

LIST OF KINDS OF ABUSE
Gathered by Linda J. MacDonald, M.S., LMFT

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

- Acts “entitled” to use you, mistreat you
- Withholding love, affection
- Invalidating you
- Not taking care of self (misusing drugs, alcohol, engaging in high-risk behaviors)
- Refusing to help you when asked or in obvious need
- Excessive jealousy of you
- Trying to isolate you from family or friends
- Refusing to listen when you object to something that hurts you
- Disregarding reasonable requests by you
- Threatening to harm self if you don’t comply
- Threatening to harm you, your kids, or pets if you don’t comply
- Controlling you (taking *inappropriate charge* of where you go, who you hang out with, how you spend money, not giving you a “voice or a vote” over a lot of decisions in your life)
- Trivializing your feelings, goals, hopes, dreams
- Ridiculing you or your abilities
- Destroying things that are precious to you
- Withholding financial support from you
- Raging
- Using anger, loudness or looks of disgust to get his/her way
- Intimidating you through threats, physical stature or gestures
- Treating you with disdain, sarcasm or disgust
- Dismissing your feelings, beliefs, values, experiences
- Rejecting you, abandoning you, or shunning you
- Walking away, not talking to you, refusing to engage with you when you bring up a topic of concern, or ignoring you as a means of punishment
- Significantly neglecting you and your relationship emotionally, physically, financially
- Rolling eyes at your ideas, suggestions
- Acting as if you have no rights and he/she has all the “rights” in the relationship
- Deceiving you regarding his/her whereabouts, investments, relationships
- Denying, distorting or rewriting the story of your marital history/relationship
- Doing harmful things behind your back (gambling, porn, affairs, secretly contacting persons of the opposite sex, over-spending, deceiving you, etc.)
- Trying to “poison” others (including your children) against you
- Threatening to leave you (as a means to get you to capitulate)
- Threatening to leave you for someone else
- Actually leaving you for someone else

SPIRITUAL ABUSE:

- Discrediting your values, beliefs
- Preventing you from observing your faith
- Trying to stop you from attending church
- Forcing you to attend his/her church and putting you down if you don’t
- Using religious language/terms to control you

- Trying to force you to “submit” to him; accusing you of being “unsubmissive” (concept of submission is sometimes misused as a power ploy by men who are insecure, abusive, or who wish to dominate a spouse; rather than love and cherish his wife and create an atmosphere of mutual loving service to one another)
- Misusing sacred texts [out of context] to justify any kind of mistreatment of you
- Insisting that his/her beliefs are the only “right” beliefs (and yours, by implication, are all wrong)
- Saying that “God” told him/her to behave in any way that causes you to feel punished, abused or emotionally harmed.
- Threatening you with “hell” or “displeasing God” if you don’t do what he/she says
- Treating you as inferior if you don’t follow his/her particular religious ideology

VERBAL ABUSE:

- Accusing you falsely
- Insulting you
- Belittling you
- Scorning you or using a snide tone
- Making unflattering comparisons of you with your mother/father/or others
- Dominating the conversation by not allowing you to get a word in edge-wise
- Name-calling (jerk, dirt-bag, idiot, creep, stupid, lazy, good-for-nothin’, mother f-er, etc.)
- Using disgusting terms to describe you (like the c-word, whore, b-word, etc.)
- Swearing at you (worst = f-bomb or God’s name in vain)
- Threatening you with abandonment or divorce just to get his/her way
- Criticizing you, your looks, your way of doing things
- Humiliating you, alone or in front of others
- Mocking you
- Putting you down
- Rejecting your opinions, ideas
- Sarcastic remarks
- Disparaging your views
- Lying to you (esp. about something that impacts you or matters a lot to you)
- Blaming, attacking you for his/her hurtful behaviors or for something not going well
- Intimidating you into agreeing with him/her by using critical or accusatory remarks
- Saying anything that makes you feel “stupid” “dumb” or “less than”

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- Towering over you
- Slamming fist on table, door, wall
- Threatening gestures
- Harming pets - to manipulate you into compliance
- Throwing or breaking objects - implies you may be next
- Throwing hard objects at you
- Trapping you in a room
- Restraining you
- Withholding medical treatment or food from you
- Following you around against your wishes
- Shoving you backwards

- Shoving you downward
- Dragging you by the leg, arm, or hair to force compliance or to get even
- Punching the wall, door (implies he/she is out of control and you could be next)
- Throwing you up against the wall or door
- Punching you
- Grabbing you
- Slapping you
- Hitting you
- Kicking you
- Choking you
- Touching or grabbing private areas of your body against your will
- Forcing sex upon you against your will (a.k.a. “date rape” or “marital rape”)
- Giving you an STD

The more boxes checked, the more abusive the relationship. The more frequent the behaviors, the more dangerous the person is to your physical, emotional, and spiritual health.