

START HERE

Emotional abuse (EA) is a pattern of power and control where one person uses psychological attacks

against another person. These include insults, humiliation, threats, jealousy/ possessiveness, manipulation, guilt, gaslighting, stalking, and coercion.

EA is designed to control, scare, and break down a person's confidence.

48%

Men and Women have reported¹ experiencing emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a form of domestic violence, and is sometimes the first warning sign. EA ranges from subtle to overt, and often appears with other forms of abuse or signals the abusive partner may escalate to other forms of abuse.

Anyone can experience emotional abuse. Abusers can be intimate partners, family members, co-workers,, friends, etc.

Emotional abuse can be more traumatizing than physical abuse.^{2,3} Emotional abuse often isn't taken seriously, and survivors who try to seek help are often not believed.

What Does EA Look Like?



INSULTS
Trans survivors may face insults about not being "man/woman" enough in appearance

HUMILIATION
"Its funny how your eye twitches when you're mad... Guys check this out!" <mimics eye twitch>

ISOLATION
"Your family will never accept you. I do. I'm the one who understands you. Not them."

MANIPULATION
"I do so much for you, what do you do? If you really loved me..."

COERCION
"Do it for me. Do it. You're overacting, come on, it'll be fine...why are you being stubborn? Do you want me to get mad? I don't think you want that."

THREATS
Abusers in LGBTQ relationships may threatened to "out" their partner as a way to control them.

GASLIGHTING
"That never happened. You're crazy. You're making stuff up."

JEALOUSY
"I don't want you to see your friends. You'll just cheat on me."

Stalking
"I need to know where you are in case you need help!"

Commonly Asked Questions

I Haven't Heard Much About Emotional Abuse?

As a society, we tend to dismiss it as "less serious" than physical abuse. EA is also harder to spot because it can be subtle or disguised as other things, like "jokes".

What Are The Effects of Emotional Abuse?

Fear, low self esteem, and a diminished sense of identity, self worth, dignity, and confidence. It can lead to depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies.

Is Emotional Abuse "That Bad"?

Yes. Many survivors say emotional abuse is as traumatizing or more traumatizing than physical or sexual abuse. A study by Walker (1979) found that many survivors "considered humiliation and verbal assaults to be more upsetting than the physical violence they experienced".³

Commonly, EA is a warning sign for future physical assault, or appears along side physical assault as well as other forms of abuse such as financial and sexual.

47.5%

Battered women report ridicule/verbal harassment as⁴ the "worst type" of emotional abuse they experienced

How Do I Know I Am Being Emotionally Abused?

Identifying emotional abuse can be tricky. Trust your gut if you feel something is off, and look for the red flags we have highlighted in this toolkit.

On the back page, we have included a short "quiz" with examples of different types of emotional abuse to help get you started.

REFERENCES

1. NCADV. (2015). Facts about domestic violence and psychological abuse. Retrieved from www.ncadv.org
2. HENNING, K. R. I. S., & KLESGES, L. M. (2003). Prevalence and Characteristics of Psychological Abuse Reported by Court-Involved Battered Women. JOURNAL OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE, 18(6), 857-871. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260503253878>
- 3 Walker, L. E. (1979). The battered woman. New York: Harper & Row.
- 4 Follingstad, D. R., Rutledge, L. Berg, B. J., Hause, E. S., & Poleck, D. S. (1990). The Role of Emotional Abuse in Physically Abusive Relationships. Journal of Family Violence, 5(2).



QUIZ

Which of the following sound like you?

I feel anxious about how my partner will respond to me doing/saying/etc. | **I think I'm too sensitive**
My partner told me they can't live without me

When I tell my partner about something they did that upset me, they say its my fault. Or I deserve it.

My partner has called me "crazy" | **My partner convinced me to quit my job/school/certain hobbies**

My partner had threatened to kill themselves if I leave

I am afraid to tell my partner "no"

My partner follows me everywhere

My partner says its my fault for how they act

I feel like I don't see my friends and family as much now that I'm with my partner

My partner has ignored me for long periods of time to punish me for something I did

I go with things my partner wants even when it makes me uncomfortable. It feels easier.

My partner scares me

My partner has threatened me | **My partner reads my texts**
My partner calls me names they know hurt me | **My partner is really jealous**
My kids | **My partner is really jealous**
My pets | **My partner is really jealous**
My family | **My partner is really jealous**

I've changed what I wear because of my partner

My partner intentionally uses the wrong pronouns for me

My partner tells me my friends think I'm crazy. That no one believes me.

A certain look or touch from my partner warns me... I'd better "watch it". Or I'll be in trouble later.

Answer Key

0 = There may be no EA. BUT if you are worried there is, trust your gut.

1- 5 = Seeing a few red flags.

5-10 = Warning bells are ringing

>10 = We are concerned there is emotional abuse in your relationship. Check --> for next steps.

I'm experiencing Emotional Abuse What Now?

Are you scared your partner will physically harm/kill you?

Yes

No

We recommend reaching out to a local domestic violence advocate and working one on one for how to proceed. Consider building a network of support for when you feel in danger. Can you stay with family or friends? If you are scared that you are in danger... please don't ignore it. You are the expert on your relationship.

Connect with people who can support you. Practice self love. Do things that make you happy. Identify and set boundaries. Even if your abuser ignores them, set them for yourself! And remember...you do NOT deserve to be treated this way!

We recommend connecting with a DV advocate in your local area. Identify what you need to proceed safely. Don't forget to care for yourself and your mental health. You've been through trauma. Your needs matter!

Do you want to leave your relationship?

I can't, my abuser is family/boss, teacher...

YES

No, I love my partner. And this doesn't seem "that bad"

It is ok to love your partner. But you don't deserve to be abused. And EA is as bad or worse than other forms of abuse. Your needs matter. Your safety matters.



Want to learn more?

www.teamtead.org



Our Podcast: The Domestic Violence Discussion



Looking to join Team TEAD?

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Join us at upcoming events?

visit our website at teamtead.org

Team TEAD Emotional Abuse Toolkit

Do you feel like you can't do anything right? Are you often anxious? Do you think your feelings and opinions don't matter? You may be experiencing Emotional Abuse.

Our Team TEAD toolkit is designed to help you understand emotional abuse: What it looks like, how it feels, and suggestions and strategies for beginning your healing journey

