

## What is needed for a healthy relationship?

A healthy relationship requires two people who are autonomous, who care about each other and who promote each other's growth within a partnership.

Listening, understanding and valuing each other's point of view is essential. Respect for each other, healthy self-esteem, enjoyment and trust are the basis for a relationship that both partners will appreciate.

Most couples in intimate relationships disagree about things and argue at times. Arguments are a part of normal, healthy relationships. When arguing, both partners compromise and rationally discuss their concerns to seek solutions and overcome their problems as equals. Problems arise if one partner feels threatened or is too frightened to argue back. If this occurs, the balance of power is no longer equal.

As this imbalance of power increases, your partner may try to take over, insisting on having their own way.

No-one enters a relationship intending to become a victim of domestic violence.

### Women's Bill of Rights

- **I have the right to feel safe**
- **I have the right to a violence free environment and lifestyle**
- **I have the right to equality**
- **I have the right to respect**
- **I have a right to be appreciated**
- **I have a right to my dignity**
- **I have a right to make choices**
- **I have a right to receive empathy & warmth**
- **I have a right to be accepted as I am**
- **I have a right to say no**

#### NQDVRS

Funded by the Department of Communities

- Information and referral
- Aardvarc program for children
- Community education & training
- Resources
- Court Support
- Men's Behavioral Change

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Against Violence #10

## Thinking of a new relationship?

North Queensland  
Domestic Violence  
Resource Service



**The signs were there, why couldn't I see them?**

**Dalma Hunt** (*Women & Survival*)

## Clues to potential abuse

### ? Did he grow up in a violent family?

People who grow up in families where they have been abused as children, or where one parent - usually the father - beats the other, are more likely to become an abuser. They have grown up learning that violence is normal behaviour. Those who come from violent homes may claim that they never behave that way, but may resort to violence when faced with the problems of marriage and parenting.

### ? Does he tend to use force or violence to "solve" his problems?

Does he have a quick temper? Does he over-react to little problems and frustrations, such as not finding a parking place? Does he punch walls or throw things when he's upset? Any of these behaviours may be a sign of a person who will work out bad feelings with violence. Do not minimise the tendency he may have to be cruel to animals. Cruelty to animals is a common behaviour of men who are cruel to women & children. A man who has a criminal record for violence, who gets into fights, or who acts tough is likely to act the same way with his partner and children.

### ? Does he expect you to follow his orders or advice?

Does he become angry if you do not fulfill his wishes, if you cannot anticipate what he wants?

### ? Does he abuse alcohol or other drugs?

There is a strong link between violence & problems with drugs & alcohol. Be alert to his drinking/drug problems, particularly if he refuses to admit that he has a problem, or refuses to get help. DO NOT THINK THAT YOU CAN CHANGE HIM.

### ? Does he think poorly of himself?

Does he guard his masculinity by trying to act tough? He may think he's acting like a man, but in fact, he may be acting like a future abuser.

### ? Does he have strong ideas about what men & women should be?

Does he think a woman should stay at home, take care of her partner, & follow his wishes and orders? In other words, does he act like women are second class citizens?

### ? Is he jealous of you - of other men that you know - and of your girlfriends & family?

Does he keep tabs on you? Does he want to know where you are at alltimes? Does he see himself as the "protector" of the family? Does he say that he loves you, can't live without you and wants you with him all the time, even when it is inconvenient for you?

### ? Does he go through extreme highs & lows, as though he is almost two different people?

Is he extremely kind one time, and extremely cruel at another time?

### ? When he gets angry, do you fear him?

Do you find that not making him angry has become a major part of your life? Do you do what he wants you to do, rather than what you want to do?

### ? Does he treat you roughly?

Does he hit you? Does he physically force you to do what you do not want to do? Abuse during dating is a guarantee of later abuse, & more violent abuse. Do not think that marriage will change him for the better.

### ? Do you feel threatened by him?

Have you changed your life so you won't make him angry?

Source: "Predictors Of Domestic Violence," National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

**If you answered yes to any of these questions then - he is potentially a violent partner!!**

