

# Emotional Wellness Checklist

## What is Emotional Abuse?



Emotional abuse is a type of domestic abuse that uses fear, humiliation, intimidation or manipulation to brainwash, resulting in low self-confidence, self-worth and a loss of personal value for those who are abused. Emotional abuse can be more hurtful than physical abuse because the scars are deeper and longer lasting. This type of abuse wears away at a person's sense of self and causes the person to stop trusting their own perceptions. Victims are at high risk for developing depression and anxiety. Abusers can be men or women as can victims of emotional abuse.

### UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

The abuser demands that you put everything else aside to tend to their needs. This can include a demand for constant attention or that you spend all of your free time with them. Regardless of what you do, it will never be enough and you may be criticized or berated because you don't fulfill all of their needs.

### AGGRESSING

This includes name-calling, accusing you of causing problems, blaming, threatening and ordering you around. Abusers will often blame you for causing their emotional outburst or for creating problems in your relationship.

### DENYING AND FORGETTING

Emotional abusers can deny your emotional needs in order to hurt, punish or humiliate you. In addition, abusers can deny or "forget" that an event occurred. Denial and "forgetting" is used to confuse you and to make you doubt your perceptions with the hope that you will no longer confront the abuser. It also functions to lower your self-esteem because you begin to feel like you cannot trust your own mind.

### DOMINATING

If they want to control your actions such as how much money you have, access to a car or a phone, how you behave or dress, that is a form of emotional abuse. Isolating you from your friends, coworkers and family is a type of dominating behavior.

### EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL

When someone plays on your fear, guilt, compassion, or values to get what they want, they are emotionally abusing you. For example, if you are afraid of being alone, they may threaten to leave you if they do not get what they need.

### INVALIDATION AND MINIMIZING

When the abuser refuses to or fails to acknowledge reality, they are trying to undermine your perception of the world in order to maintain control over you. Minimizing your experience by saying something like "You're blowing this out of proportion" makes you question your perceptions so that eventually you will begin to mistrust them.

### UNPREDICTABLE RESPONSES

Mood swings or sudden emotional outbursts is a form of emotional abuse because the behavior puts you on edge all the time. Telling you that they like something one day and saying the opposite the next day or reacting very differently to the same behavior from you are all examples of emotional abuse by unpredictable response.

### VERBAL ASSAULTS

Berating, belittling, criticizing, name calling, screaming and threatening you regardless of the content of the assault. Excessive blaming, using sarcasm and humiliation, pointing out your flaws especially in public are all types of verbal assaults used in emotional abuse. Sometimes these assaults are disguised as jokes, especially in social situations.