

## SIGNS TO LOOK FOR IN A BATTERING PERSONALITY

Many people are interested in ways that they can predict whether they are about to become involved with someone that will be physically abusive. Below is a list of behaviors seen in people who are abusive. If the person has three or more behaviors, there is strong potential for physical violence; the more signs the person has, the more likely the person is a batterer. All batterers possess the last four signs. In some cases, a batterer may have only a couple of behaviors that people can recognize but they are extremely exaggerated (i.e. extreme jealousy over ridiculous things). Initially, the batterer will try to explain his behavior as signs of his love and concern and a woman may be flattered at first; as time goes on, the behaviors become more severe.

1. **Jealousy:** At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser will always say that his jealousy is a sign of love. Jealousy has nothing to do with love; it is a sign of insecurity and possessiveness. He will question the woman about who she talks to, accuse her of flirting, or be jealous of time she spends with family, friends or children. As the jealousy progresses, he may call her frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. He may refuse to let her work for fear she will meet someone else or even act strange by checking her car mileage or asking friends to watch her.
2. **Controlling Behavior:** At first, the batterer will say that this behavior is because he is concerned for the woman's safety, her need to use her time well or her need to make good decisions. He will be angry if the woman is "late" coming back from the store or an appointment. He will question her closely about where she went and whom she talked to. As this behavior gets worse, he may not let the woman make personal decisions about the house, her clothing or going to church. He may keep all the money or even make her ask permission to leave the house or room.
3. **Quick Involvement:** Many battered women dated or knew their abuser for less than six (6) months before they were engaged or living together. He comes on like a whirlwind claiming love at first sight, he will tell the woman flattering things such as "you're the only person I could ever talk to", and "I've never felt loved like this by anyone." He needs someone desperately and will pressure the woman to commit to him.
4. **Unrealistic Expectations:** He is very dependent on the woman for all of his needs. He expects her to be the perfect wife, mother, and friend. He will say things like, "If you love me", or "I'm all you need – you are all I need." She is supposed to take care of everything for him emotionally and in the home.
5. **Isolation:** The man tries to cut the woman off from all resources. He accuses people who are her supports of "causing trouble", he may want to live in the country without a phone, he may not let her use the car or he may try to keep her from working or going to school or church.

6. **Blames Others for His Problems:** If he is chronically unemployed, someone is always doing him wrong, out to get him. He may make mistakes and then blame the woman for upsetting him and keeping him from concentrating or doing his job. He will tell the woman she is at fault for almost anything that goes wrong.
7. **Blames Others For His Feelings:** He will tell the woman “you make me mad,” “you’re hurting me by not doing what I ask,” “I can’t help being angry.” He is the one who actually makes the decision about what he thinks and feels but will use feelings to manipulate the woman. Harder to catch are his claims that “you make me happy,” or “you control how I feel”.
8. **Hypersensitivity:** The batterer is easily insulted, he claims his feelings are “hurt” when he is really very angry or he takes the slightest set backs as personal attacks. He will “rant and rave” about the injustice of things that have happened to him, things that are really just part of living. Things like being asked to work over-time, getting a traffic ticket and being asked to help with chores.
9. **Cruelty to Animals or Children:** This is a person who punishes animals brutally or is insensitive to their pain or suffering; he may expect children to be capable of doing things far beyond their ability (such as spanking a two-year-old for wetting their diaper). He may tease children until they cry. 60% of the men who beat the women they are with also beat their children. He may not want children to eat at the table or expect them to keep to their room all evening while he is home.
10. **“Playful” Use of Force in Sex:** The batterer may like to throw the woman down and hold her down during sex. He may want to act out fantasies during sex where the woman is helpless. He is letting her know that the idea of rape excites him. He may show little concern about whether the woman wants to have sex and use sulking or anger to manipulate her into compliance. He may start having sex with the woman while she is sleeping or demand sex when she is ill or tired.
11. **Verbal Abuse:** In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, this can be seen by the man degrading the woman, cursing her, running down any of her accomplishments. The man will tell her that she is stupid and unable to function without him. This may involve waking her up to verbally abuse her or not letting her sleep.
12. **Rigid Sex Roles:** The man expects the woman to serve him; will say she must stay at home, that she must obey him in all things; even things that are criminal in nature. The abuser will see women as inferior to men, more stupid and unable to be a whole person without a relationship with a man.
13. **Past Battering:** The man may admit that he has hit women in the past, but they made him do it. The woman may hear from relatives or ex-spouses that the man is abusive. A batterer will beat any woman he is with; circumstances do not make a person an abusive personality.

14. **Threats of Violence:** This would include any threat of physical force meant to control the woman. “I’ll slap your mouth”, “I’ll kill you”, and “I’ll break your neck”. Most men do not threaten their mates, but a batterer will try to excuse this behavior by saying, “everybody talks like that”.
15. **Breaking or Striking Objects:** This behavior is used as a punishment (breaking cherished possessions) but is mostly used to terrorize the woman into submission. The man may beat on tables with his fists; throw objects around or near the woman. Again, this is very remarkable behavior, only very immature people beat on objects in the presence of other people in order to threaten them.
16. **Any Force during an Argument:** This may involve a man holding a woman down, physically restraining her from leaving the room, any pushing or shoving.