her to do what you want
- ▼ Keeping constant tabs on a person, expecting to know his/her every move

Here are some examples of emotional abuse I have experienced in my life (not necessarily from the person above):

\_\_\_\_\_



**CHECKPOINT:**

Am I being emotionally abused by my partner? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Have I been emotionally abused in the past? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Am I being emotionally abusive to my partner? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Have I been emotionally abusive in the past? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

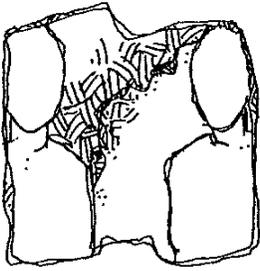
## Facilitator's Information for Focus on Emotional Abuse

**Purpose:** To develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of emotional abuse, and identify instances when participant(s) have been emotionally abused or abusive.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils

- Activity (Group or Individual):**
1. Distribute worksheet(s) and read or have a participant volunteer to read aloud the introductory paragraph.
  2. Ask teen(s) if they think that every time someone gets their feelings hurt in a relationship, it means someone is being abusive. Ask for examples of how feelings get hurt in a non-abusive relationship, and acknowledge that hurt feelings occur in all relationships.
  3. Instruct teen(s) to identify the relationship they will evaluate, and write the person's name in the box if they are comfortable doing so.
  4. Read or have participant(s) read aloud each example of emotionally abusive behavior. Instruct teen(s) to check any type of emotional abuse they have experienced, and invite group members to share examples if they wish.
  5. After completing the list, ask participant(s) to think about one specific example of emotional abuse they have experienced, not necessarily by the person in the relationship they evaluated above. Stress that while everyone may not have been in a relationship where there was a pattern of one person controlling the other, everyone has manipulated another person or been manipulated before. Instruct participant(s) to write one such example in the space provided.
  6. If working with a group, invite participant(s) to share with the group an example of emotional abuse they have experienced (as abuser or abused).
  7. Ask the participant(s) to decide for themselves whether they think they are or have been emotionally abused or abusive, and check the appropriate boxes at the bottom of the page.

**Use In Conjunction With:** SEALS+PLUS, "*Emotions*," (page 24)  
SEALS II, "*Deepening Relationships*," (page 38)  
SEALS III, "*Sticks & Stones*," (page 53)  
CROSSING THE BRIDGE, (pages 12, 28, 29, 30, 31)



# Case Study: Emotional Abuse

## Maria and James\*

Seventeen-year-old Maria came to counseling confused about whether she was treating her boyfriend fairly – he told her she was being emotionally abusive. She had been going out with James for about a year, and was not willing to have sex with him. He said she was being selfish and didn't care about his needs. He told her that her decision to remain a virgin was eventually going to force him to break up with her.

As Maria and her counselor talked, she described some things James had done to hurt her feelings. When she wrote him a letter telling him how much she loves him, he corrected her spelling and grammar mistakes in red pen on the letter, then gave it back to

her and told her he would accept the letter after she made the corrections. Maria told her counselor that James often corrects the way she talks and writes, but he says he does this because he loves her and wants to help her become a better person. The other day in the cafeteria he snapped at her for using slang, then told his friends that her parents are immigrants and can't speak English, so since she can't learn anything from them, he has to teach her.

*\* Names and identifying information have been changed.*

Which examples of emotional abuse listed on the Focus on Emotional Abuse page are described in this story?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Around the issue of whether or not to have sex, who is being abusive, James or Maria? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you think Maria felt when James gave her letter back with corrections on it?

\_\_\_\_\_

How is James justifying his behavior?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How is James manipulating Maria?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think James realizes he is being emotionally abusive? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What advice would you give to Maria?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

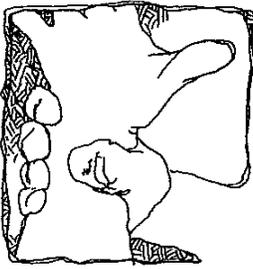
## Facilitator's Information for Case Study: Emotional Abuse

**Purpose:** To apply knowledge about emotional abuse to a case study in order to better understand the dynamics of emotional abuse.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils  
Copies of completed worksheets Focus on Emotional Abuse

- Activity (Group or Individual):**
1. Hand out copies of Focus on Emotional Abuse and briefly review activity.
  2. Tell participant(s) that this new activity is going to build on the knowledge they gained in the last activity, Focus on Emotional Abuse.
  3. Hand out worksheet Case Study: Emotional Abuse.
  4. Read or have participant(s) read aloud Maria and James' story.
  5. Instruct participant(s) to answer questions about Maria and James' story individually, allowing about ten minutes to do so. Tell participant(s) that they can use the Focus on Emotional Abuse worksheet to refer to.
  6. After participant(s) have completed worksheet, review answers. Be sure that the following points are addressed:
    - \* Examples of emotional abuse from Focus on Emotional Abuse include James manipulating Maria into feeling responsible for his choices or actions, frequently criticizing/correcting her, putting down her family, embarrassing/humiliating her, guilt trips, threatening to break up.
    - \* A person always has the right to make his or her own decisions about whether or not to have sex. Making a decision that's healthy for yourself does not mean you are not being considerate of the other person - it just means you are not willing to put the other person above yourself.
    - \* Sex is not a 'need.' It is a 'want.'
    - \* By saying he will be forced to break up with her, James is putting responsibility for his choices on Maria. It is his decision whether or not to stay in a relationship that doesn't include sexual intercourse.
    - \* James justifies his behavior by saying he wants to make Maria a 'better person.' This is a common justification for abuse. He is not her parent or her teacher, and he is not responsible for teaching her. If she asks for help with homework that is one thing - but by correcting her letters and her speech in public, he is only embarrassing her and making her feel badly about herself.
    - \* James may or may not consciously realize how he is hurting and manipulating Maria, but on some level he is doing it to gain power and control over her. Whether it's conscious or not, James' behavior is his responsibility.
    - \* If she is not ready to end the relationship, Maria can work on being assertive and setting limits (see activities on these issues.) She can clearly tell James how she feels about his behavior, and insist he stop. She can stand her ground on the issue of sex and tell him clearly that she will not be pressured. She can make decisions about her own limits in terms of the relationship, and at what point she will end the relationship if James continues to be emotionally abusive.

**Use In Conjunction With:** SEALS+PLUS, "*Lighten Up*," (page 18)  
SEALS II, "*Passive Aggressive*," (page 7)  
SEALS III, "*Sticks & Stones*," (page 53)



# Focus on Physical Abuse

**Physical abuse is any behavior that is meant to cause hurt to another person's body or to control another person's physical freedom or movement. One person may abuse another using his or her own physical strength, using an object or weapon, or using size or presence to intimidate or control the other.**

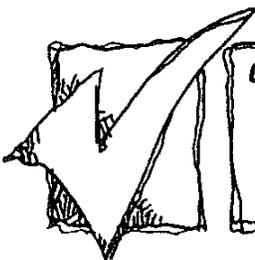
**I am evaluating my relationship with:** \_\_\_\_\_

Some examples of physical abuse are below.  
Check any that you have done to this person or they have done to you.

	I have done to this person	This person has done to me
Pushing or shoving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grabbing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hitting, slapping or punching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pulling hair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kicking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holding someone down or holding their arm so they can't walk away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Throwing objects at another person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of weapons to hurt or threaten someone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pinching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spitting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arm twisting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carrying someone against their will	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trapping someone in a room or car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abandoning someone in an unsafe place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chasing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing in the doorway to block the other person from leaving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hiding car keys, shoes, clothes or money so the other person can't leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standing in front of/behind car to prevent person from leaving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sabotaging car to prevent person from leaving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refusing to help someone when they're sick or injured	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Following or stalking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Here are some examples of physical abuse I have experienced in my life (not necessarily from the person above):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**CHECKPOINT:**

- Am I being physically abused by my partner?     Yes    No
- Have I been physically abused in the past?     Yes    No
- Am I being physically abusive to my partner?     Yes    No
- Have I been physically abusive in the past?     Yes    No

## Facilitator's Information for Focus on Physical Abuse

**Purpose:** To develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of physical abuse.  
To identify instances when participants have been physically abused or abusive.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils

**Optional:** Flip chart and markers/blackboard and chalk

- Activity (Group):**
1. Introduce activity by stating that today the group is going to focus on one of the forms of abuse, physical abuse.
  2. As one group or in several smaller groups, ask teens to brainstorm as many specific examples of physical abuse as they can. Explain that by specific, you mean a single action - instead of 'beating', break it down to 'punching,' 'slapping,' 'kicking.' Give each group a piece of large paper or space on the blackboard to make its lists.
  3. Give group(s) about ten minutes to make its lists.
  4. If activity is done in more than one group, reconvene the larger group and ask each workgroup to read and explain its list to the larger group. After each group has reviewed its list, note any similarities and differences in the lists.
  5. Distribute worksheets and read or have a participant volunteer to read aloud the introductory paragraph.
  6. Instruct participants to identify a relationship they will evaluate, and write the person's name in the box if they are comfortable doing so.
  7. Read or have participants read aloud each example of physically abusive behavior. Instruct participants who are comfortable doing so to check any type of physical abuse they have experienced. Facilitator may invite group members to share examples if they wish, and guide the group in offering support.
  8. After completing the list, ask teens to think about one specific example of physical abuse they have experienced, not necessarily by the person in the relationship they evaluated above. Stress that while everyone may not have been in a relationship where there was a pattern of one person physically abusing the other, many people have experienced at least one of the more subtle forms of physical abuse by a partner, peer or family member. (Give examples of being trapped in a room or car, being smacked by a peer, etc.) Ask participants to write one such example in the space provided.
  9. Ask the teens to decide for themselves whether they think they are or have been physically abused or abusive, and check the appropriate boxes at the bottom of the page.
  10. Process whether participants have learned anything new from this activity, whether anyone has realized for the first time that they have been involved in a physically abusive relationship and what that feels like, and if so, what steps need to be taken based on this realization.

- Activity (Individual):**
1. Give teen worksheet and read or have teen read aloud the introductory paragraph.
  2. Acknowledge that talking or even thinking about physical abuse can be very difficult. Discuss the participant's comfort level with learning about the different types of abuse. Allow teen to decide whether s/he wants to participate by completing the checklist based on a personal relationship, or just learn about what the different types of abuse are without applying it to him/herself at this time.
  3. Read or have participant read each example of physically abusive behavior, and discuss examples in his or her life or hypothetical examples. Instruct teen to check any type of physical abuse he or she has experienced, if comfortable doing so.
  4. After completing the list, ask participant to think about one specific example of physical abuse s/he has experienced and write the example in the space provided.
  5. Ask the participant to decide for him/herself whether s/he is or has been physically abused or abusive, and check the appropriate boxes at the bottom of the page.
  6. Process whether teen realized anything new about his or her experiences, how that feels and whether s/he wants to make changes based on this realization.

**Use In Conjunction With:** SEALS+PLUS, "I Have The Right to Change a Situation," (page 12)  
SEALS II, "Journal Keeping," (page 16)  
SEALS III, "My Play," (page 62)



# Focus on Sexual Abuse

**Sexual abuse is any sexual behavior that is forced, coerced or manipulated. It includes sexual harassment, which is discussed in more detail in the separate worksheet Focus on Sexual Harassment. Sexual abuse overlaps with the other types of abuse, because it can be physical (such as unwanted touching), verbal (such as calling someone sexual names) or emotional (such as using sexual behavior to humiliate someone.)**

Some examples of sexual abuse are listed below.

Check any that you have ever done to someone or someone else has done to you.

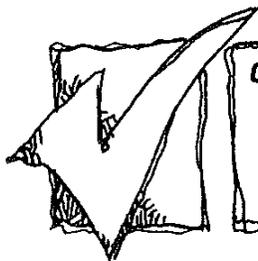
	I have done	Have had done to me
▷ Threatening to break up with someone or spread rumors about them if they refuse sexual acts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Threatening to hurt the other person or someone they care about if they refuse sexual acts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Lying to or manipulating someone to get him/her to agree to sexual behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Ripping or tearing at someone's clothes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Unwanted grabbing or touching of someone's rear end, breasts, or genital areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Forcing someone to take off his/her clothes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Physically forcing someone into any kind of sexual behavior – even when they have agreed to one form of sex but not to another	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Sex while one person is too drunk or high to make a sound decision about sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Forcing someone into sexual acts with a third person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Forcing someone to watch sex between others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Taking pictures or videos of someone undressing or involved in sexual behavior without his/her consent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Any sexual activity between an adult and child or a child and a much younger child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Rape with an object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Sex that hurts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Withholding sex as a way of manipulating someone into doing what you want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Making partner dress in a sexier way or less sexy way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Sexual harassment (see <u>Focus on Sexual Harassment</u> for details on this form of sexual abuse.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Here are some examples of sexual abuse I have experienced:**

---



---



**CHECKPOINT:**

Am I being sexually abused by my partner?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Have I been sexually abused in the past?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Am I being sexually abusive to my partner?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Have I been sexually abusive in the past?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

## Facilitator's Information for Focus on Sexual Abuse

**Purpose:** To develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of sexual abuse.  
To identify instances when participants have been sexually abused or abusive.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils

- Activity (Group or Individual):**
1. Distribute worksheet(s) and read or have a participant(s) read aloud the introductory paragraph.
  2. Acknowledge that talking or even thinking about sexual abuse can be very difficult and painful for people who have experienced it.
    - \* In an individual session, discuss the participant's comfort level with learning about the different types of abuse and allow him/her to decide whether s/he wants to participate by completing the checklist, or just learn about what the different types of abuse are without applying it to him/herself.
    - \* In a group setting, tell the group that you would like everyone to at least learn about the many different types of sexual abuse so they can identify them in the future. Give group members the individual option of completing the checklist or not without asking them to state their choice for the group. Emphasize that no one should feel pressured to talk about any experience they are not comfortable talking about. Reiterate group agreements around confidentiality and mutual support.
  3. Read or have participant(s) read each example of sexually abusive behavior. Instruct participants, who are comfortable doing so, to check any type of sexual abuse they have experienced. If appropriate, invite group members to share examples if they wish, and guide the group in offering support.
  4. After completing the list, ask participant(s) to think about one specific example of sexual abuse they have experienced. Stress that while not everyone may have been in a relationship where there was a pattern of one person sexually abusing the other, most people, especially females, have experienced at least one of the more subtle forms of sexual abuse. (Give examples of being called a sexual name or being hassled on the street.) Invite participants, if they are comfortable, to write one such example in the space provided.
  5. Ask participant(s) to decide for themselves whether they think they are or have been sexually abused or abusive, and check the appropriate boxes at the bottom of the page.
  6. Process whether participant(s) have learned anything new from this activity, whether anyone has realized for the first time that they have been involved in a sexually abusive relationship and what that feels like, and if so, what steps need to be taken based on this realization.

**Note to facilitator:** Because this activity asks participant(s) to identify instances of sexual abuse, it should only be done in groups or therapeutic relationships where there is a strong sense of trust and intimacy. It is very important that the professional be prepared to offer support and clinical intervention for a participant who discloses sexual abuse.

**Use In Conjunction With:** SEALS+PLUS, "Significant Life Events," (page 28)  
SEALS II, "We Are People With . . .," (page 8)  
SEALS III, "Coping Tree," (page 1)





## Facilitator's Information for Painful Memory

**Purpose:** To recognize circumstances common to date rape.  
To recognize and empathize with feelings common among victims of date rape.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils

**Activity (Group or Individual):**

1. Introduce activity by reviewing any previous discussion about rape and stating that this is a poem about date rape written by a high school student.
2. Read or have a participant read the poem aloud.
3. Instruct participant(s) to take ten minutes to write down any feelings or thoughts the poem brought up in them, or to write their own poem about sexual abuse. Allow extra time if needed.
4. Ask participant(s) if anyone would like to share their poem or thoughts with the group, and process as necessary. Be sure to include discussion of the date rape dynamics discussed in the poem that are listed below.
5. Ask participant(s) how writing, whether it be poetry or just writing down feelings, might help a person who has been through a difficult experience like rape to work out their "painful memories." Encourage participant(s) to write poetry, fiction or prose or to journal regularly to work through their own thoughts and feelings about relationships.

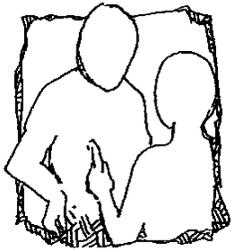
**Alternate Activity (Group or Individual):**

1. Introduce activity by reviewing previous discussion about rape and stating that this is a poem about date rape written by a high school student. Read or have a participant read the poem aloud.
2. State that every stanza (paragraph) in this poem makes a point about the dynamics of date rape by giving an example of a circumstance or feeling that is common to date rape. (Review the meaning of the term "dynamics" if necessary.)
3. With participant(s), go through the poem reading one stanza at a time and prompting participant(s) to point out the dynamic that the author is giving an example of. Following are suggested discussion points for each stanza.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Stanza 1:  | Rape has long-lasting emotional effects. (However, there is help to work through the emotions.)   |
| Stanza 2:  | Rapists are usually someone who the victim trusts.  |
| Stanza 3:  | Rapists often manipulate their victims in order to get them alone.  |
| Stanza 4:  | People often do not trust their intuition because the rapist is so charming and manipulative. (It is very important to trust your gut if you are uncomfortable with a person!)  |
| Stanza 5:  | Most rapes take place in the home or car of the victim or offender. (Again, the young man in this example manipulates the young woman into going to his house by saying he needed someone to talk to.)  |
| Stanza 6:  | Again, it is very important to go with your gut - however in this example, the young woman was manipulated into going inside with her date.   |
| Stanza 7:  | Another example of how the young man manipulates the young woman by making her feel good and getting her to trust him.  |
| Stanza 8:  | One warning sign of an abusive person is someone who doesn't respect your feelings. Even though the young man saw that the young woman was uncomfortable with the situation, he continued to pressure her.  |
| Stanza 9:  | Sexual abusers often start out sweet and gentle - it is only when they don't get what they want that they get aggressive.   |
| Stanza 10: | Assertiveness (speaking up clearly for yourself) is very important in protecting yourself from abuse.   |
| Stanza 11: | Another example of the young man not respecting the young woman's feelings - when she told him no the first time, he didn't respect that and continued to try to persuade her.  |
| Stanza 12: | Here the young man continues to try to pressure the young woman into sexual activity.   |
| Stanza 13: | When an abuser's emotional tactics don't work to control his partner, he might suddenly "turn mean" and get physically and verbally aggressive.   |
| Stanza 14: | In most cases, men have greater physical strength than women, and abusive men will use this strength to gain power and control.   |
| Stanza 15: | Feelings of shame, guilt and being "dirty" are normal after rape - however the victim of rape has NOTHING to be ashamed or guilty about because she has done nothing wrong. As the poem says, the rapist was the one in control, and he is the one who is in the wrong. |
| Stanza 16: | Shock and disbelief are also common feelings after rape, especially with someone the victim trusted or felt safe with. These feelings need to be worked through with a counselor/therapist.   |

**Use In Conjunction With:**

SEALS II, "What Have I Been Up To?," (page 18)  
SEALS II, "Write To Heal," (page 19)  
SEALS II, "Poetry Power," (page 20)



# Focus on Sexual Harassment

**Sexual Harassment is any unwanted sexual attention that makes a person feel threatened, uncomfortable or unsafe. Often, but not always, the harasser has some kind of power over the person they are harassing – for example a boss. Males and females can be sexually harassed.**

Some examples of sexual harassment are listed below.

Check any that you have ever done to someone or someone has done to you.

**Have had  
I have done    done to me**

**Physical forms of sexual harassment:**

- Unwanted touching, grabbing or pinching someone's rear end, breasts or genital areas
- 'Accidentally' brushing up against someone
- Any unwanted touching of a sexual nature, such as caressing someone's hair or face
- Kissing someone when they don't want to be kissed
- Standing in someone's way while verbally or non-verbally harassing them
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

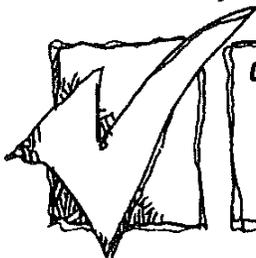
**Verbal forms of sexual harassment:**

- Pressure to go out on a date or engage in sexual activity
- Comments about a person's body that make them feel uncomfortable
- Making jokes of a sexual nature that make another person uncomfortable – even if the jokes are not told to the person directly, but they are meant to 'overhear'
- Jokes that put down members of the opposite sex
- Spreading sexual rumors about a person
- Names or words that belittle someone's gender or sexual orientation
- 'Dirty' notes or letters
- Sexual noises or whistles
- Obscene prank phone calls
- Threatening (or implying) that a person's job will be affected by refusing or agreeing to be sexually involved with an employer, co-worker or other person in the workplace
- Threatening (or implying) that a student's grades or school performance will be affected by refusing or agreeing to be sexually involved with a teacher, school administrator or other person in the school
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nonverbal forms of sexual harassment:**

- Sexual drawings, nude or 'sexy' posters that make a person uncomfortable in the school or workplace
- Staring at someone's body parts in a way that makes them uncomfortable
- Gestures or expressions that are meant to be sexual – for example, licking lips or 'pantomiming' sexual behavior
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***If you are ever unsure about whether what you are doing is sexual harassment, think about this:  
Would you want someone doing the same thing to your child, brother, sister or parent?***



- CHECKPOINT:**
- Am I being sexually harassed by anyone now?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
  - Have I been sexually harassed in the past?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
  - Am I sexually harassing anyone now?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
  - Have I sexually harassed anyone in the past?    \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

(continued on next page)

*For Facilitator's Information see page 50.*





## Focus on Sexual Harassment

(continued)

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING SEXUALLY HARASSED

*If you are experiencing sexual harassment, the sooner you address it the easier it will be to deal with. Many victims of sexual harassment try to ignore it because it is embarrassing, they want to get along with people or they are afraid of what the harasser will do. But if you let it go, the harasser might get the message that his or her behavior is okay with you and it could get out of control. Below are some steps you can take to address sexual harassment.*

1. Make it very clear to the person harassing you that you want it to STOP immediately. Use assertive words to let him or her know that you are not comfortable with the behavior. Tell them you feel harassed. Do not laugh or smile at them.

Write what you will say to your harasser here: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Keep a log. Write down everything that happens – the names, places, times, exactly what was said or done, and the names of any witnesses.

Start by writing how your harassment began, and attach extra pages if necessary. (The more detailed the better)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name(s) of people involved: \_\_\_\_\_

What was said or done: \_\_\_\_\_

How you responded: \_\_\_\_\_

Any witnesses or people you told about the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Tell someone in a position of authority. If you are at school, tell a teacher or guidance counselor you trust. If you are at work, tell a supervisor. If the problem continues and the person in authority doesn't do anything, tell someone higher up.

Who will you tell? \_\_\_\_\_

Once you have told this person, write their response here: \_\_\_\_\_

Also write the responses of people you tell in your log.

4. Try not to be alone with the harasser. You might be able to get friends or co-workers to help by sticking close. What friends or co-workers will you ask for help? \_\_\_\_\_

5. File a complaint and get advice from experts in the area of sexual harassment. Write in the number for your state's division of human rights/sexual harassment unit or other place you will call: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Get help in taking care of yourself emotionally. People who are sexually harassed often feel violated, embarrassed, ashamed, angry and confused. All of these feelings are normal, but it is important to get help working through them. Write the name of a counselor or other adult who you can confide in. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Remember, Sexual Harassment is NOT your fault. It is another example of abuse, when someone is trying to gain power and control over another person.

### Write A Sexual Harassment Role-Play Here

Characters:

The Harassment:

What the person being harassed does in response:

## Facilitator's Information for Focus on Sexual Harassment

**Purpose:** To define sexual harassment and identify different forms of sexual harassment.  
To know what to do if one is being sexually harassed.

**Materials:** One photocopy of each worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils  
Phone number(s) for local/state sexual harassment help lines. Look in the phone book for the state division of human rights' sexual harassment unit, the local Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or call the Department of Labor or a domestic violence hotline for information.

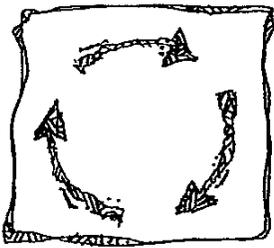
**Activity  
(Group or  
Individual):**

1. Distribute first page, Focus on Sexual Harassment and read or have participant(s) read aloud the introductory paragraph. Ask participant(s) if they can think of any examples where they have heard of people being sexually harassed in the news or on TV, etc., and discuss.
2. Read or have participant(s) read each of the examples under the different forms of sexual harassment. Discuss and prompt participant(s) to come up with examples for each one. Instruct participant(s) to check the boxes if they have been sexually harassed or if they have harassed someone else in any of the ways listed.
3. Read or have participant(s) read aloud the sentence "If you are ever unsure..." and discuss.
4. Instruct participant(s) to complete the questions under 'Checkpoint.'
5. Distribute second page, What to Do if You are Being Sexually Harassed and pens or pencils.
6. Tell participant(s) that if they checked the box on the last page saying they are being sexually harassed, they should complete this worksheet as an action plan for dealing with the harassment. People who are not being sexually harassed can still complete the worksheet based on what they will do if they ever find themselves in that position in the future. As an alternative, facilitator may read a story or show a video of a person being harassed and ask participant(s) to complete the worksheet as a plan for what the character in the story should do.
7. Read the introductory paragraph, and read or have participant(s) read aloud each of the questions. Allow time for participant(s) to fill in their answers in the space provided.
8. **If working with a group**, break participants up into groups of two or three and instruct them to develop a role-play where one person is sexually harassing the other. The person being harassed should use some of the suggestions in the worksheet to deal with the harassment. A third person can act as someone encouraging the harasser, someone helping the person being harassed, or the boss or teacher they will inform of the harassment. Instruct participants to write the scenario in the box provided, and then allow each group to perform their role-plays for the larger group.  
**If working with an individual**, work with the teen to develop and write a scenario in which someone is being sexually harassed. The teen should role-play the part of the person being harassed, using some of the strategies in the worksheet.
9. Process with the following questions:
  - \* What are some of the reasons a person sexually harasses another? (To gain power and control, to humiliate them, to show off for friends, not being able to take no for an answer, thinking they are funny and being insensitive to how their jokes make others feel, etc.)
  - \* How do you think sexual harassment makes the person being harassed feel? (Embarrassed, helpless, afraid, angry, ashamed, guilty, confused about whether they are doing something to ask for it, etc.)
  - \* What are some of the excuses people use to justify sexual harassment? (S/he was flirting with me, liked it, dresses provocatively, brought it on with his/her sexual behavior, led me on, I was just joking, didn't mean anything by it, didn't know s/he didn't like it, etc.)
  - \* Has anyone ever laughed or smiled at someone when they were really uncomfortable? (This is normal, but it is a non-assertive behavior that others might take as meaning their behavior is OK. Discuss alternate assertive responses.)
  - \* After doing this activity, has anyone realized they have been sexually harassed or sexually harassed someone else, and not even realized it?
  - \* What is the difference between sexual harassment and flirting? (Flirting is when both people engage in the behavior, enjoy it, feel no pressure, and have equal power.)
  - \* Do guys get sexually harassed? (Yes) How is the pressure on a male being sexually harassed similar and different from the pressure on a female? (If a female harasses a male, the male is given the message he is supposed to like it and want sex under any circumstances. If harassed by a man, others might make fun of him and question his sexual orientation. When a gay male is harassed by another gay male, it brings up stigmas and stereotypes about gays being 'perverts' that might make the victim even more hesitant to disclose. However, sexual harassment is equally painful for male and female victims.)

**Use In  
Conjunction  
With:**

SEALS+PLUS, "I Have The Right To Change A Situation," (page 12)  
SEALS II, "Awareness Journal," (page 52)  
SEALS III, "Talking About Personal Issues," (page 54)



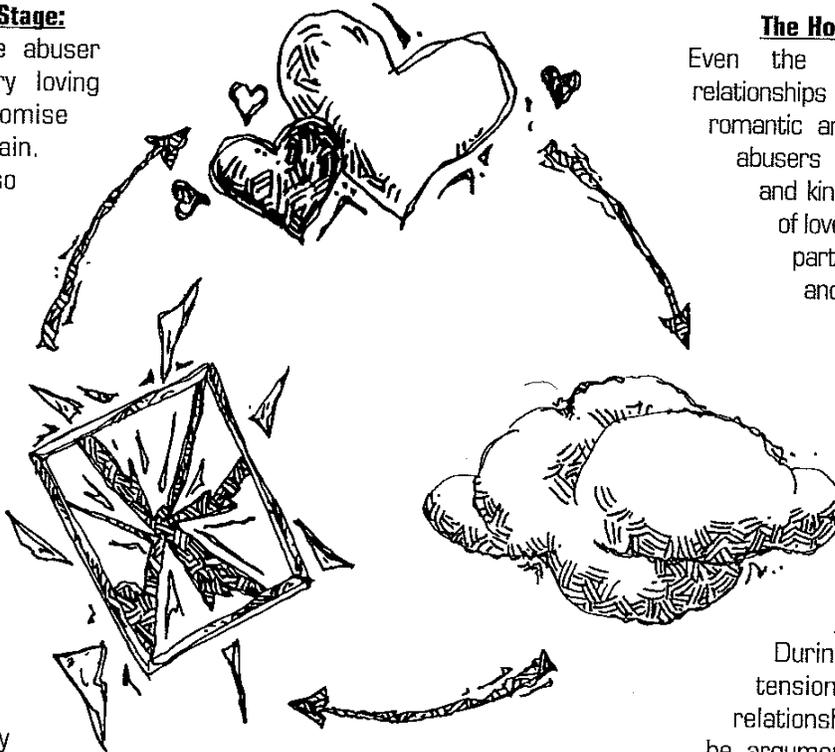


# The Cycle of Abuse

*Although not all abusive relationships follow the same pattern, there is a cycle that is similar in many abusive relationships. It looks something like this.*

### **Back to The Honeymoon Stage:**

After the 'blow up' the abuser may apologize, be very loving and kind, and promise it won't happen again. Because the abuser is so convincing, the partner will often try to 'forgive and forget.' Unfortunately, the cycle usually repeats itself and the abuse gets worse.



### **The Honeymoon Stage:**

Even the most abusive relationships usually start out romantic and loving. Many abusers act very sweet and kind, express a lot of love and make their partners feel special and cared for.

### **The Blow Up Stage:**

This is when the abuse is at its worst, and it may include extreme physical or sexual violence.

### **The Tension Building Stage:**

During this phase, tension builds in the relationship. There may be arguments, emotional abuse or minor physical abuse like grabbing or pushing.

Have you experienced this cycle in your relationship? If so, briefly write down the behaviors you saw during each of the phases. Or think of a relationship from a movie, book or TV, and write down examples of behaviors you saw at each stage of the relationship.

1. The Honeymoon Stage (beginning of the relationship): \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Tension Building Stage: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Blow Up Stage: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The Honeymoon Stage (after the blow up): \_\_\_\_\_

## Facilitator's Information for The Cycle of Abuse

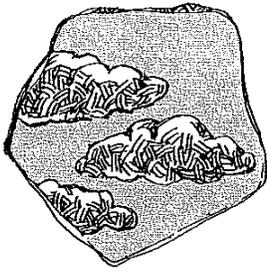
**Purpose:** To understand and identify the 'Honeymoon,' 'Tension Building' and 'Blow Up' stages which are common in abusive relationships.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils  
Optional for GROUP: Flipchart and markers/blackboard and chalk

- Activity (Group or Individual):**
1. Introduce activity by stating that there is a pattern that is very common in abusive relationships, although it does not apply to all abusive relationships.
  2. Refer to the cycle on the page or, in a group, a larger version of the cycle drawn on a flipchart or board. Read or have participant(s) read aloud the descriptions of each stage of the cycle.
  3. Ask participant(s) if they can think of examples of this cycle from their own relationships or relationships from a movie, book or TV. If necessary, provide examples of behaviors that might be seen at the various stages such as the following:
    - \* Honeymoon Stage (Beginning of the relationship): Compliments, buying presents, writing love letters, going out on romantic dates.
    - \* Tension Building Stage: Accusing the person of flirting with other people, telling the person they're acting stupid, starting arguments about being late. Later in the relationship (after the cycle has escalated) this may include minor battering like pushing, grabbing or shoving.
    - \* Blow Up Stage: Early in the relationship this might be a minor battering incident like pushing, grabbing or shoving, or verbal abuse and threats. As the cycle repeats the degree of violence may escalate to punching, kicking, breaking bones, shooting, stabbing, etc.
    - \* Honeymoon Stage (after blow up): Apologizing, making excuses, buying presents, promising to change, making commitments to the relationship, saying s/he couldn't live without the other person.
  4. Instruct participant(s) to write the examples they have generated in the spaces provided at the bottom of the page.

**Use In Conjunction With:** SEALS+PLUS, "Serenity," (page 23)  
SEALS II, "Repeating Questions," (page 67)  
SEALS III, "Coping Tree," (page 1)





# 21 Warning Signs

## ... of an Abusive Person

Following are some common signs that a person is or may turn out to be abusive to his or her intimate partner. Answering yes to one or two questions below does not necessarily mean a person is abusive. However, if any of the questions below are true about you or your partner, you should be cautious about proceeding with the relationship and be sure to address those issues right away, preferably with the help of a counselor.

### AM I / IS MY PARTNER A PERSON WHO...

	TRUE of ME	TRUE of MY PARTNER
1. * Was or is abused by a parent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. * Grew up in a home where an adult was abused by another adult?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Gets very serious with boyfriends/girlfriends very quickly - saying "I love you" very early in the relationship, wanting to move in together or get engaged after only a few months, or pressuring partner for a serious commitment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Comes on very strong, is extremely charming and an overly smooth talker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is extremely jealous?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Isolates partner from support systems - wants partner all to themselves, and tries to keep partner from friends, family or outside activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Attempts to control what partner wears, what s/he does or who s/he sees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is abusive toward other people, especially mother or sisters if he is a male?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Blames others for one's own misbehavior or failures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Abuses drugs or alcohol?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Has unrealistic expectations, like expecting partner to meet all of one's needs and be the perfect partner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Is overly sensitive - acts 'hurt' when not getting one's way, takes offense when others disagree with an opinion, gets very upset at small inconveniences that are just a normal part of life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Has ever been cruel to animals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Has ever abused children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Has ever hit a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Has ever threatened violence, even if it wasn't a 'serious' threat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Calls partner names, puts him/her down or curses at him/her?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Is extremely moody, and switches quickly from being very nice to exploding in anger?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. If a male, believes women are inferior to men and should obey them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Is intimidating, for example using threatening body language, punching walls or breaking objects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Holds partner against his/her will to keep him/her from walking away or leaving the room?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* Numbers 1 and 2 do not indicate a person will be abusive. The majority of children who grow up in abusive homes choose not to be abusive as adults. However, these children have a higher likelihood than other children of growing up to be involved in abusive relationships. These factors should be considered with other factors.

## Facilitator's Information for 21 Warning Signs for an Abusive Person

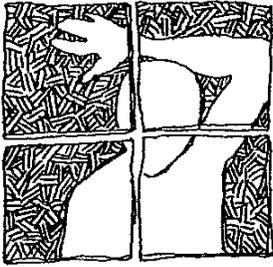
**Purpose:** To recognize the early warning signs of a potentially abusive personality.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils

- Activity (Group or Individual):**
1. Introduce activity by reminding participants that abusers do not wear signs across their foreheads saying "I'm Violent." In fact, most abusers are very sweet and charming in the beginning of the relationship and to the rest of the world. However, there are some warning signs that can help you to predict when a person is likely to be abusive. The more of these characteristics a person has, the more likely it is that they are or will turn out to be abusive.
  2. Read or have participant(s) read aloud each of the warning signs, and ask for examples of similar behaviors participant(s) have seen in their lives or in the lives of others, on TV or in movies.
  3. Instruct participant(s) to check "yes" or "no" to whether the questions are true about themselves and their partners. If they are not currently in a relationship, they can base their answers to the right-hand column on a former relationship or leave it blank.
  4. If working with a group, invite participants to share some of their responses or reactions to this activity with the group if they feel comfortable.
  5. Process with the following questions:
    - \* Why do you think (a particular question) might be a sign of abusiveness?
    - \* If your partner shows this characteristic, how might you address it with him or her?
    - \* If you have this characteristic, where might you have learned it? How do you feel about it? What can you do if you want to change it?
    - \* Numbers 8 and 19 address male attitudes and behaviors toward women, but not the other way around. Why is this? (Because gender roles and sexism are one of the major justifications for abusive behavior, which explains why the majority of abuse cases involve a male abusing a female.)

**Use In Conjunction With:** SEALS+PLUS, "*Gopher It*," (page 46)  
SEALS II, "*Inner Voice*," (page 79)  
SEALS III, "*Everything in Moderation*," (page 57)





# Why People Stay In Abusive Relationships

*Many people recognize they are being mistreated or even abused, but choose to stay in the relationship for a number of reasons. When friends or family members ask them "Why do you stay...?" they may have a hard time explaining. After all, it is never easy to end a relationship, even a hurtful one. Below are some of the common reasons people stay in unhappy or abusive relationships. If you are being mistreated, it might be helpful to look over this list and circle the reasons that might have something to do with your decision to stay.*

1. **Love.** You love your partner, and there are still times when your partner is very loving.
2. **Hope.** You have many memories of happy times, and hope those times will return. Your partner may promise to change, or you may think if you do things differently, the abuse will stop.
3. **Making light of the abuse.** Your partner may deny that his or her behavior is abusive, or act like it's not such a big deal, and you want to believe this. It's very painful to admit that someone you love would hurt you, so you might try to convince yourself it's not really that bad.
4. **Blaming yourself.** Your partner might blame you for his or her abusive behavior - saying you made him or her angry, or that you did something to deserve it. A part of you may believe this.
5. **Link between love and violence.** If you grew up in a home where there was violence, or if you were ever hit by a parent and told they were doing it because they love you, you might have learned to think that love and violence go together.
6. **Hopelessness.** You may feel like you'll never be able to be happy, you'll never find a partner who treats you any better, or that all relationships include abuse.
7. **Gender roles.** If you are a woman in a relationship with a man, you may have learned from family, religion or culture that men are supposed to be in charge, can't help being violent, or have the right to discipline their women. You may believe that women have to put up with this behavior and try to keep their men happy.
8. **Embarrassment and shame.** You may not want to admit what's going on to others because you're afraid of what they will think about you.
9. **Financial dependence.** You may depend on your partner for financial support.
10. **Lack of supportive relationships.** You may have become isolated from your friends and family. Or, family and friends may pressure you to stay with your partner.
11. **Fear.** Your partner may have threatened to hurt or kill you or someone you care about if you leave.
12. **Not wanting to be alone.** You may panic at the thought of being without your partner.
13. **Loyalty.** You may feel the right thing to do is to stick with your partner no matter what.
14. **Rescue complex.** You think you can change, fix, or heal your partner if you stay.
15. **Guilt.** Your partner may make you feel guilty about how much it would hurt him or her if you left. S/he may even threaten to commit suicide.
16. **Children.** If you have a child with your partner, you may believe it is best for the child to have two parents who are together.
17. **Dependency on drugs or alcohol.** Many people use drugs or alcohol as a way of coping with abuse, which then makes them less clear and strong and makes it more difficult to leave.
18. Other \_\_\_\_\_
19. Other \_\_\_\_\_

(continued on next page)

*For Facilitator's Information see page 58.*





## Why People Stay In Abusive Relationships

(continued)

**Whatever your reasons for staying in an abusive relationship, those reasons are very real and very important to you. However it is also important to look at both sides of the situation. Some of your reasons may be based on misunderstandings or myths, and some might be based on fear. If you are struggling with wanting to end the relationship but you can't get past one or more of your reasons for staying, it might help to consider the following statements that give 'the other side' of the argument about each of these reasons.**

1. **Love.** No one can argue with the way you feel - your love is real and you can't ignore it. But loving someone doesn't always mean they are healthy for you. Ending your relationship does not mean you will automatically stop loving your partner, but with time your feelings will be less intense as you are able to look at the whole picture. It might help to focus on nurturing your love for yourself and your family or friends. It may seem impossible now, but if you end your relationship, you will someday find another boyfriend or girlfriend to love - and hopefully it will be a healthier love.
2. **Hope.** You are not the cause of the abuse, so nothing you do or change about your behavior will end the abuse. While abusers will usually promise to change during the honeymoon stage, it is rare for an abuser to change while still in a relationship - usually, the only way to stop the abuse is to end the relationship.
3. **Making light of the abuse.** Abuse is a big deal. No one deserves to be abused, and physical abuse is a serious crime that can result in jail time for the abuser.
4. **Blaming yourself.** The fact is there is nothing you can do to make another person hurt you, and no one deserves to be hurt under any circumstances. Everyone is 100% responsible for their own behavior.
5. **Link between love and violence.** Physical abuse is not about love - it's about gaining power and control. Even if violence was normal in your upbringing, the fact is that it is NOT a normal part of a healthy, loving relationship.
6. **Hopelessness.** The idea of being happy without your current partner may seem impossible now, but remember that you are a person who deserves to be treated with respect. There are many people out there who don't abuse!
7. **Gender roles.** A healthy relationship is a partnership based on equality, regardless of gender. If you checked this as a reason for staying, work with a counselor on understanding gender roles.
8. **Embarrassment and shame.** It is true that some people judge or blame people who are being abused because they are not educated about relationship abuse. You must remember that you are not the one doing something wrong, and you have nothing to be ashamed of! Counselors at domestic violence hotlines and agencies will not judge you, and can help you figure out which friends or family members you can talk to.
9. **Financial dependence.** There are ways to become more financially independent, including programs specifically set up for people who are financially trapped in abusive relationships. Your counselor can help you make a plan for financial independence.
10. **Lack of supportive relationships.** Your friends and family may be more willing than you think to help you if you want to end an abusive relationship - but, you may have to develop new supportive relationships. A good place to start is with a support group where you will meet other people who have been in abusive relationships.
11. **Fear.** If you have been threatened, it is very important to develop a safety plan with your counselor before leaving. See the safety plan section in this workbook, and know there are safe homes, shelters and other programs to help you get away from an abuser.
12. **Not wanting to be alone.** You are a strong person who has endured a great deal and while the idea of being alone is scary, you can live without an abusive relationship. Developing other supportive relationships will be helpful.
13. **Loyalty.** Loyalty must be earned. Someone who is supposed to love you, but abuses you, has betrayed you. No reasonable person should expect you to be loyal to someone who abuses you.
14. **Rescue complex.** No amount of loyalty or understanding will change your partner.
15. **Guilt.** Guilt-trips are a way of manipulating you. Your partner is responsible for his or her own actions; you are only responsible for yourself. You have nothing to feel guilty about if you choose to leave an abusive relationship.
16. **Children.** The fact is, witnessing abuse is extremely psychologically damaging to children. A child is better off living with one non-violent parent than with two parents in an abusive relationship. You can work out a way for your child to see the other parent in a safe setting.
17. **Dependency on drugs and alcohol.** If you use drugs or alcohol as a way of coping with abuse, it's important to get treatment for this problem so you can make healthier decisions about your relationships.
18. Other \_\_\_\_\_
19. Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Facilitator's Information for Why People Stay In Abusive Relationships

**Purpose:** To understand common reasons why many people remain in abusive relationships.  
To identify some of participants' own reasons for staying in an abusive relationship.  
To hear alternative perspectives on reasons for staying in or ending an abusive relationship.

**Materials:** One photocopy of worksheet per participant  
Pens/pencils  
Optional: Flipchart and markers/blackboard and chalk

- Activity (Group or Individual):**
1. Introduce this activity's purpose according to the situation(s) of the group or individual you are working with, as discussed in the facilitator's note.
  2. Hand out first page of worksheet and read or have participant(s) read aloud the introductory paragraph.
  3. If desired, have the headings of each 'reason' written on flipchart or board for visual aid.
  4. Read each item aloud, or have participant(s) take turns reading. Instruct participant(s) to circle the number of each item that has contributed to their staying in an abusive relationship. (If you are working with participant(s) who have not been in abusive relationships, you may want to identify a character from a video you have viewed, a story you have read, or someone the participant knows in real life who is or has been in an abusive relationship. You might develop a short story or skit about an abusive relationship. Ask the participant to guess which factors contributed to that person staying in the relationship.)
  5. Discuss and process each item on the list as you go along. Be sure to validate the feelings of participant(s) who disclose their own reasons for staying in an abusive relationship. Without minimizing these feelings, ask participant(s) if they can think of another side to these arguments.
  6. After reviewing the list, ask teens if there are reasons for staying in a relationship that are not listed here, and if so, have them write the reason(s) in the space provided.
  7. Process this part of the activity by asking participant(s) what feelings this activity brought up, whether they were surprised at some of the things they circled or realized anything new about their reasons for staying, and whether it helps people who have not been in abusive relationships to better understand people who have. Remind participant(s) that all of the reasons discussed are real, legitimate and valid reasons for staying in a relationship.
  8. Tell participant(s) that for all the reasons for staying in an abusive relationship, we are now going to look at the other side of the argument.
  9. Hand out second page of worksheet and read or have participant(s) read aloud the introductory paragraph.
  10. Read or have participant(s) take turns reading aloud each item. Discuss and process each item as you go along, including whether participant(s) had thought of that point while discussing the reasons in the first page of this activity.
  11. Process this part of the activity by asking whether this activity has given them anything new to think about or whether they think it will influence their decisions about whether to continue their relationships.

**Facilitator's Note:** This activity will be most applicable to teens who are currently in relationships that they have identified as abusive. It can be used with teens who have ended abusive relationships to better understand why they stayed as long as they did. For teens who have not been in abusive relationships, or do not identify their relationships as abusive, it can be framed as an activity to help them understand why others might stay in abusive relationships, so they may be able to help a friend or family member who might need their support.

**Use In Conjunction With:** SEALS+PLUS, "Be Your Own Best Friend," (page 50)  
SEALS II, "Women & Risk Taking," (page 54)  
SEALS III, "Personal Network Profile," (page 80)

