

What can I do to escape emotional abuse?

If you have identified some behaviours your partner is using which are abusive, your next step is to plan to survive.

You begin moving forward once you stop looking for the 'magic button' that will change your partner and save your relationship. Once you do this, you are on a path which will save you and perhaps your children.

Leaving an emotionally abusive relationship is not easy. Remembering these important points may help you take this step:

- Abuse is a game of power and control. It is not love.
- Trust your instincts – if you feel a relationship isn't good for you, plan to get out.
- Know you cannot 'work it out' in an abusive relationship.
- Know that you can't save your partner at the expense of your own life, sanity or happiness.
- Don't feel sorry for him anymore – no more excuses, no more lies.
- Get help for you, not your partner. Believe in yourself and focus on your needs.
- Gather support for yourself – tell people you trust about what is happening and consider joining a women's group.
- Take one step at a time.

You may feel angry, hurt and disappointed, and it is normal to grieve. Keeping a diary or journal of events and writing about your feelings may help. Remind yourself of what you know is real.

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL: 000



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Other useful phone numbers

DVconnect - Womensline

(24 hours, 7 days) 1800 811 811

Women's Legal Service

1800 677 278 or (07) 3392 0670

Legal Aid & Women's Legal Aid Queensland

1300 651 188

Multicultural Families Organisation (MFO)

(07) 5571 0381

Police Prosecutions

(07) 5571 4383

Queensland Law Society

(07) 3842 5842

Southport Magistrates Court

1300 516 700

Coolangatta Magistrates Court

(07) 5569 3040



DVPC is located on Kombumerri Country on the traditional lands of the Kombumerri Saltwater people. We acknowledge and pay respects to the Kombumerri traditional custodians and their Elders, past and present.



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Emotional abuse is real



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What is emotional abuse?

Emotional abuse is any behaviour that deliberately undermines your confidence, leading you to believe you are stupid, 'a bad mother', useless or even that you are going crazy or insane. This type of abuse humiliates, degrades and demeans you.

An abusive partner may use one of many ways to control you, e.g. they may do things like accuse you of lying, being unfaithful, keep track of you all the time or take control of your money.

An abusive partner can have a charming side too. Sometimes they seem to have two personalities – their behaviour can change drastically from one moment to the next. This is not insanity, it is manipulation.

The games an abusive partner plays with your emotions can make you feel crazy. It is often hard to pin down emotional abuse, and your partner may say he behaves as he does because he loves you.

Emotional abuse is as real as physical abuse

Is emotional abuse the same as physical abuse?

Emotional abuse is as real as physical abuse. They are similar in almost every way except that with physical abuse the bashings and bruises are visible, while the emotional ones are not. Someone experiencing emotional abuse can feel just as fearful and trapped as someone experiencing physical abuse.

What effect does emotional abuse have?

When a woman is experiencing emotional abuse she may be affected in many different ways. She may experience panic, depression, despair, and feel that there is no way out. She may feel worthless or unattractive and lose or gain weight. Or she may become dependent on alcohol and other drugs.

Sometimes a woman may not realise that what she is feeling is caused by the abuse. Women often feel responsible for the emotional wellbeing of their partners or families. Sometimes it is at a cost to themselves.

Don't ignore the problem: it won't go away

How to tell if your relationship is emotionally abusive

People who are abusive to their partners often use a range of behaviours which we can recognise. Similarly, when someone abuses us emotionally, we often respond in particular ways. Does the person you love:

- show jealousy or possessiveness?
- always keep track of you?
- accuse you of lying or being unfaithful or blame you if he is unfaithful?
- call you names like 'crazy', 'stupid' 'ugly'?
- put you down in front of other people?
- act nice and sweet and then become suddenly angry and sometimes violent?
- use promises to change, and charm, gifts or affection if you say you want out of the relationship?
- stop your relationships with family and friends?
- stop you from studying, working or going out?
- take your money or make you account for everything you spend?
- destroy your sentimental items or personal property?
- threaten to hurt you or the children, or stop you seeing your children if you leave?
- make all the important decisions, or undermine your decisions?
- force you to have sex against your will or ways you do not like?