

Navigating emotional abuse in relationships

Disturbingly, emotional abuse is something that happens in many relationships across the UK. According to the National Centre for Domestic Violence, [one in five adults experience domestic abuse in their lifetime](#). Domestic abuse covers several types of abuse, including physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in particular can be difficult to spot at first, as it doesn't leave any physical marks. Understanding what emotional abuse is and how it can manifest means you can help to protect yourself and others by taking action before it's too late.

Identifying signs and patterns

By definition, emotional abuse involves the use of non-physical behaviours to control someone. This can cause the victim to feel isolated and threatened. In practice, it can look like:

- Humiliation
- [Gaslighting](#)
- Antagonisation
- Manipulation
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Giving the silent treatment

Often, this type of abuse can be subtle and often goes undetected. This means the abuser is easily able to hide it from others, which can cause the issue to spiral. Even the victim might not realise what is happening before it's too late. It's all about power and controlling the victim to make them feel defenceless.

Victims who are exposed to this behaviour are at risk of developing low self-esteem, as well as mental health issues like anxiety or depression.

This is why it's so important to identify emotional abuse early to prevent long-term psychological harm and relationship deterioration.

Strategies for coping and seeking help

Spotting the signs is one thing but knowing how to cope and seek help is another thing altogether. The most important thing to remember is that none of this is your fault – and that there are ways out of this.

Firstly, seek support from those you can trust, such as close family or friends. They will be able to validate how you're feeling and offer practical support that will help you leave your abusive relationship. You can also seek support from helplines, such as National Domestic Abuse Helpline, Refuge, Women's Aid and Men's Advice Line.

In some cases, [you may need more help in the form of legal advice from family law solicitors](#). They can help you file for divorce or untangle finances that might make it hard to escape the relationship.

Even after leaving the relationship, you may struggle with the aftermath of being exposed to this behaviour. Many victims attend therapy to help with this, as well as support groups.

If you need professional, legal help, don't hesitate to get in touch with a reputable family law firm. With an experienced domestic abuse lawyer by your side, you'll receive comprehensive support that's tailored to your needs. They'll be experienced with sensitive cases such as these, helping you access the support you need to move forward.