



WARNING SIGNS OF AN UNHEALTHY OR UNSAFE RELATIONSHIP



Domestic violence and abuse often develops gradually and does not always start with physical violence. It can begin with behaviours that feel controlling, intimidating, confusing or emotionally damaging and may become worse over time.

Many people do not recognise what is happening because they are waiting for a single major event or believe things are not “serious enough” to ask for help.

Recognising warning signs early can help you or someone you care about seek support sooner.

You do not need to wait until you are physically harmed before seeking support.

Note: This can happen in dating relationships, families, households or other relationships where someone uses control or fear.

Warning signs can include:

- Constant jealousy or possessiveness
- Wanting access to your phone, passwords or location
- Checking where you are, who you are with, or what you are doing
- Isolating you from friends, family or other supports
- Making you feel guilty for spending time with others
- Frequent put-downs, humiliation or insults
- Making you feel worthless or like nothing you do is right
- Explosive anger or unpredictable behaviour
- Blaming you for their behaviour or emotions
- Threatening to hurt themselves, you, children, pets or someone you care about
- Threatening suicide as a way to control you
- Pressuring or forcing sexual activity
- Controlling money, clothing, decisions or access to things you need
- Monitoring who you talk to or where you go
- Stopping you from getting help or speaking to others
- Making you feel afraid, anxious or like you are “walking on eggshells”
- Repeatedly apologising after hurtful behaviour and promising it will never happen again
- Using social media, messaging, devices or technology to monitor, track or intimidate you
- Choking, restraining, pushing, hitting, damaging property or using physical intimidation

Healthy relationships should involve:

- Respect
- Trust
- Honest communication
- Feeling safe
- Independence and personal space
- Support for your friendships, family and interests
- Being able to make your own choices
- The ability to say “no” without fear

Trust your instincts

If something feels controlling, unsafe or emotionally exhausting, it is important not to ignore those feelings. Abuse is not always physical, and talking to someone early can help you understand your options.

Remember

You do not have to wait for things to become “serious enough” before seeking support. If something does not feel right, it is okay to talk to someone you trust.

Where to get help

If you or someone else is in immediate danger **call 000**

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

24/7 national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information & support.

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

Free 24/7 counselling and support for young people aged 5–25.

Lifeline

13 11 14

24/7 crisis support if you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope.