

Relationship Warning Signs

compliments of <http://www.dvirc.org.au/whenlove/checklist.htm>

If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you could be in an abusive relationship, or your relationship could become abusive.

- do you feel nervous around your boyfriend, girlfriend, or partner?
- do you have to be careful to control your behaviour to avoid their anger
- do you feel pressured by them when it comes to sex?
- are you scared of disagreeing with them?
- do they criticise you, or humiliate you in front of other people?
- are they always checking up or questioning you about what you do without them?
- do they repeatedly and wrongly accuse you of seeing or flirting with other people?
- do they tell you that if you changed they wouldn't abuse you?
- does their jealousy stop you from seeing friends or family?
- do they make you feel like you are wrong, stupid, crazy, or inadequate?
- have they ever scared you with violence or threatening behaviour?
- do you often do things to please them, rather than to please yourself?
- do they prevent you from going out or doing things you want to do?
- do you feel that, with them, nothing you do is ever good enough?
- do they say that they will kill or hurt themselves if you break up with them?
- do they make excuses for their behaviour, for example, by saying it's because of alcohol or drugs, or because they can't control their temper, or that they were 'just joking'?

You might have answered 'yes' to some of these questions, but still think 'it's not that bad'. But feeling scared, humiliated, pressured or controlled is not the way you should feel in a relationship. You should feel loved, respected, and free to be yourself. Your feelings and safety are important.

People who are abusive will often make you feel like you are to blame for their behaviour. You might think that if you try and change to be more like what they want you to be, then the abuse will stop. But in a relationship, you should be able to feel ok just being yourself and doing what you want to do. What about what you want for yourself?

If you are in an abusive relationship, it is likely to get worse over time. But you can't make your boyfriend or girlfriend change their behaviour. They are the one who has to change their attitude and accept responsibility for abusing you, and not make excuses for their behaviour. If this does not happen and you want the violence to stop, then unfortunately, leaving them might be your only choice.

It's not your fault if you are being abused. You deserve to be treated with respect.