

Signs You may be in an **Unhealthy** or **Abusive** Relationship



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a prevalent form of Gender Based Violence. It may be called domestic violence, dating violence, spousal violence or relationship violence. It refers to multiple forms of harm caused by a current or former intimate partner or spouse. It encompasses physical violence, sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, financial abuse, stalking, verbal abuse, spiritual abuse and blackmail. It also encompasses reproductive coercion, coercive control, cyber violence and death.

IPV impacts people of all races, genders, orientations, ages, abilities, religions, classes, cultures, sizes and education levels. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies IPV as a major global Public Health concern, affecting millions of people.

If any of the below describe your partner/relationship you may be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship:

- They prevent or discourage you from spending time with others (friends, family, co-workers) as they are trying to isolate you
- They demand and/or expect access your phone and your passwords
- They demand and/or expect access to your social media – may expect you to delete certain people (e.g., all men or x-partners)
- They send lots of messages and expect a response immediately
- They say they love you frequently and may have said it early within the relationship
- Threats (e.g., “I will post naked pics of you if you leave”, “I will kill myself if you leave”)
- Shows up at your workplace or after class unexpectedly (checking up on you)
- They want to know where you are and who you are with – may ask for proof (e.g., send a pic of who you are with and a landmark in the background)
- They are dominant in your relationship - may interrupt people, speak down to restaurant staff, have belief in rigid/traditional gender roles, be overly competitive
- Plays games within the relationship, often confusing you
- Use of Gaslighting, making you question yourself, your reality and/or your sanity
- Uses “love bombing” (grandiose gestures) after abusive behaviour
- They have a quick temper, verbally abuse/yell at you, they may be cruel to animals
- They may harm, or threaten to harm, your pet
- They never blame themselves – they blame others, you, a bad day, stress, society...
- Jealous and possessive
- Accuse you of cheating, flirting and/or not loving them
- Unpredictable
- Minimizes existence of and seriousness of violence/harm, have many excuses
- Forces sex on you, does not use consent, does not care about your pleasure
- Interferes with or sabotages things that are important to you (e.g., school and/or work)
- Sabotages and or controls birth control methods if you use them, may keep track of menstrual cycle if you menstruate
- Often pleasant and charming between periods of abuse – outsiders may see them as nice



- Mentions your friends don't like them
- Objectifies you, sees you as "their property"
- Controls what you wear/eat/say/do etc.
- Demeans, shames or embarrasses you privately or publicly
- Tells you that you never do anything right
- Wants to accompany you everywhere
- Pressures you to use drugs and/or alcohol
- Forbids you to use drugs and/or alcohol
- Destroys or throws away your belongings



If any of the above describe your relationship **it is not your fault.**

If you have questions or concerns about your relationship there are supports for you.

List of Resources

Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office (SVPRO)

University of Waterloo, non-crisis support, email: svpro@uwaterloo.ca
<https://uwaterloo.ca/sexual-violence-prevention-response-office/>

Waterloo Region Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC)

24 Hour Support Line **519.741.8633** <https://www.sascwr.org/>

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre

St. Mary's Hospital, Kitchener and Cambridge Memorial Hospital, Cambridge
<https://www.smgh.ca/areas-of-care/sexual-assault-domestic-violence>

Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region

24/7 crisis support line: **519-742-5894 or 519-653-2422** or access the live chat
<https://wswr.org/>

List of other crisis support services

<https://uwaterloo.ca/sexual-violence-prevention-response-office/resources/crisis-support-services>

