

Family Shelter Service

605 EAST ROOSEVELT ROAD • WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187 • HOTLINE: (630) 469-5650

IS AN ABUSIVE PARTNER REALLY CHANGING?

Developed by the Texas Council on Family Violence for the Battering Intervention & Prevention Project

Manipulation

Old habits die hard. Your partner's abusive behavior is rooted in a desire to control the relationship, and that pattern isn't going to change overnight. Your partner may no longer be violent, but may still try to exert control by manipulating you into doing what he/she wants. Here are some common manipulative behaviors:

- ◆ Tries to invoke sympathy from you or family and friends.
- ◆ Is overly charming; reminds you of all the good times you've had together.
- ◆ Tries to buy you back with romantic gifts, dinners, flowers, etc.
- ◆ Tries to seduce you when you're vulnerable.
- ◆ Uses veiled threats - to take the kids away, to quit attending counseling, to cut off financial support.
- ◆ Promises to change without actually changing behaviors.

You may be so hopeful for change that you want to believe your partner, even if things don't feel any different. But trust your instincts. If you don't feel safe, then chances are you're not.

The Six Big Lies

When batterers make statements like these, you should know they are lying to themselves - and to you.

1. "I'm not the only one who needs counseling."
2. "I'm not as bad as a lot of the other people in there."
3. "As soon as I'm done with this program, I'll be cured."
4. "We need to stay together to work this out."
5. "If I weren't under so much stress, I wouldn't have such a short fuse."
6. "Now that I'm in this program, you have to be more understanding."

These statements have one thing in common: they let batterers off the hook for their abusive behavior. Remember, a person needs to be willing to accept responsibility for their violence in order to change.

It's a positive sign if your partner:

- ◆ Has stopped being violent or threatening to you or others.
- ◆ Acknowledges that abusive behavior is wrong.
- ◆ Understands that he/she does not have the right to control and dominate you.
- ◆ Doesn't make you feel afraid when you are together.
- ◆ Does not coerce you into having sex when you don't want to.
- ◆ Allows you to express anger without making you feel intimidated.
- ◆ Does not make you feel responsible for his/her anger or frustration.
- ◆ Respects your opinion, even if the two of you don't agree.
- ◆ Respects your right to say no.
- ◆ Does not humiliate or belittle you.
- ◆ Does not require that you ask for permission to go out, go to school, get a job, or take other independent actions.
- ◆ Listens to you and respects what you have to say.
- ◆ Communicates honestly and does not try to manipulate you.
- ◆ Recognizes that changing behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs is a lifelong process, and that there is no quick "cure".
- ◆ No longer does _____ (fill in the blank with any behavior that used to precede violence, manipulation, or emotional abuse).