

Know the Signs: Spotlight on Jealousy



A [recent study](#) published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that within a year, 21 percent of high school girls and 10 percent of high school boys were physically or sexually assaulted by someone they dated. We often hear about the harmful impacts of physical or sexual abuse in a relationship, but it is less often that we hear about emotional or verbally abusive behaviors used to manipulate and control a dating partner. Emotional abuse covers non-physical behaviors like manipulation, humiliation and more, including jealous and possessive behavior.

Minor jealousy isn't necessarily a bright red flag for abuse in the way other warning signs may be, like isolating someone from friends and family. In fact, for some, jealousy makes it seem like the other partner is really interested in them. One might think, "If a partner is jealous, it must be because they're madly in love!" Gradually, jealousy can grow until it becomes confrontational, controlling and abusive, resulting in a desire to exert power and control over someone else.

Another way jealousy can affect a dating relationship is through verbal abuse, like when a partner yells, screams, threatens or insults a dating partner. This can quickly devolve into controlling another partner's actions, insisting that a dating partner "check in" to see where they are at all times, excessive calling or texting, or telling a dating partner they can no longer see or be around a certain individual. In some cases, jealousy can become so intense that a dating partner experiencing abuse may feel as though they are not able to see their friends, go to their job, or live their own life without fear of retribution from their partner.

Jealousy, though a natural emotion, is not a sign of flattery or love -- it is a problem. Telling a dating partner that they get "crazy jealous" is a warning sign of dating abuse and should be heard loud and clear. Jealous behavior can potentially escalate into other harmful behaviors. The person experiencing abusive behaviors may feel they have no one to turn to, leaving them without the support of friends and family when they need it most.

If you see a friend, child or student experiencing abuse because of a jealous dating partner, you can help them understand that this is a warning sign. Discuss the fact that they have the right to

do what they want and live their own life. Being in a relationship should never be a "me or nothing" choice. Let your friend or loved one know they can talk to you -- and that we are here for them too. [Chat, call or text one of love is respect peer advocates](#), 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are many warning signs of dating abuse, but it is essential that young people know they're not alone if they are experiencing abuse.