

# What is Verbal Abuse?



Verbal abuse refers to the ways in which a person uses their words to cause harm. It is one tactic in a range of deliberate behaviors that a person may use to gain and maintain power and control over another in an intimate relationship.

Verbal abuse is one aspect of psychological abuse, also referred to as emotional abuse or expressive aggression. It is characterized by insults, name-calling, put-downs, criticizing, and other demeaning language designed to bully, intimidate, frighten, humiliate, degrade and diminish the victim's self worth and sense of safety.

## Facts and Stats

- **Verbal Abuse is Domestic Violence.**
- **No one deserves to be verbally abused.**
- **Verbal Abuse is difficult to detect, assess and substantiate, and many cases go unreported.**
- **No matter what others might say, you are never responsible for your partner's abusive actions.**

## Verbal abuse can be recognized as behaviors including:

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|---|---|---|
|  <p>NAME CALLING, INSULTS,<br/>AND CONTINUAL CRITICISM</p>                             |  <p>USING WORDS TO<br/>ISOLATE AND CONTROL</p>                               |  <p>HARASSMENT IN<br/>PERSON, ONLINE, OR<br/>OVER TEXT OR PHONE</p>  |
|  <p>PUBLIC HUMILIATION OR<br/>EMBARRASSMENT</p>  |  <p>CONSTANT JEALOUSY<br/>OFTEN SURFACING AS<br/>ACCUSATIONS OF CHEATING</p> |  <p>BLAMING OTHERS FOR THEIR<br/>OWN HARMFUL BEHAVIOR</p>  |
|  <p>TELLING SOMEONE THEY DESERVE<br/>TO BE MISTREATED OR DO NOT<br/>DESERVE LOVE</p> |  <p>STARTING<br/>DESTRUCTIVE RUMORS</p>                                    |  <p>THREATENING TO EXPOSE SECRETS<br/>OR PERSONAL INFORMATION<br/>INCLUDING PHOTOS OR VIDEOS</p>         |
|  <p>THREATENING WITH<br/>ADDITIONAL VIOLENCE</p>                                     |  <p>BODY SHAMING</p>   |  <p>GASLIGHTING (MANIPULATING<br/>SOMEONE PSYCHOLOGICALLY, UNTIL<br/>THEY QUESTION THEIR OWN SANITY)</p> |

To learn more about the signs, visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) and [Love is Respect](#).