

## Warning Signs

Anyone can be an abuser. Although both men and women can be abusers, a high percentage are men. Abusers often refuse to accept responsibility for the violence and attempt to rationalize or blame the victim 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 him mad. He 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, he will get jealous and angry.

**Blaming:** abusers blame you and/or others for their problems, for example, losing a job.

**Unrealistic expectations:** abusers can be overcritical. He may expect you to be the perfect partner, lover, or friend.

**Hypersensitivity:** abusers often are easily insulted or hurt.

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

**Sexist attitude toward women:** abusers often believe in strict gender roles. They believe that it is your job to take care of the home and him.

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