



Facts about Domestic Violence and Psychological Abuse

What is psychological abuse?

Psychological abuse involves trauma to the victim caused by verbal abuse, acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics. Perpetrators use psychological abuse to control, terrorize, and denigrate their victims. It frequently occurs prior to or concurrently with physical or sexual abuse.

Psychological abuse includes:

- Humiliating the victim
- Controlling what the victim can or cannot do
- Withholding information from the victim
- Deliberately doing something to make the victim feel diminished or embarrassed
- Isolating the victim from friends and/or family
- Denying the victim access to money or other basic resources
- Stalking
- Demeaning the victim in public or in private
- Undermining the victim's confidence and/or sense of self-worth
- Convincing the victim (s)he is crazy

Why it Matters:

Psychological abuse increases the trauma of physical and sexual abuse, and a number of studies have demonstrated that psychological abuse independently causes long-term damage to a victim's mental health. Victims of psychological abuse often experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal ideation, low self-esteem, and difficulty trusting others. Subtle psychological abuse is more harmful than either overt psychological abuse or direct aggression.

Did You Know?

- 48.4% of women and 48.8% of men have experienced at least one psychologically aggressive behavior by an intimate partner.
- 4 in 10 women and 4 in 10 men have experienced at least one form of coercive control by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- 17.9% of women have experienced a situation where an intimate partner tried to keep them from seeing family and friends.
- 18.7% of women have experienced threats of physical harm by an intimate partner.
- 95% of men who physically abuse their intimate partners also psychologically abuse them.
- Women who earn 65% or more of their households' income are more likely to be psychologically abused than women who learn less than 65% of their households' income.

Effects of Psychological Abuse

- 7 out of 10 psychologically abused women display symptoms of PTSD and/or depression.
- Women experiencing psychological abuse are significantly more likely to report poor physical and mental health and to have more than 5 physician visits in the last year.
- Psychological abuse is a stronger predictor of PTSD than physical abuse among women.

Am I Being Psychologically Abused?

Does your partner:

- Threaten to harm you, your children, your family and/or your pets?
- Tell you are worthless and that no one will ever love you?
- Isolate you from your friends and/or family?
- Control your behavior and monitor your movements and whereabouts?
- Tell you that you are crazy?
- Demean you in public or private?
- Constantly criticize you?
- Blame you for everything that goes wrong?
- Stalk you?
- Cause you to feel guilt over things that are not your fault?
- Threaten to take away your children?

If so, your partner may be abusing you. For help, contact the Center for Safety & Change Hotline 1-845-634-3344