

**Inside This Issue:**

1. [Signs of an Abusive Relationship](#)
2. [How to Avoid Prescription Drug Misuse or Abuse](#)
3. [Anger Management Tips: Taming Your Temper](#)
4. [For Your Information](#)

**EAP Services:**

1. [How to Use Your EAP](#)

---

## Signs of an Abusive Relationship

All relationships have their ups and downs, but there are certain types of behavior in any relationship that are unacceptable and abusive. If you think that your partner is abusive, or you suspect that someone you know is in an abusive relationship, review the information below. Recognizing the signs of an abusive relationship is the first step to breaking free.

### What is relationship abuse?

Relationship abuse is a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors used to maintain power and control over a former or current intimate partner. An abusive relationship means more than being hit by the person who claims to love or care about you. Abuse can be emotional, psychological, financial, sexual or physical and can include threats, isolation and intimidation. Abuse tends to escalate over time. When someone uses abuse and/or violence against a partner, it is always part of a larger pattern to try to control him/her.

### Self-test: Is your relationship abusive?

Do you wonder if your relationship may be abusive? Ask yourself the questions below. The more “yes” answers, the more likely it is that you’re in an abusive relationship.



**Does your partner:**

- humiliate, insult, criticize, demean or yell at you?
- ignore or put down your thoughts, feelings or accomplishments?
- treat you so badly that you're embarrassed for your friends and family to see?
- blame you for all the problems in your relationship, or for his/her own abusive behavior ?
- see you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?
- act excessively jealous and possessive?
- control where you go or what you do?
- keep you from seeing your friends or family?
- check up on you all of the time to see where you are, what you're doing and who you are with?
- accuse you without good reason of being unfaithful or flirting?
- limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
- have a bad and unpredictable temper?
- destroy your belongings or things you value?
- hurt you, or threaten to hurt or kill you?
- threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- force you to have sex?

**Do you:**

- feel afraid of your partner much of the time?
- avoid certain topics out of fear of angering your partner?
- feel that you can't do anything right for your partner?
- believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- wonder if you're the one who is going crazy?
- feel increasingly trapped or powerless?
- feel emotionally numb or helpless?

**What to do if you're being abused**

If you are in an abusive relationship, you may feel confused, afraid, angry and/or trapped. What should you do? Taking the wrong step could escalate tensions or may destroy the relationship permanently. The following information can help. Obviously, the level of your response will depend on the degree of seriousness with which the abuse is inflicting emotional or physical injury.

### **1. Acknowledge the reality of abuse.**

The first step toward changing things is recognizing that your situation is abusive. Even if your partner says he/she cares about you and you care about your partner, it's not okay to be put down, pushed around, scared or intimidated into things that make you feel uncomfortable, unhappy or unsafe, just because you are in a relationship. And it is never okay for your partner to use physical violence. Once you acknowledge the reality of the abusive situation, then you can get the help you need.



### **2. Meet with a professional therapist or counselor.**

For your health and safety, and the security of any children who may be involved, it is vitally important that you utilize the help of a professional therapist or counselor who can help you assess your situation and advise you with solid principles and practical information. You may need to go several times to address the variety of issues that may be involved in your relationship.

### **3. Confide in a trusted friend or family member.**

Talk to someone who can be an objective listener to help you separate your emotions from reason in sorting through the issues involved in an abusive relationship. Share your concerns with a person who knows both of you, but who can maintain an impartial perspective. Sharing your feelings with a trusted friend or family member can also help you feel less isolated and relieve stress.

### **4. Find out about local support programs.**

Ask your counselor, use the yellow pages, or research online to learn about local services that you may need if you break off your relationship with the abuser, including: shelters/safe homes, 24-hour emergency hotlines, support groups for victims of abuse, and advocacy programs offering help in obtaining medical care, legal protection, housing, furniture, clothing, training and educational services, employment, social services, and emergency transportation.

### **Your EAP is here to help**

If you need help dealing with a stressful relationship, or breaking free of relationship abuse or violence, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for FREE and CONFIDENTIAL counseling, information and/or referrals. A professional EAP counselor can help you assess your situation and develop an appropriate plan of action. If domestic violence is involved, your EAP counselor can help you develop a personalized safety plan and refer you to people and resources that can empower you with support, advice and information to help you break the cycle of abuse.

### **Resources**

National Domestic Violence Hotline: If you are being abused, call this free hotline for assistance: 1-800-799-7233 / 1-800-799-SAFE

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474

## How to help a friend or family member who is being abused

**Don't be afraid to let him/her know that you are concerned for their safety.** Help your friend or family member recognize the abuse. Tell him or her that you see what is going on and that you want to help. Help them recognize that what is happening is not "normal" and that they deserve a healthy, non-violent relationship.

**Acknowledge that he or she is in a very difficult and scary situation.** Let your friend or family member know that the abuse is not their fault. Reassure him or her that they are not alone and that there is help and support out there.

**Be supportive.** Listen to your friend or family member. Remember that it may be difficult for him or her to talk about the abuse. Let him or her know that you are available to help whenever they may need it. What they need most is someone who will believe and listen to them.

**Be non-judgmental.** Respect your friend or family member's decisions. There are many reasons why victims stay in abusive relationships. He or she may leave and return to the relationship many times. Do not criticize his or her decisions or try to guilt them. He or she will need your support even more during those times.

**Encourage him or her to participate in activities outside of the relationship with friends and family.**

**If he or she ends the relationship, continue to be supportive of them.** Even though the relationship was abusive, your friend or family member may still feel sad and lonely once it is over. He or she will need time to mourn the loss of the relationship and will especially need your support at that time.

**Help him or her develop a safety plan.**

**Encourage him or her to talk to people who can provide help and guidance.** Find a local domestic violence agency that provides counseling and support groups. Offer to go with him or her to talk to family and friends. If he or she has to go to the police, court or a lawyer, offer to go along for moral support.

**Remember that you cannot "rescue" him or her.** Although it is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt, ultimately the person getting hurt has to be the one to decide that they want to do something about it. It's important for you to support him or her and help them find a way to safety and peace.

*Source: National Domestic Violence Hotline – [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)*

---

## How to Avoid Prescription Drug Misuse or Abuse

Prescription medications can be effective when they are used properly, but some can be addictive and dangerous when misused. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 14 of the 20 most abused mood-altering substances in the U.S. are prescription drugs.

Many people become "unwitting" addicts. These are often individuals with no prior history of drug abuse, who begin using prescription drugs for a legitimate medical problem. Then, at some point they start increasing the dosage on their own because the drug makes them feel better. Gradually, the abuse becomes full-blown addiction.



## Basic medication safety tips

Follow these guidelines for the safe use of any prescription medications you may use:

- 1. Educate yourself about any prescribed or over-the-counter drug you may take, in particular the drugs that can be addictive.** The most frequent offenders are pain and nerve medications, tranquilizers, diet pills and cold medicines. Before taking any medication ask what is in the medication and what effects can be expected.
- 2. Keep your doctor informed about all medications you are taking, including over-the-counter medications.**
- 3. Be sure to use medication only as prescribed.** If you have questions or concerns, contact your doctor.
- 4. Get a second opinion before going on a medication for any length of time.** Long-term use for more than 27 consecutive days can be addictive (This does not apply to medications that simply provide what the body is deficient in, such as insulin, thyroid, and antidepressants).
- 5. Low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and feeling of isolation and detachment are the most common problems associated with drug dependency.** Seek professional help or other resources to help you solve these problems, instead of covering up the symptoms with medication. Make yourself a priority and take care of your physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

### Your EAP is here to help

If you or a dependent needs help to overcome a problem with prescription drug abuse or addiction, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can assist you with CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals and information. EAP counselors are specially trained to help people get the right help for a problem with prescription medications or other drugs, and can help you determine the extent of your problem and what treatment is needed. If you need help, why not call an EAP counselor today? We're here to help. All EAP services are free and strictly confidential.

---

## Anger Management Tips: Taming Your Temper

If you have a tough time controlling your anger, you can take steps on your own to improve your anger management. The suggestions listed below can help you get your anger under control:

- **Practice deep breathing.** If you feel yourself getting angry, don't let it build up until you have a violent outburst. Try breathing deeply from your diaphragm in long, slow breaths, giving your heartbeat a chance to slow down. Repeat a word such as "relax" or "calm" as you breathe. Breathing deeply will ease your tension.
- **Change your environment.** Get out of the situation if you need to. The quickest way to uncouple yourself from a source of anger is to take a five-minute walk and get some fresh air. The walk will help you calm down and the break can give you time to think about the cause of your anger. Find someone to talk things over with - someone who can help you calm down and gain perspective.



- **Count to ten.** Counting to ten is an anger management tip that has worked for centuries. The Roman poet Horace (65-8 BC) said, "When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, one hundred." Counting to ten (or one hundred) helps you step back from an anger-provoking situation, buys time for you to examine the problem, and then decide on an effective, rational way to express your anger.
- **Do something physically exerting.** Physical activity can provide an outlet for stressful emotions. Numerous worldwide studies have documented that exercise can dissipate stress energy and improve your mood. If you're about to erupt, go for a brisk walk or run, a swim, lift weights or shoot baskets.
- **Ask yourself this question.** Before you react in anger, ask yourself: "Will the object of my anger matter ten years from now?" Chances are, by asking this question, you will see things from a calmer perspective.
- **Let go of what is beyond your control.** You can change only yourself and your responses to others, not what others do to you. Getting angry doesn't fix the situation and often makes you feel worse. If someone constantly arouses your anger, focus on the troublesome situation and brainstorm solutions.

### Your EAP is here to help

If your anger is out of control and having a negative impact on your relationships or on other important parts of your life, consider contacting your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for help. A psychologist or licensed mental health professional experienced in anger management can work with you in developing a range of techniques for changing your thinking and behaviors. We're here to help you.

---

## For Your Information

### Take a Break

Create better balance in your life by treating one day a week - usually Saturday or Sunday - as a vacation. Take the day completely off. To make the day truly one of rest, avoid all conversation about work - yours or your spouse's. A weekly one-day vacation will energize you, improve your relationships and motivate you to find ways to get more done in less time.

### Face Stress Head On

Too much stress drains your energy, undermines your mood and negatively impacts your health. If you're suffering from overwhelming or chronic stress ask yourself: What is the biggest problem or conflict that is troubling me and how can I deal with it more effectively? Face the issue head on by devising ways to change or manage the aspects of the issue over which you have control. Learn to let go of those aspects over which you have no control.



# Employee Assistance Program Services

PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

Your Employee Assistance Program is a prepaid and confidential program designed to help employees and their dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. EAP Consultants offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your EAP Counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

For assistance, call EAP Consultants at: **800-869-0276** or request services by secure e-mail on the Member Access page of our website at <http://www.eapconsultants.com/>.