

MCG Women's Behavioral Health Program

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If You're In an Abusive Relationship...

Personality Types of Batterers

(from Jacobson & Gottman: When Men Batter Women)

1. **“Cobras” (20% of batterers):**
 - a. History of criminal behavior; history of violence toward others.
 - b. Feels entitled to whatever he wants whenever he wants it
 - c. High likelihood of drug and alcohol abuse.
 - d. Uses more severe violence. Partners are more fearful
 - e. Has most of the power in the relationship, and he knows it.
 - f. Places few demands on partner – wants to be left to do his own thing.
 - g. Uses violence to prevent partner from controlling him, or whenever partner gets in the way of getting what he wants.
2. **“Pit Bulls” (80% of batterers):**
 - a. Less likely to have criminal record; violence more likely confined to family members
 - b. Emotionally dependent on partner – fears abandonment; jealous and possessive; isolates partner from family and friends
 - c. Constantly scrutinizes partner's behavior – always “in her face;” makes constant demands on partner.
 - d. Has most of the power in the relationship, but feels like a victim.
 - e. Will use psychological abuse to make partner question her sanity.
 - f. Uses violence to control partner, to increase her dependence on him, and to prevent being abandoned by her.

****Both types of batterers are dangerous. Both types are capable of inflicting severe injury or even death.****

Warning Signs of a Potential Batterer:

- 1) Has a history of violence toward other people or animals
- 2) Comes from a family where there was violence
- 3) May be exceedingly charming at first, and push for the relationship to develop very quickly
- 4) Is controlling, manipulative, and/or refuses to accept influence from you
- 5) Is very jealous and/or emotionally abusive
- 6) Has a poor opinion of women, in general
- 7) Abuses drugs or alcohol

If You're In an Abusive Relationship, and You're Thinking About Leaving:

- 1) Recognize that the chances are overwhelming that the violence in your relationship will continue, especially if there has been any severe violence or more than one episode of violence.
- 2) A man who acts as though the abuse is not really serious or who blames you for the violence is not even close to taking the first step to ending the violence: accepting responsibility for it.
- 3) A man willing to seek treatment for violence, commit to the therapy, and not drop out may be taking responsibility for the violence. However, couples therapy is not a reasonable option – a batterer's violence is not a mutual problem.
- 4) Recognize that if emotional abuse continues, even in the absence of physical abuse, the relationship is still abusive and is likely to continue to be.
- 5) Recognize that all attempts to escape from an abusive relationship are risky –there is no way to predict how the batterer will respond. However, most battered women who escape successfully feel that the freedom from abuse is worth the agony of escaping.
- 6) While you are the best judge of when and if the time is right to leave, you also need support in making this decision, and escaping successfully. Get professional help (i.e., Safe Homes) as soon as you have decided to leave.
- 7) Construct a safety plan with a knowledgeable professional that includes: escape plans, both temporary (during an argument) and permanent; discussion of legal options; discussion of necessary resources and documents;

discussion of your individual situation and indicators of danger; having a “safety kit” outside the home for quick escapes.

- 8) Cobras are harder to leave in the short run, but easier to leave in the long run. They may respond to attempts to leave very quickly with very severe violence. But they are unlikely to pursue you for long periods of time.
- 9) Pit Bulls may be easier to leave in the short run, but harder to leave in the long run. They may not act with severe violence initially, but because of their emotional dependence they may stalk, harass, and abuse you for a long period of time.

To Get Help:

Safe Homes of Augusta (available 24 hours a day): 736-2499

- Counseling services, legal advice, help in accessing resources, shelter services for abused women and their children.
- You do not have to leave your relationship to get help from Safe Homes.

For More Information:

When Men Batter Women, by Jacobson & Gottman

Education about Wife Abuse: www.womanabuseprevention.com

Family Violence Prevention Fund: www.endabuse.org