

What are the Warning Signs of an Abusive Person or Relationship?

Warning signs of abuse are not always what one may think. Due to society romanticizing jealousy, some people may even view abusive behaviors as showing affection. This is a place where family, friends, and educators can take steps to help those they care about. When a person is being abused, sometimes they don't recognize the warning signs. Even though one sign may not be cause for alarm, it may be time to talk with the person about their safety or relationship. Just as in an adult domestic violent relationship, you should not offer ultimatums, but rather be a listening ear and offer resources. Focus on being a stable presence in their day. While they may never disclose the abuse, you may be helping them more than you know just by allowing them to rest and breathe. You can also report your suspicions to the school social worker, psychologist or suspicions, privately. Bethany House can help provide information for safety planning and ending an abusive relationship when the victim is ready. The following pages offer more suggestions on ways you can help someone you care about if you suspect they are being abused.

Physical Signs:

- Unexplained or sudden illness
- Changes in physical appearance
- Starting to wear more makeup or stopping wearing makeup all together
- Wearing baggier clothes in public
- Prolonged exhaustion
- Changes in eating habits
- Depression or mood/personality changes
- Seeming passive or withdrawn
- Frequent self-blame or depreciation
- Hypervigilance
- Frequent bruises
- Self-harming behaviors,
- Using drugs or alcohol in excess

Signs Attached to Abuser:

- Constant check-ins/ texts and photos to prove where they are
- Excessive calling/texting partner
- Makes excuses for partners behavior
- High-risk sexual behavior

- Pregnancy
- Jealousy/Insecurity
- Spending all their time with partner
- Abuser "love bombs"

Signs Attached to Peers:

- Isolation/loss of friendship
- Isolation from family
- Changes in mood and overall personality
- Becomes a bully or begins being bullied
- Concern that everyone can tell abuse is occurring

Signs Apparent in Class:

- Often late to class or does not attend
- Passive or compliant/ withdrawn
- Newly failing grades
- Inability to concentrate
- Falls asleep in class frequently
- Expression of gendered belief system
- Feeling Unsafe
- Worried abuser may track them down because of class attendance

What is "Love Bombing"?

Love Bombing is a dangerous and manipulative form of emotional abuse because it can sometimes be viewed as a positive beginning or confused with the "honeymoon phase" of a new relationship. During this time an abusive partner may seem charming and ideal, and show an overwhelming amount of love and affection. However, this is later replaced with gaslighting and criticism. Common signs of love bombing include:

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| ♥ Giving constant compliments | ♥ Say exactly what you want to hear | ♥ Lots of PDA, physically and digitally |
| ♥ Bombard you with gifts | ♥ Use terms like "soulmate" a lot | ♥ Feel like you have to tread lightly |
| ♥ Relationship feels intense and unbalanced | ♥ Push for commitment early in relationship | ♥ Saying "I Love You" very early on |
| ♥ Expect a lot of attention | ♥ Get upset with boundaries | |
| ♥ Shower you with over-the-top gestures | ♥ They're very needy | |

