



# Why Do Abusers Abuse?

**Understanding Why Abusers Abuse and the Indicators of Abuse**

# If you find yourself with an abusive partner, it is not uncommon to wonder, “why do they do the things they do?”

There is no excuse or justification for domestic violence. Abuse is one partner exerting power and control over the other. But how can someone who says they love you abuse you? What are some of the different control tactics? Should you hold out any hope an abuser can change?

This toolkit will provide you with these insights and more. Inside you'll find:

- Helpful Articles
- Recommended Books
- Checklists
- Danger Assessments
- Survey Results & Toolkits
- In-Depth Video
- Support Communities
- How to Find Help

Remember, abuse is a choice. You are not to blame.



There are hundreds of articles on [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) covering the many facets of domestic violence. The links here can help you understand the abuser mindset and red flags abusive behavior.

#### [Predictive Indicators of Violence](#)

The facts and figures on domestic violence perpetrators.

#### [Profile of an Abuser](#)

What to be aware of before you get involved.

#### [Abusive Red Flags](#)

Warning signs that your partner could turn violent.

#### [Recognizing Unsafe People](#)

Three types of people that may spell trouble.

#### [Why People Choose to Abuse](#)

There's no easy way to predict who will become a batterer.

#### [Life with a Psychopath](#)

How psychopaths exert control and why.

## [What is Domestic Violence?](#)

A look at the five types of domestic violence.

## [A Deadly Cycle](#)

The 4 stages of abuse that happen over and over.

## [Survivors Denying Abuse](#)

How abusers trick survivors into denying abuse.

## [Will It Happen Again?](#)

A look at whether past behaviors can predict abuse.

## [Abuse Isn't Caused by Alcohol](#)

Dispelling the myth that abuse is caused by alcohol.

## [This Is What Abuse Looks Like](#)

How to recognize if you're in an abusive relationship.

## [Power and Control Wheel](#)

Know the repeated pattern abusive partners follow.

## [The Excuses We Tell Ourselves](#)

A reminder there's no justification for an abusive partner.

## [Abuse Isn't Due To Mental Illness](#)

Abusers are no more likely to be mentally ill than others.

## [DV in Affluent Marriages](#)

When abusers exhibit narcissistic entitlement.



### [10 Patterns of Verbal Abuse](#)

This form of abuse can be harder to recognize than you may think.

### [Recognizing Emotional Abuse](#)

19 questions to help identify this type of domestic violence.

### [3 Myths About Survivors](#)

The falsities to stop telling yourself once and for all.

### [Can Abusers Change?](#)

The 9 signs that an abuser can change.

### [What is Batterer Counseling?](#)

What this form of counseling addresses and how it works.

### [Victim of Financial Abuse?](#)

16 questions to help identify this type of domestic violence.

### [When Abusers Use Sexual Abuse](#)

40% of survivors experience these types of sexual abuse.

### [Recognizing Religious Abuse](#)

Is your abuser using your spiritual beliefs to control you?

### [Narcissistic Abusers Won't Change](#)

Rarely true, this term is often used as a manipulation tactic.

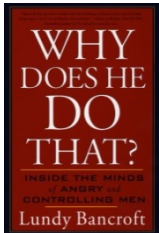
### [Counseling Will Not Stop Abuse](#)

Why couples counseling won't help.

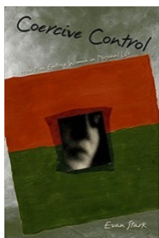


Reading books can be a helpful way to understand if you're a victim of abuse and understand the abuser's behavior.

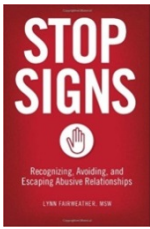
Here are our recommended reads:



[Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men](#). He says he loves you. So...why does he do that? You've asked yourself this question again and again. Now you have the chance to see inside the minds of angry and controlling men. You will learn about the early warning signs of abuse, the nature of abusive thinkers, myths about abusers, 10 abusive personality types, the role of drugs and alcohol, and how to get out of an abusive relationship safely.



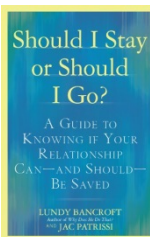
[Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life](#). This book breaks through entrenched view of physical abuse that have ultimately failed to protect women. It looks at how domestic violence is neither primarily domestic, nor necessarily violence, but a pattern of controlling behaviors more akin to terrorism and hostage-taking.



[\*Stop Signs: Recognizing, Avoiding, and Escaping Abusive Relationships\*](#). This book familiarizes readers with intimate partner violence and explains how to develop self-esteem, preparation and assertive awareness that can protect them from involvement with abusive individuals. It explores the minds of abusers, explains visible signs of danger in their attitudes and actions, and provides effective strategies for safe extraction when involved with an abuser.



[\*Not To People Like Us: Hidden Abuse in Upscale Marriages\*](#). How is it possible for a highly educated woman with a career and resources of her own to stay in a marriage with an abusive husband? How can a man be considered a pillar of his community and regularly give his wife a black eye? The very nature of these questions proves how convinced we are that domestic violence is restricted to the lower classes.



[\*Should I Stay or Should I Go?: A Guide to Knowing if Your Relationship Can—and Should—be Saved\*](#). In this supportive and straightforward guide, the authors offer a way for women to practically take stock of their relationships and move forward— with or without their partners. Women will learn how to tell the difference between a healthy-yet-difficult relationship and one that is really not working, recognize their partner has a serious problem, and more.



Sometimes lists are easier on the mind because they are uncluttered and to-the-point. If you'd rather read a few items vs. articles or books, these lists are for you.

- [25 Relationship Red Flags](#)
- [20 Things Abusers Say](#)
- [27 Characteristics of Unsafe People](#)
- [19 Myths About Domestic Violence](#)



There are two well-known, free online assessment tools available that can help you understand the level of danger that may be present, but not always obvious.

### [The Danger Assessment](#)

The free tool helps determine the level of danger an abused person has of being killed by an intimate partner. There are two parts to the tool 1) a calendar and 2) a 20-item scoring instrument that uses a weighted system to score yes/no responses to risk factors associated with intimate partner homicide.

### [MOSAIC](#)

Using a series of questions, this tool assesses how similar a situation is to other situations that have gotten worse. After creating a confidential account and answering the questions, a detailed report is compiled immediately and tells you how a situation compares to others like it, rating it on a scale of 1 to 10.





A lot of lessons can be taken away from people who have been through it before. Check out the following survey results to learn from the experiences of others.

### *Surveys*

- [Which type of abuse did you experience first?](#)
- [At what age did you first experience abuse?](#)
- [Was your domestic violence experience impacted by holidays?](#)
- [Can an abusive partner change after attending batterer counseling?](#)
- [Did news, politics or current events impact the abuse you experienced?](#)

### *Toolkits*

- [Am I Experiencing Abuse?](#)
- [I Know Someone Who Is Being Abused, What Should I Do?](#)
- [I'm Ready to Leave, Now What?](#)
- [How Do I Heal After Abuse?](#)

## Click video thumbnail to watch



WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?



WHY DO ABUSERS ABUSE?



Will an Abuser Kill You?



Profile of an  
Abuser



**Online forums and chats can help you connect with others who are in or have faced similar situations and find support and ideas from the survivor community.**

[AfterSilence.org](https://www.AfterSilence.org) aims to help victims become survivors and to communicate in the recovery of domestic and sexual violence. It offers an active message board and chat room for rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest and molestation survivors. There are over 31,000 members and about 1,000,000 posts, including recent posts and many useful posts from days and months past.

[Pathways to Safety International](https://www.PathwaysToSafety.org) If you're an American overseas, your situation is different than 99% of your fellow countryman, and this site will be a wonderful resource for you. Among the services is a 24-hour response to emails, as well as international phone options.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Page](#) offers one of the most active places where domestic violence survivors. You'll find conversation, past experiences and unvarnished stories, and occasionally advice from professionals who have joined in on a topic.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Group](#) is a private group designed to be a safe space for domestic abuse victims, survivors, advocates and others affected by abuse to support one another through meaningful dialogue and helpful insight.

[Fort Refuge](#) is a clever, grassroots site run by survivors for fellow survivors as a safe place to come together and discuss their struggles and victories in healing from various types of abuse. Though the forum and chat do not boast the same numbers as some of the larger organizations, they are one of the more active conversation places on the internet currently. They also add new content to their site regularly.

[Love is Respect - National Teen Dating Helpline](#) focuses on teen relationships and can be accessed by phone, text or live chat. It offers real-time, one-on-one support by trained peer advocates who offer information and advocacy to those involved in dating abuse. They also offer support to parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers.

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) offers confidential, private, one-on-one chats with advocates every day 24/7.

[OnYourMind.net](#) is a safe and anonymous place for teens to get information and support from other teens in an online chat room, covering topics such as relationships, school, depression, stress, suicide, parents, cutting, identity and health.

[Pandora's Aquarium](#) is an online forum with around 2 million posts and over 70,000 members, and is run by Pandora's Project, which provides information, support and resources to rape and sexual abuse survivors and their friends and family.



When accessing hotlines, chats or forums from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, please remember to take the necessary precautions to keep your activities confidential from your abuser. Learn more about how to stay safe online [here](#).

Also, keep in mind that local shelters may offer in-person or virtual support groups. You can find shelters in your area at [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org).



## Another way to determine if you're experiencing abuse is to contact a trained domestic violence advocate near you or through a national service.

To search for domestic violence program staffed with trained advocates, visit [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) and type either your city and state, or ZIP code, into the search bar at the top of the page. A list of organizations and contact numbers near you will be displayed. To reach an advocate, reach out directly by calling the phone number listed. Most are open 24/7.

To speak to an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, also 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org) to chat online.

It's important to know that your call is confidential and you can choose to remain anonymous when speaking with an advocate. To know what to expect when calling, read [this article](#).