

# What to Do When You Feel You Are in Danger from Someone You Are Dating

## Objective

To identify the steps to take when you feel you are in danger from someone you are dating.

## You Should Know

Abusive relationships can take many forms. The most common forms of dating abuse are:

- **Physical**, meaning any form of physical aggression, including hitting, slapping, kicking, shoving, pushing, choking, hurting someone with an object or weapon, or purposely breaking things that belong to them.
- **Sexual**, meaning pressuring or blackmailing someone into a sex act of any kind, when they don't want it.
- **Emotional**, meaning name calling, yelling, criticizing, belittling, humiliating, or lying about you. This can also include attempts to control your whereabouts or keeping you from spending time with friends or family.
- **Cyber abuse** refers to abusive texts and phone calls, unwanted sexting, manipulating social media, stealing passwords, and pressure to post or send sexual photos or videos.

If you are concerned for your safety in your current relationship, it is vital that you talk to someone about it as soon as possible. *If you feel there is an immediate danger call 911. If you feel that there is the potential of danger, call the National Domestic Violence hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).*

## What to Do

This worksheet offers guidelines on how to identify abusive behavior from someone you are dating. Here are some common warning signs that indicate you are likely in an abusive relationship. Put a check next to the ones that apply to you.

Does your partner:

- Check your phone, email, or social media accounts without permission?
- Express extreme jealousy or insecurity?
- Constantly belittle you or put you down?
- Have an explosive temper?
- Try to isolate you from family and friends or tell you who to hang out with?

- \_\_\_ Continually accuse you of things that are not true?
- \_\_\_ Exhibit constant mood swings?
- \_\_\_ Physically hurt you (slapping, pushing, grabbing, shaking, smacking, kicking, punching)?
- \_\_\_ Act possessive or controlling?
- \_\_\_ Tell you what you can and cannot do?
- \_\_\_ Demand to know where you are at all times and with whom?
- \_\_\_ Threaten to injure you or themselves if you leave the relationship?
- \_\_\_ Blame you for everything that goes wrong?
- \_\_\_ Demand you spend time with them exclusively?
- \_\_\_ Constantly criticize your appearance or dress?
- \_\_\_ Tell you to quit an activity or something you love to do?
- \_\_\_ Raise a hand or fist as if they are going to hit you?
- \_\_\_ Force you to go further than you want to sexually?

Of the four types of abusive behaviors listed in the section above (physical, sexual, emotional, cyber), which ones are you experiencing in your current relationship? Describe each in as much detail as you can.

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How are abusive experiences affecting you? Write down your answers below.

Physically?

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Emotionally?

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Sexually?

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Spiritually?

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Academically?

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Other:

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Safety is the most important thing to think about in leaving an abusive relationship. If you're in an abusive relationship, you need to end it as soon as possible. But how do you do this? The first step is to TELL SOMEONE. You probably have already thought of this, but maybe you are afraid to tell someone, or you are embarrassed about things you have done. It's understandable that you feel this way, but you'll feel safer when you talk to someone about what's going on and what you want.

If you don't know how to talk about this with someone you know, you might consider getting help from an anonymous hotline or a mental health agency.

Write down the names of people you can talk to about your relationship.

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### Reflections on This Exercise

What happened when you reached out for help?

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Are there still obstacles toward ending the abusive relationship? Who can help you with these?

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What action steps can you take next to get out of the abusive relationship?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?

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