

Early Warning Signs of Batterer Behavior

He seems to “rush” the relationship, has his own time-line

- ⊗ “Sweeps her off her feet”, romantically – a real Romeo
- ⊗ Talks of marriage very early in the relationship
- ⊗ Monopolizes your time, without regard to her other interests

“Lord of the Castle” attitudes or comments

- ⊗ He earns the money—she has no right to spend it
- ⊗ Kids should be seen but not heard—she had better handle those kids
- ⊗ Household management is “women’s work”—and it had better be done right
- ⊗ His needs are her responsibility—such as meals on time, sex upon demand
- ⊗ Uses scripture or religious tenets to justify violence against women and/or support his attitudes and beliefs about women’s roles

Demonstrates lack of respect for women in general

- ⊗ Refers to women such as bitches, chicks, broads, babes, etc
- ⊗ Implies that only “weak men” tolerate independent women
- ⊗ Makes jokes at women’s expense—portrays women as stupid or lazy
- ⊗ Sees women as property of “their man”, ignores them completely

Resents your friends or outside interests and activities

- ⊗ Can’t understand why she “needs” them
- ⊗ Implies that they keep her from her home-based “duties”
- ⊗ Belittles her friends—insults them, discourages her from seeing them
- ⊗ Devalues her interests—makes them seem silly or unimportant

Seems to have two separate personalities—one in private and one in public

- ⊗ In public, goes out of his way to be liked or to impress others
- ⊗ In private, concentrates on how she acts toward him, not how he treats her
- ⊗ Gets extremely upset if she “upstages him” in public—he wants the spotlight
- ⊗ Is critical of her appearance—sees it as a reflection on him and others

Is increasingly jealous or possessive

- ⊗ Monitors or listens to her telephone conversations
- ⊗ Disrupts or reacts strongly to her friendships with men
- ⊗ Accompanies her almost everywhere; questions her whereabouts
- ⊗ Monitors how long she took to run an errand, how much gas was used

Is extremely “loving” or “passionate” after an argument

- ⊗ Acts like nothing happened or won’t discuss it later
- ⊗ Acts romantic, sometimes to the extreme
- ⊗ Pressures her for sex immediately following the incident (sexual bonding)
- ⊗ May refer to sex as a “reward” for certain behaviors he wants her to adopt

May exhibit anger or aggressiveness toward others

- ⊗ “Road rage”—anger at other drivers, “flips them off”, horn blowing
- ⊗ Picks fights in bars or at work
- ⊗ Impatient or even cruel toward children, animals, prior girlfriend/wives
- ⊗ Uses alcohol or drugs as excuse for incidents of anger or violence

Signs and Symptoms of Domestic Abuse – How the Victim is Affected

Psychological symptoms of domestic violence may include:

- Feelings of isolation and inability to cope
- Suicide attempts or gestures
- Panic attacks and other anxiety symptoms
- Alcohol or drug abuse to self medicate
- Post-traumatic stress reactions or disorder.

Common types of injuries include:

- Bruises, scrapes, minor cuts, fractures or sprains
- Injuries to the head, chest, neck, breasts and abdomen
- Injuries during pregnancy
- Repeated injuries or multiple injuries
- Evidence of prior or similar injuries

The stress of living with ongoing abuse may cause:

- Imagined pain or pain due to widely distributed trauma without physical evidence
- Physical symptoms related to stress, chronic post-traumatic stress disorder, other anxiety disorders, or depression including:
 - ◊ Sleep and appetite disturbances
 - ◊ Fatigue, decreased concentration
 - ◊ Chronic headaches
 - ◊ Abdominal and gastrointestinal complaints
 - ◊ Chest pain
 - ◊ Palpitations, dizziness, numbness or tingling of extremities, difficulty breathing
- Gynecologic problems, frequent vaginal or urinary tract infections, pelvic pain
- Frequent use of prescribed or over-the-counter tranquilizers or pain medications

Behavioral signs of domestic violence may include:

- Absenteeism or arriving late for work
- Denial or minimization of violence by partner or victim
- Victim is overly-apologetic for taking your time
- Exaggerated sense of personal responsibility for relationship, including self-blame for partner's violence
- Reluctance of victim to speak in front of partner, defers to him
- Intense irrational jealousy expressed by partner or reported by victim
- Partner accompanies victim, insists on staying close, or answers questions for victim

An abuser's use of control within a relationship may result in:

- Lack of transportation
- Unable to access financial resources
- Unable to access family and friends
- Limited communication such as by telephone and email
- Limited access to routine or emergency medical care
- Noncompliance with treatment regimens such as not being allowed to obtain or take medication
- Limited ability to attend worship services (i.e. only with partner) or unable to participate in women's groups or other religious activities

Source: Family Violence Council of Lincoln/Lancaster County, "Guide for Mental Health Practitioners" 2001

Why does he do that?

Often the question heard most when discussing domestic violence is “why doesn’t she just leave?” Rooted in misunderstanding, questions such as that blame the victim for the abusive behavior. Advocates and experts in domestic violence believe the more appropriate question to be asked is **why do men abuse their partners?**

According to the National Training Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, men batter women and use power and control tactics because:

1. They have learned to.
2. It works.
3. They can.

Further, the NTCDSV states in order for men to stop, they will have to:

1. Learn differently
2. Not be able to get away with it.

Source: National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

In general terms, men who batter have complex, sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant belief systems that in their minds allow for their battering. In other words, they create scenarios, rooted in their attitudes and values, that excuse or shift blame and responsibility for their behavior.

In addition, we know the following generalities about batterers:

- Their violence is not about anger control – it’s about **power and control**
- They have an insatiable need to control
- They are unable to trust and are often abnormally jealous
- They are narcissistic, not in the sense that they are vain, but they are self-focused and self-absorbed
- Their partners are the **object** to control
- They see themselves as victims – giving them the sense that their behavior is OK
- They minimize, deny, rationalize, and blame others for their violence and behaviors
- They use male privilege and stereotypic gender roles to justify their violence and control
- They see the victim’s response as “violent” and will say the victim starts the violence
- They are skillful manipulators – having a “public and private” face
- They blame other ethnic groups, co-workers, women, and/or past partners for their violence
- They criticize, demean, and discredit their partners

Source: Family Violence Council of Lincoln/Lancaster County

Myths about men who batter

Lundy Bancroft in his landmark book *“Why Does He Do That?”* (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, Publisher) confronts the myths of men who batter. According to Bancroft:

“The mythology about abusive men that runs through modern culture has been created largely by the abusers themselves. Abusive men concoct explanations for their actions which they give to their partners, therapists, clergy people, relatives, and social researchers. But it is a serious error to allow abusers to analyze and account for their own problems. Would we ask an active alcoholic to tell us why he or she drinks, and then accept the explanation unquestioningly?”

Bancroft further states:

“When we hear ... excuses from a drunk, we assume they are exactly that – excuses. We don’t consider an active alcoholic a reliable source of insight. So why should we let an angry and controlling man be the authority on partner abuse? Our first task, therefore, is to remove the abusive man’s smoke and mirrors, and then set about watching carefully to see what he is really doing.”

The following is also adapted from Lundy Bancroft’s book *“Why Does He Do That?”* We offer this information for the insight it provides to batterer’s and the insight it offers into working with abused women. Remember, abused women have usually adapted our cultural perspective of the batterer as well.

A note about the author: Lundy Bancroft has spent the last fifteen years of his career specializing in the field of domestic abuse and the behavior of abusive men, and is considered one of the world’s experts on the subject. He is the former co-director of Emerge, the nation’s first program for abusive men. He has also served extensively as a custody evaluator and child abuse investigator, appears periodically as an expert witness in child custody and child welfare cases, and has led groups for teenage boys exposed to domestic violence. We thank him for allowing us to use the following excerpts from his book *“Why Does He Do That?”*

The Myths About Abusers

1. He was abused as a child, and he needs therapy for it.

According to Bancroft: “... a bad childhood doesn’t cause a man to become an abuser, but it can contribute to making a man who is abusive especially dangerous.”

Further, “If abusiveness were the product of childhood emotional injury, abusers could overcome their problem through psychotherapy. But it is virtually unheard of for an abusive man to make substantial and lasting changes in *his pattern of abusiveness* as a result of therapy.”

In addition, Bancroft points out that if a man was abused as a child, he should be *more sympathetic* to abuse and that the man should be *less* likely to abuse a woman from having been abused.

Bancroft points out “an abusive man deserves the same compassion that a non-abusive man does, neither more nor less. But a non-abusive man doesn’t use his past as an excuse ...”

2. He had a previous partner who mistreated him terribly, and now he has a problem with women as a result. He’s a wonderful man, and that bitch made him get like this.

Bancroft states: “He may describe other wounds he received from a previous partner: She tried to control him; she wouldn’t let him have any freedom; she expected him to wait on her hand and foot; she turned their children against him; she even ‘had him arrested’ out of vindictiveness. What he is describing usually are his *own* behaviors, but he attributes them to the woman so that he is the victim.”

“A man who was genuinely mistreated in a relationship with a woman would not be using that experience to get away with hurting someone else.”

3. He’s abusive because he feels so strongly about me. People cause those they care about most deeply the most pain.

Bancroft says: “Abusers can use this rationalization successfully with their partners, friends, and relatives. There is a grain of truth to it: People we love *can* cause us deeper pain than anyone else. But what does this have to do with abuse?”

The abuser would like us to accept the following simple but erroneous formula:
FEELINGS CAUSE BEHAVIOR.

Although our feelings can influence how we wish to act, our choices of how to behave are ultimately determined more by our *attitudes* and our *habits*.”

4. He holds in his feelings too much, and they build up until he bursts. He needs to get in touch with his emotions and learn to express them to prevent those explosive episodes.

Bancroft refers to this as “The Boiler Theory of Men.” He states: “The idea is that a person can only tolerate so much accumulated pain and frustration. If it doesn’t get vented periodically – kind of like a pressure cooker – then there’s bound to be a serious accident.”

Bancroft states that for his clients, the opposite is true. “Most of my clients are not unusually repressed. In fact, many of them express their feelings more than some nonabusive men.” He also states: “They have an exaggerated idea of how important their feelings are, and they talk about their feelings – and act them out – all the time ...”

Bancroft asserts: “It is not *his* feelings the abuser is too distant from; it is his *partner’s* feelings and his *children’s* feelings.”

5. He has a violent, explosive personality. He needs to learn to be less aggressive.

According to Bancroft, “The great majority of abusive men are fairly calm and reasonable in most of their dealings that are unrelated to their partners. In fact, the partners of my clients constantly complain to me: ‘How come he can be so nice to everyone else but he has to treat me like dirt?’ The two-sided nature of abusers is a central aspect of the mystery.”

Further Bancroft says, “The societal stereotype of the abuser as a relatively uneducated, blue-collar male adds to the confusion.

“Class and racial stereotypes permit the more privileged members of society to duck the problem of abuse by pretending that it is someone else’s problem. Their thinking goes: ‘It’s those construction-worker guys who never went to college; it’s those Latinos; it’s those street toughs- they’re the abusers. Our town, our neighborhood, isn’t like that. We’re not macho men here.’

“But women who live with abuse know that abusers come in all styles and from all backgrounds. Sometimes the more educated an abuser, the more knots he knows how to tie in a woman’s brain, the better he is at getting her to blame herself, and the slicker is his ability to persuade other people that she is crazy.”

6. He loses control of himself. He just goes wild.

Bancroft refers to several examples to debunk this myth. He refers to an abused woman who was explaining that her abusive husband “goes absolutely berserk, and you never know when he’s going to go off like that. He’ll just start grabbing whatever is around and throwing it. He heaves stuff ... smashes stuff, important things sometimes. Then it’s like the storm just passes; he calms down; and he leaves for a while.”

At this point Bancroft asks the woman when things got broken, if they were his things or hers. The woman replied that he only breaks her things and that she can’t think of one thing he’s smashed that belonged to him. He also asked her who cleans up the mess and she answered that she does. Bancroft’s point is that the abusive husbands “behavior isn’t nearly as berserk as it looks. And if he really felt so remorseful, he’d help clean up.”

Bancroft cites another example of the physically violent abuser showing self-control – “the moment police pull up in front of the house, for example, he usually calms down immediately, and when the officers enter, he speaks to them in a friendly and reasonable tone. Police almost never find a fight in progress by the time they get in the door.”

Again, Bancroft’s examples illustrate the abusers ability to control his emotions when it suits him.

7. He’s too angry. He needs to learn anger-management skills.

Bancroft states “When people conclude that anger causes abuse, they are confusing cause and effect. Abusers carry attitudes that produce fury.” He also states “the abuser’s explosive anger can divert ... attention from all the disrespect, irresponsibility, ... lying, and other abusive and controlling behaviors that he exhibits even at times when he *isn’t* especially upset.” Further, Bancroft asserts “Perhaps his loudest, most obvious, or most intimidating forms of abuse come out when he’s angry, but his deeper pattern is operating all the time.”

8. He's crazy. He's got some mental illness that he should be medicated for.

According to Bancroft, "... the great majority of my clients over the years have been psychologically 'normal.' Their minds work logically; they understand cause and effect; they don't hallucinate. **Their value system is unhealthy, not their psychology.**"

Further, Bancroft says "... most recent research shows that even in physically violent abusers the rate of mental illness is not high." He clarifies that "Mental illness doesn't cause abusiveness any more than alcohol does. What happens is rather that the man's psychiatric problem interacts with his abusiveness to form a volatile combination."

9. He hates women. His mother, or some other woman, must have done something terrible to him.

Bancroft asserts "most abusers don't hate women. They often have close relationships with their mothers, or sisters, or female friends. ... *Disrespect for women* certainly is rampant among abusive men ..."

"In general, I find that my clients' view that their partners should cater to their needs and are not worthy of being taken seriously does indeed carry over into how they view other females, including their own daughters." He further states "... the disrespect that abusive men so often direct towards women in general tends to be born of their cultural values and conditioning rather than personal experiences of being victimized by women.

"Some abusive men use the *excuse* that their behavior is a response to such victimization because they want to be able to make women responsible for men's abuse."

10. He is afraid of intimacy and abandonment.

Bancroft states that "*many people*, both male and female, are afraid of abandonment and may reel from panic, heartbreak, or desperation when being left by a partner. If a person's panicked reaction to being left could cause threats, stalking, or murder, our entire society would be a war zone. But post separation homicides of intimate partners are committed almost exclusively by men (and there is almost always a history of abuse *before* the breakup). If fear of abandonment causes post separation abuse, why are the statistics so lopsided?"

11. He suffers from low self-esteem. He needs his self-image shored up.

"When you try to improve an abuser's feelings about himself, his problem actually tends to get worse. An abusive man expects catering, and the more positive attention he receives, the more he demands. He never reaches a point where he is satisfied ... and soon escalates his demands", states Bancroft.

Further, "The self-esteem myth is rewarding for an abuser, because it gets his partner, his therapist, and others to cater to him emotionally ... Imagine the privileges an abusive man may acquire: getting his own way ... having his partner bend over backward to keep him happy ... getting to behave as he pleases, and then on top of it all, he gets *praise* for what a good person he is, and everyone is trying to help *him* feel better about himself?"

Bancroft says “certainly an abuser can be remorseful or ashamed after being cruel or scary to his partner, especially if any outsider has seen what he did. But those feelings are a *result* of his abusive behavior, not a cause.”

12. His boss abuses him, so he feels powerless and unsuccessful. He comes home and takes it out on his family because that is the one place he can feel powerful.

Bancroft calls “this myth ‘boss abuses man, man abuses woman, woman abuses children, children hit dog, dog bites cat.’”

He reminds the most important point: “In my fifteen years in the field of abuse, **I have never once had a client whose behavior at home has improved because his job situation improved.**”

13. He has poor communication, conflict-resolution, and stress management skills. He needs training.

According to Bancroft, “An abusive man is not *unable* to resolve conflicts non-abusively; he is *unwilling* to do so. The skill deficits of abusers have been the subject of a number of research studies, and results lead to the following conclusions: Abusers have normal abilities in conflict resolution, communication, and assertiveness *when they choose to use them*. ... But they don’t *want* to handle these kinds of issues non-abusively when it involves their partners.”

14. There are just as many abusive women as abusive men. Abused men are invisible because they are ashamed to tell.

Bancroft states that “there certainly are some women who treat their male partners badly, berating them, calling them names, attempting to control them. The negative impact on these men’s lives can be considerable.” He goes on to say that “the reason we don’t generally see these men is simple: They’re rare.”

Further, Bancroft says, “Abusive men commonly like to play the role of victim, and most men who claim to be ‘battered men’ are actually the perpetrators of violence, not the victims.”

15. Abuse is as bad for the man who is doing it as it is for his partner. They are both victims.

According to Bancroft, “abusing one’s partner is not a healthy lifestyle, but the negative effects don’t hold a candle to the emotional and physical pain, loss of freedom, self-blame, and numerous other shadows that abuse casts over the life of its female target. Unlike alcoholics or addicts, abusive men don’t ‘hit bottom.’ They can continue abusing for twenty or thirty years, and their careers remain successful, their health stays normal, their friendships endure.”

16. He is abusive because he has faced so much societal discrimination and disempowerment as a man of color, so at home he needs to feel powerful.

Bancroft offers the following, “First, a majority of abusive men are white, many of them well educated and economically privileged, so discrimination couldn’t be a central cause of partner abuse.”

“Second, if a man has experienced oppression himself, it could just as easily make him *more* sympathetic to a woman’s distress as less so, as is true for childhood abuse (see Myth #1).”

“And in fact there are men of color among the most visible leaders in the United States in the movement against the abuse of women. So while discrimination against people of color is a terribly serious problem today, it should not be accepted as an excuse for abusing women.”

17. The alcohol is what makes him abusive. If I can get him to stay sober, our relationship will be fine.

Bancroft states that many men hide their abusiveness under the cover of alcoholism or drug addiction. In fact, Bancroft devotes an entire chapter of the book to explore the issue of addiction in detail.

He states, “the most important point to be aware of is this: Alcohol cannot create an abuser, and sobriety cannot cure one. The only way a man can overcome his abusiveness is by dealing with his abusiveness.”

In recapping, Bancroft emphasizes over and over that it’s about what abusers **think** not what they feel. He further states **“an abuser ... has to stop focusing on *his feelings and her behavior* and look instead at *her feelings and his behavior.*”**

A few words about conversion and confession ...

The Rev. Dr. Marie Fortune, Founder and Senior Analyst of the FaithTrust Institute warns not to be taken in by an abusers “conversion” experience. She states that if it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as he proceeds with accountability. If it is phony, it’s another way to manipulate you, his partner, the system, and to control the process to avoid accountability.

A few words about long-term change ...

While long-term change for batterers is not impossible, it is improbable. Even high quality batterer intervention programs have a small effect. For more information, see the article entitled “Batterer Programs: An Overview” at the end of this article.

Source: Family Violence Council, Lincoln/Lancaster County

What is batterer collusion and how can I prevent it?

According to Dr. Catherine Waltz, trainer and consultant with the National Training Project, Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN:

Collusion with a batterer is ...

... anything you or anyone else says or does that aligns oneself with the batterer, especially in his view of being the victim.

Common examples of batterer collusion are:

- Suggesting and supporting couple's counseling
- Passing information back and forth to the victim on the batterer's behalf
- Telling the batterer where the victim and her children are staying
- Testifying on his behalf in child custody cases
- Promoting unsupervised visitation of children
- Using non-verbal communication (nodding) that may be interpreted as supporting his views and beliefs justifying violence
- Supporting religious tenets or scriptures that may be used to support or justify the batterer's choice of violence

Remember, the most effective intervention is to ***support the man by challenging the behavior while holding him accountable for his actions.***

Finally, we refer to Lundy Bancroft:

“Almost anyone can become an ally of an abusive man by inadvertently adopting his perspective. People usually don't even notice that they are supporting abusive thinking, or they wouldn't do it.”

“It is impossible for a community to stop abuse while continuing to assist or ignore abusers at the same time. ***Protecting or enabling an abuser is as morally repugnant as the abuse itself.*** This critical concept needs to become firmly embedded in our culture. Colluding with abuse abandons the abused woman and her children, and ultimately abandons the ***abuser*** as well, since it keeps him from ever dealing with his problem.”

“The argument that ‘he is a human being, too, and he deserves emotional support’ should not be used as an excuse to support a man's ***abusiveness.*** Our society should not buy into the abusive man's claim that holding him accountable is an act of cruelty.”

RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: GUIDELINES FOR PASTORS, RABBIS, IMAMS AND OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Remember the Goals:

- 1. SAFETY for the woman and children**
- 2. ACCOUNTABILITY for the abuser**
- 3. RESTORATION of individuals and, IF POSSIBLE, relationships
OR
MOURNING the loss of the relationships**

DO's and DON'Ts with an abusive partner

If he has been arrested, **DO** approach him and express your concern and support for him to be accountable and to deal with his violence.

DON'T meet with him alone and in private. Meet in a public place or in the church with several other people around.

DON'T approach him or let him know that you know about his violence unless

- a) you have the victim's permission,
- b) she is aware that you plan to talk to him, and
- c) you are certain that his partner is safely separated from him.

DO address any religious rationalizations he may offer or questions he may have. **DON'T** allow him to use religious excuses for his behavior.

DO name the violence as his problem, not hers. Tell him that only he can stop it; and you are willing to help.

DO refer to a program that specifically addresses abusers.

DO assess him for suicide or threats of homicide. **DO** warn the victim if he makes specific threats towards her.

DON'T pursue couples' counseling with him and his partner if you are aware that there is violence in the relationships.

DON'T go to him to confirm the victim's story.

DON'T give him any information about his partner or her whereabouts.

DON'T be taken in by his minimization, denial or lying about his violence. **DON'T** accept his blaming her or other rationalizations for his behavior.

DON'T be taken in by his "conversion" experience. If it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as he proceeds with accountability. If it is phony, it is only another way to manipulate you and the system and maintain control of the process to avoid accountability.

DON'T advocate for the abuser to avoid the legal consequences of his violence.

DON'T provide a character witness for this purpose in any legal proceedings.

DON'T forgive an abuser quickly and easily. DON'T confuse his remorse with true repentance.

DON'T send him home with just a prayer. Work with others in the community to hold him accountable.

DO pray with him. Ask God to help him stop his violence, repent and find a new way. DO assure him of your support in this endeavor.

DO find ways to collaborate with community agencies and law enforcement to hold him accountable. For information addressing religion and abuse refer to www.faithtrustinstitute.org or contact The FaithTrust Institute at (206) 634-1903.

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