

Predictors of Domestic Violence
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

1. Did they grow up in a violent family? People who grow up in families where they have been abused as children, or where one parent beats the other, are likely to become spouse-beaters or child-beaters, or both. They have grown up learning that violence is normal behavior.
2. Do they tend to use force or violence to "solve" their problems? Are they destructive when angry? Do they punch walls or throw things when upset? Any of these behaviors may be a sign of a person who will work out feelings with violence. Do not minimize a tendency they may have to be cruel to animals. Cruelty to animals is a common behavior of men or women who are cruel to their husbands or wives and children.
3. Do they abuse alcohol or other drugs? There is a strong link between violence and problems with drugs and alcohol. Be alert to their possible drinking/drug problems, particularly if they refuse to admit they have a problem or refuse to get help. Do not think you can change them.
4. Do they think poorly of self? Does he guard his masculinity by trying to act tough? He may think he is acting like a man, but in fact, he may be acting like a future batterer.
5. Do they have strong traditional ideas about what a man should be and what a woman should be? Does he think a woman should stay at home, take care of her husband, and follow his wishes and orders? In other words, does he act like women are second-class citizens?
6. Are they jealous of you-not just other men or women you may know-but also of your family and friends? Do they keep tabs on you? Do they want to know where you are at all times? Do they want you with them all the time, even when it is inconvenient for you?
7. Do they play with guns, knives, or other lethal instruments? Do they talk of using them against people, or threaten to use them to "get even"?
8. Do they expect you to follow their orders or advice? Do they become angry if you do not fulfill their wishes or if you cannot anticipate what they want?
9. Do they go through extreme highs and lows, as though they are two different people? Are they extremely kind one time, and extremely cruel another time?
10. When they get angry, do you fear them? Do you find not making them angry has become an important part of your life? Do you do what they want you to do, rather than what you want to do because it is less trouble?
11. Do they treat you roughly? Hit you? Do they physically force you to do what you do not want to do? Abuse during dating is a guarantee of later abuse, and more violent abuse. If they already abuse you, you are already a battered man or woman and should seek help now.
12. Do you feel threatened by them? Have you changed your life so you won't make them angry? If so, you are abused and should seek advice from your local domestic violence center.