

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Generally speaking, abuse is any behavior that results in the mistreatment of another. There are seven major kinds of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual, social, verbal, legal, financial and spiritual. To describe what is meant by “mistreatment of another”, some common examples of abuse are listed below:

Physical Abuse

- Destroying your belongings
- Throwing objects at you, punching walls or doors
- Touching you in ways that hurt or scare you
- Twisting your arm, slapping, or biting you
- Pushing or shoving you, head-butting, pinching, jabbing, or chest-bumping you
- Depriving you of food, shelter, money or clothing
- Threatening you with weapons
- Hitting, punching, or kicking you
- Strangling or throwing you
- Abusing you to the point you need medical treatment
- Breaking your bones and/or causing internal injuries
- Causing a miscarriage or injuries that require a therapeutic abortion
- Denying you medical treatment
- Inflicting permanent disabling and/or disfiguring injuries

Emotional Abuse

- Ignoring you and/or your feelings
- Degrading you and/or your family
- Yelling at you
- Telling you that you will fail
- Blaming you for her/his faults
- Threatening you with violence or retaliation
- Threatening to hurt your pets
- Threatening to abuse the children and/or get custody of them
- Telling you that you must stay because you can't make it alone
- Accusing you of being violent when you protect yourself in any way
- Labeling you as crazy, stupid, bitch, bastard, ugly, or a whore
- Blaming you for things that go wrong
- Holding back approval as a form of punishment
- Threatening, taunting you with threats that he can't live without you, he'll kill himself
- Name calling, using sarcasm or being critical
- Insulting you repeatedly, hurting your feelings with criticisms, laughing at you, putting you down, and taunting you in the name of “fun”
- Lying

Social Abuse

- Insulting you publicly
- Putting down your abilities
- Checking up on you
- Taping conversations

WHAT IS ABUSE?

- Following you from place to place – stalking
- Demanding all of your attention and resenting any focus on others
- Making a public display of destroying property
- Threatening to hurt your extended family and friends
- Isolating you from friends or activities

Sexual Abuse

- Talking about you or others as sexual objects
- Forcing you to have sex, including sex after a beating
- Criticizing your sexual performance
- Withholding affection to punish you
- Accusing you of looking at, talking to, or having sex with another
- Forcing you to engage in sexual activities that are uncomfortable for you
- Inflicting harm or mutilation of your genitals
- Strangling or slapping you during sex
- Telling women hating jokes and sharing your secrets with others to humiliate you

Spiritual Abuse

- Discounting your sense of right and wrong
- Denying, minimizing, or ridiculing your spiritual beliefs
- Denying you value as a person with legitimate wants and likes
- Questioning your motives for just about everything
- Questioning your sense of reality
- Refusing to allow you access to worship communities or support groups

Financial Abuse

- Controlling your use of money
- Withholding or controlling funds
- Demanding her paycheck when she gets paid
- Hiding or refusing money needed for basic needs and emergencies
- Spending paychecks without meeting obligations. Not paying rent, utilities, and food bills to point services are terminated and the funds are not available for the bill

Systems Abuse

- Making false claims to Police/CPS
- Hiding assets from the courts to alter child support/ spousal support amounts
- Hiding financial information to prevent equal distribution of assets
- Lying to lawyers and judges about the depth, intensity and frequency of the abuse
- Refusing to obey Protection Orders, Restraining Orders, No Contact Orders and No Trespassing orders
- Requesting multiple continuances to keep the case from closing
- Continually asking for changes or refusing to honor visitation times and dates
- Utilizing court to punish you
- Refusing to pay court fees, child support, or spousal support

Adapted from: It's Not Okay Anymore, Greg Enns and Jan Black, Hannibal House, Inc., 1996.