

# TYPES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

The following is a list of many of the types of emotional abuse that women suffer. You may readily recognize many of the behaviors on the list as abusive, but it may surprise you to discover some that you may not think of as abusive.

1. DOMINATION – When you allow yourself to be dominated by someone else, you begin to lose respect for yourself, and you become silently enraged. Someone else is in control of your life, just as assuredly as if you were a slave doing what you were ordered to do. You are no longer the master of your own destiny.
2. VERBAL ASSAULTS - This set of behaviors involve berating, belittling, criticizing, name-calling, screaming, threatening, blaming, and using sarcasm and humiliation. This kind of abuse is extremely damaging to the victim's self-esteem and self-image. Just as assuredly as physical violence assaults the body, verbal abuse assaults the mind and spirit, causing wounds that are extremely difficult to heal. Not only is this kind of abuse demeaning, but it is frightening as well. When someone yells at us, we become afraid that they may also resort to physical violence.
3. ABUSIVE EXPECTATIONS – Here, the abuser places unreasonable demands on you, and you are expected to put aside everything to satisfy his needs. The abuser demonstrates a constant need for your undivided attention, demands frequent sex, and often requires you to spend all of your free time with him. But no matter how much time or attention you give, it is never enough; this person can never be pleased, because there is always something more you could have done. You are subjected to constant criticism, and you are constantly berated because you don't fulfill all of this person's needs.
4. EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL – Emotional blackmail is one of the most powerful ways of manipulation. An emotional blackmailer either consciously or unconsciously coerces another person into doing what he wants by playing on that person's fear, guilt, or compassion. Women, in particular, are easily exploited because they tend to place others' wishes and feelings ahead of their own. They can be made to feel guilty simply for thinking of their own needs and feelings first.  
You are being emotionally blackmailed when someone threatens to end a relationship if you don't give them what they want, or when someone rejects you or distances themselves from you until you give in to their demands. If others give you the "cold shoulder" whenever they are displeased with you, threaten to fire you if you don't do what they say, or use other fear tactics to get you under control, they are using the tactic of emotional blackmail.
5. UNPREDICTABLE RESPONSES – In this type of abusive situation, the abuser has drastic mood swings or sudden emotional outbursts for no apparent reason, or gives inconsistent responses. Whenever someone in your life reacts very differently at different times to the same behavior from you, such as, tells you one thing one day and the opposite the next; or frequently changes his mind (they like something you do one day, but hate it the next), you are being abused with unpredictable responses.

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6. **CONSTANT CRITICISM** – When someone is unrelentingly critical of you, always finds fault, and can never be pleased, it is the insidious nature and cumulative effects of the abuse that do the damage. Over time, this type of abuse eats away at your self-confidence and sense of self-worth, undermining any good feelings you have about yourself and about your accomplishments or achievements. Eventually, you become convinced that nothing you do is worthwhile, and you may feel like just giving up.
7. **CHARACTER ASSASSINATION** – Character assassination occurs when someone constantly blows your mistakes out of proportion: gossips about your past failures and mistakes and tells lies about you; humiliates, criticizes, or makes fun of you in front of others, and discounts your achievements. In addition to the pain this behavior causes you personally, character assassination can ruin your personal and professional reputation, causing you to lose lovers, friends, and jobs.
8. **GASLIGHTING** – This term comes from the movie of the same name, in which one character uses a variety of insidious techniques to make another character doubt her perceptions, her memory, and her very sanity. An abuser who does this may continually deny that certain events occurred or that he said something you both know was said, or may by insinuate that you are exaggerating or lying. In this way, the abuser may be trying to gain control over you or may be trying to avoid responsibility for his actions.
9. **CONSTANT CHAOS** – This type of abuse is characterized by continual upheavals and discord. The abuser may deliberately start arguments and be in constant conflict with others. He is likely to be “addicted to drama”, since creating chaos creates excitement in crisis-oriented people. Seemingly unable to enjoy harmony and peace, the “chaotic person” bursts out with constant disruptions and negative moods.
10. **SEXUAL HARASSMENT** – Although this term is used most often with regard to work settings, a woman can be sexually harassed by anyone, including her partner. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances or physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature. Whenever a woman is pressured into becoming sexual against her will, whether it be because she doesn’t choose that person as a sexual partner or because she does not feel like being sexual at the time, it is considered sexual harassment.

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