

INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE IDENTIFICATION

[Answer questionnaire as if still in the relationship for those questions which refer to that]

0 - Never or Rarely true (or N/A)

1 - Sometimes true [If question is starred (*) rate as 2. (For survey, must choose Often or Always true)]

2 - Often or Always true

CHARACTER TRAITS OF ABUSING PARTNER

- Inwardly and/or outwardly, my partner appears to need to see him/herself as special, extreme, or superior.....___
- My partner can engage in risky behaviors with no anxiety.....___
- My partner engages in behaviors outside the law (not related to addictions).....___
- My partner has not been able to maintain consistent employment.....___
- My partner was intensely attentive at the beginning of the relationship.....___
- Presenting a good public image is important to my partner.....___
- My partner believes s/he is entitled to special treatment.....___
- My partner expresses feeling like a victim of outside circumstances which makes him/her hostile toward them.....___
- My partner seemed like my perfect mate at the beginning of the relationship.....___
- My partner can be vindictive toward myself or others if s/he perceives insult or injury.....___
- Our relationship from the beginning moved forward quickly.....___
- My partner can exhibit grand romantic or extravagant gestures, but does not connect emotionally day to day.....___
- My partner's behaviors are callous toward me and/or others.....___
- My partner seems like two different people, either engaging and calm, or enraged.....___
- My partner can be charming and glib.....___
- My partner likes to be the life of the party/center of attention.....___
- My partner does not have friends s/he socializes with.....___
- My partner does not have close family connections.....___
- My partner shared at the beginning that s/he had a criminal record and/or was incarcerated previous to the relationship.....___
- My partner neglects his/her responsibilities.....___
- My partner does not care for and/or act caring toward the children.....___
- My partner does not accompany me to important doctor appointments or events.....___
- My partner does not exhibit caretaking behaviors when I am sick or injured.....___
- My partner has told me about his/her abusive, neglectful, and/or traumatized childhood.....___

SCORE.....___

COERCIVE CONTROL

- My partner coerced me into getting plastic surgery.....___
- My partner tells me what clothes s/he would prefer I wear.....___
- My partner is critical if I gain weight.....___
- My partner dictates the menus.....___
- My partner decides who does what around the home.....___
- My partner does not want me to work, be away from the home, or go to school.....___
- My partner expresses distaste about, picks fights about, or skips social/family gatherings.....___
- My partner seems to pick fights at times just to put me down or influence events.....___
- My partner appears irritated or uncomfortable when I spend time with family or friends.....___
- My partner only wants to go where s/he feels comfortable and in control.....___
- My partner insists on knowing where I am at all times.....___
- My partner checks my texts, emails, and social media.....___
- My partner expresses distaste for the people in my life.....___
- My partner violated the agreements of our divorce decree.....___
- *When I broke up with my partner, s/he stalked me.....___
- Once I broke up with my partner, s/he did not respect my boundary and kept trying to contact me.....___
- My partner interferes with my attempts to enforce rules or consequences on children.....___

My partner makes major decisions without consulting with me.....
My partner coerced spiritual beliefs and practices that I had no say about.....
During the divorce my partner tried to get full custody of the children without grounds.....
During our divorce my partner hid financial records and was not forthcoming with disclosure.....
During the divorce my partner made false allegations against me.....

SCORE.....

VERBAL ABUSE

If my partner does not like something I do, s/he expresses it demeaning or hostile language.....
*My partner goes on hostile verbal rants or rages.....
If something is wrong with the children my partner blames/puts me down for it.....
My partner accuses me of behaviors that I do not do, but that s/he does.....
My partner expresses verbal hostility or criticism when I disagree with him/her.....
My partner is verbally abusive toward the children (e.g. critical, demeaning, shouting, degrading).....
My partner degrades, criticizes, or yells at me in front of the children.....
My partner has told negative rumors or lies about me to others.....
My partner becomes disproportionately verbally hostile toward me for minor slights or disagreements.....

SCORE.....

EMOTIONAL ABUSE/MANIPULATION

My partner will appear to be mentally shut down or absent during an argument.....
My partner insists something in the past happened in a way I remember different or have no recall of.....
If I bring up something that bothers me in our relationship my partner turns it around into me being the bad guy for bringing it up, and that he is the victim. It doesn't get further than that.....
If I bring up something that bothers me in our relationship my partner gets angry or walks away, then refuses to talk about it again and acts as if nothing happened.....
If my partner is uncomfortable with my feelings or opinions, s/he is dismissive.....
My partner uses friends, family, or community members to convince me to do what s/he wants.....
When there is a conflict my partner does not seem able to take responsibility for his/her part in it.....
If my partner's deceptive or hurtful actions clearly harmed me or the children, s/he does not express remorse.....
My partner does not admit shortcomings or inconsiderate actions toward me.....
My partner does not seem able to empathize with or validate my emotions.....
My things disappear, at times reappear, or are found damaged without any logical explanation.....
The only emotions I have seen my partner express are anger or self-pity.....

SCORE.....

PHYSICAL (OR THREAT OF) ABUSE/VIOLENCE

My partner is physically intimidating or overpowering to me.....
*My partner has physically assaulted me (hitting, kicking, choking).....
My partner has pushed or shoved me.....
*My partner has attempted to kill me.....
*My partner physically assaulted me in front of the children.....
*I had to get a Restraining Order against my partner for threat or violence, stalking or abuse.....
*My partner has verbally threatened to kill me.....
*My partner has intimidated or threatened me with a weapon.....
My partner has destroyed or thrown things in a fit of rage.....
*My partner is physically abusive toward the children (e.g. beating, starving, over punishing, punching).....
*Our relationship goes through cycles of physical abuse, then reconnecting romantically.....
*My partner fed or exposed me to something that made me sick or was poisonous.....

SCORE.....

SEXUAL ABUSE

*My partner has sexually assaulted me (rape).....
My partner has coerced or persuaded me to participate in sexual practices I have not felt comfortable with.....
My partner insists we use drugs or alcohol before sex even if I don't want to.....

My partner needs porn before or during sex to get aroused which I'm not comfortable with.....__

My partner refuses to have sex, blaming my looks, character, me being oversexed; and refuses to work on it.....__

*My partner engaged deceitfully in sex outside the relationship with prostitutes, escorts, other gender sex, multiple sexual partners, and/or affairs.....__

*My partner was found to be sexually abusing one or more of the (step)children.....__

My partner insists we have sex when I don't want to or am sick.....__

*My partner had sex with me after secretly drugging me to unconsciousness, or while I was asleep.....__

*I acquired an STD from my partner's cheating.....__

My partner needs sex that is increasingly degrading, controlling, sadistic, induces pain, or play acts violence.....__

SCORE.....__

FINANCIAL ABUSE

My partner has insisted I give him/her my whole pay check.....__

My partner has stolen money from me or someone else in my family.....__

My partner has scammed other people out of money during our relationship.....__

My partner has financially exploited others or entities, that put me at risk for criminal indictment.....__

My partner insists on controlling the money in the relationship.....__

My partner accrued debt before or during the relationship and kept it hidden from me.....__

SCORE.....__

DECEIT ABUSE

*My partner engaged in criminal activities during the relationship and lied about it.....__

My partner engaged in criminal activities or was incarcerated previous to the relationship and hid it from me.....__

*My partner lied about demographics, e.g. identity, finances, relationship status, children, occupation.....__

I have caught my partner in lies about his/her whereabouts or other things.....__

My partner erases incoming texts and computer history.....__

My partner insists on passwords and privacy on his/her devices and computer.....__

My partner says, "I love you" but actions are not loving.....__

My partner is sometimes gone or out of contact for periods of time.....__

*I discovered my partner had sexual activity/liasons outside of our relationship.....__

*I discovered my partner was secretly a pedophile, rapist, or murderer.....__

SCORE.....__

ADDICTION

My partner has a substance or alcohol problem.....__

My partner has a gambling, food, or spending addiction.....__

My partner has a sex addiction.....__

My partner has not taken responsibility for nor has not received the help maintain staying sober/clean from their addiction.....__

The lies related to addiction are the only lies my partner tells.....__

SCORE.....__

PARTNER'S POSITIVE TRAITS IN THE RELATIONSHIP

My partner considers my opinion regarding a decision as equal to his/hers.....__

My partner is sensitive and responsive to my sexual needs.....__

My partner can put aside his own comfort to respond to my or the children's needs.....__

My partner respects my personal boundaries.....__

My partner verbalizes the parts of my character s/he loves or appreciates.....__

My partner can express uncomfortable emotions like inadequacy, guilt, hurt, etc.....__

My partner exhibits caring responsible actions towards our children.....__

If my partner's behavior is causing a problem in the relationship s/he can honestly look it and take responsibility for improving it.....__

My partner can eventually empathize with my emotions even if we start out in a conflict.....__

My partner strives to maintain meaningful relationships with family, friends.....__

My partner strives to maintain positive relationships with my family and friends.....__

My partner carries his/her share of the responsibilities to provide for/maintain our household.....__

SYNDROME OF RESPONSE TO ABUSE

[Answer questionnaire as if still in the relationship for those questions which refer to that]

0 - Never or Rarely true (or N/A)

2 - Sometimes true [If question is starred (*) rate as 2. (For survey, must choose Often or Always true)]

3 - Often or Always true

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES TO RELATIONAL STRESS

- If I get a negative reaction from my partner, I try to be more pleasing.....
- I take on the activities my partner does not like to do.....
- I forget my partner’s hostility or negative behavior toward me once s/he’s nice again.....
- I find myself changing in me whatever my partner is not comfortable with.....
- I have found myself panicking and trying harder to reach my partner if s/he grows distant.....
- I think I can improve our problems by figuring out how to better love my partner.....
- Even though my partner doesn’t communicate well I believe my understanding can make up for the deficit.....
- I fight more to be heard as time goes on, but it only causes more conflict.....
- I have begun an addiction in response to relationship stress.....
- I have begun an eating disorder in response to relationship stress.....

SCORE.....

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO RELATIONAL STRESS

- I feel more and more depressed and hopeless in this relationship.....
- I have felt suicidal because of the difficulty of the relationship.....
- I have attempted suicide during the relationship.....
- I have had a psychiatric hospitalization during the relationship for depression/suicidality.....
- I often feel anxious in the relationship.....
- I have begun having panic attacks during the relationship.....
- I feel painfully alone most of the time in the relationship.....
- I feel shame for agreeing to participate in some sexual practices my partner wants me to.....
- I feel shame for allowing myself to be disrespected and treated badly.....
- I feel more and more isolated as shame keeps me from reaching out to family and friends.....
- I have felt abandoned by or distanced from God since being in the relationship.....
- I have wondered if my partner would kill me.....
- I have not left the relationship because I fear my partner’s anger and retaliation.....
- I feel vague a sense of paranoia/uneasiness about my partner but cannot pinpoint why.....

SCORE.....

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE OF SELF

- I see myself as a failure in this relationship.....
- I have felt significantly less attractive as the relationship has progressed.....
- My sense of confidence has diminished during the course of this relationship.....
- When my partner disagrees with me or is angry it makes me doubt myself.....
- I feel deeply for my partner’s difficult life and would never want to abandon him/her like others have.....
- I believe the unusual nature of our relationship makes us unique.....
- I feel like we have two different lives – a public one and a private one.....
- It is important for me to see myself as special or superior to others in some way.....
- I feel like I have lost myself in this relationship.....
- I feel addicted to the intense sex in our relationship.....
- My commitment/religious beliefs prevent me from giving up on my marriage and/or family no matter how miserable I might be.....
- Sometimes things seem to go missing and I wonder if I’m losing my mind.....
- I feel objectified in our sexual relationship.....
- It seems like my partner cannot see who I really am, but who s/he needs me to be.....

SCORE.....

SYMPTOMS OF PTSD (PRESENT WITHIN SAME PERIOD)

- I feel hypervigilant about my partner's unpredictable or hostile behavior.....
- I have flashbacks of abuse/deceit from the relationship.....
- I have problems concentrating on my daily activities.....
- I find myself ruminating over interactions in our relationship that seem to have no resolution.....
- I feel detached from others and outside activities.....
- I have sleep disturbance and nightmares.....
- I have had multiple home or vehicular accidents during the relationship.....
- I feel emotionally numb or flat.....
- I feel more negativity, shame and/or guilt about myself.....
- I block out abusive or painful interactions with my partner when things settle down.....
- I feel more distractible, forgetful, and/or spacey as time goes on.....
- Since deceit was discovered I have been in a state of shock.....
- I have lost my ability to trust people as a result of this relationship.....
- I avoid activities, people, and situations that remind me of memories of this relationship.....
- I do not feel safe engaging in another relationship since breaking from this one.....

SCORE.....

PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS OF CHRONIC STRESS

- I get more respiratory and viral illnesses than usual in the relationship.....
- I acquired a chronic illness during the relationship.....
- I feel chest tightness and/or shallow breathing.....
- I have more muscle tension, headaches and/or migraines.....
- I have developed digestion issues during the relationship.....
- I feel generally broken down and worn out and/or developed adrenal fatigue.....
- I have lost/gained 20 or more pounds during the relationship.....

SCORE.....

POSITIVE PERSONAL TRAITS IN THE RELATIONSHIP

- I feel I carry equal decision making power in the relationship.....
- I am sensitive and responsive to my partner's sexual needs.....
- I carry my share of the responsibilities providing for, maintaining our household.....
- I respect my partner's boundaries in the relationship.....
- I feel safe to express any emotions honestly and expect an empathic response.....
- If I've hurt my partner in some way I express genuine remorse and try to improve my behavior.....
- If there is a conflict between us, I can eventually understand my partner's viewpoint and empathize with his/her emotions.....
- When my behavior is causing a problem in the relationship I am willing take responsibility for it.....
- I am able to put my needs aside to consider the needs of my partner and/or children.....
- I exhibit caring behaviors toward the children.....
- I maintain meaningful relationships with my own family and friends.....
- I maintain positive relationships with my partner's family and friends.....

INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE & SYNDROME OF RESPONSE TO ABUSE QUESTIONNAIRE - NOTE TO CLINICIANS

Most clinicians are aware of and may be able to identify a relationship that is abusive in the classic sense - associated with physical violence, the romance/abuse/reconnection cycle, and typically associated with Borderline Personality Disorder in the abusing partner. This questionnaire identifies traits and behaviors usually associated with Antisocial Personality Disorder, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, and Psychopathy (whether separate or comorbid) that express as abusive in intimate partner relating. This is not for the purpose of forming a diagnosis of the abusing partner. It is for the purpose of allowing client and clinician to recognize traits and clusters of behaviors that identify a situation of ongoing harm to the victim partner, which can include physical and emotional forms of abuse and control.

The primary personality structure of the abuser is based upon the need to maintain dominance, control, and a narcissistic (blameless and flawless) self-perception, which precludes introspection, and in which a lack of empathy, remorse, and conscience are inherent. This abuser will not tolerate traits in a partner that do not accommodate this need. This will be outwardly expressed in callous, manipulative, controlling, aggressive, and deceitful behaviors that are collectively traumatic to the intimate partner. Because the abuser does not usually initially present with these behaviors, which also can be intermittent and can include deceit, abuse can be harder to identify. This assessment is purposefully lengthy to capture specific traits and relational behaviors found in the various forms of abuse to create a clear picture for both clinician and client, which can be distinguished from normal intimate partner conflict.

It is helpful to the clinician and client to recognize that those traits/behaviors, if part of an enduring and inflexible personality adaptation, most often preclude motivation to make changes. Motivation requires the ability to look inward at one's behavior honestly, even when it's uncomfortable, and to be aware that the problem originates from them, i.e. taking responsibility. It is most often empathy – the experience that one's behavior causes discomfort or suffering in their loved one – that is the motivating factor for changing responses toward one's partner. This assessment tool can help determine whether or not a client's romantic partner possesses the factors of responsibility, remorse, empathy, to engage in the couples therapy to create lasting change.

The purpose of clarifying the personality structure that must maintain dominance/control/narcissistic self-perception in the romantic partner and identifying abuse is to end confusion and self-blame. Understanding the decompensating emotional, psychological, physiological effects of abuse can help the clinician to perceive the client's needs in therapy and better direct them (e.g. issues surrounding boundaries, relational interactions and communications, safety, interventions for self-esteem, self-care, etc.). Identifying symptoms of PTSD can help the clinician direct interventions designed specifically for trauma work. Other categories indicate ways the client may have adapted to victimization and control, and also may help the clinician identify any pre-existing codependent traits or maladaptive patterns of interaction. Other trauma, family history, or vulnerability that contributed to the client being in the abusive relationship are separate issues to explore, but are not covered by this assessment.

The addiction category indicates the presence of an addiction issue which may account for deceitful behaviors, denial and lack of remorse, poor functioning, and level of aggression. The therapist should discern whether addiction is wholly responsible for these problematic behaviors or just one of the variables that impact the separately distinct personality disorder and/or psychopathy.]

The inclusion of Positive Traits in the questionnaire is to help the client understand what healthy responses in an intimate partner relationship look like in order to compare to those received by his/her partner, and to examine their own healthy or non-healthy responsiveness patterns.

This assessment tool is not in any way intended to be a clinician's guide as to what actions the client should take regarding their relationship status unless a client or their children are found to be in imminent harm. If this is the case therapists should take measures to plan for safety, as required by their professional ethics code.

SCORING: INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE IDENTIFICATION

Categories are scored to highlight abusive traits and behaviors, so the higher the score more significant abuse is present. Minimum scores below demonstrate significant abuse/control in relationship for each category.

CHARACTER TRAITS OF ABUSING PARTNER	16+
COERCIVE CONTROL	6+
VERBAL ABUSE	5+
EMOTIONAL ABUSE/MANIPULATION	10+
PHYSICAL (OR THREAT OF) ABUSE/VIOLENCE	2+ [Any single starred (*) question answered as Sometimes, Often, or Always true is enough by itself to qualify as physical abuse.]
SEXUAL ABUSE	6+ [Any single starred (*) question answered as Sometimes, Often, or Always true is enough by itself to qualify as sexual abuse.]
FINANCIAL ABUSE	3+
DECEIT ABUSE	3+
ADDICTION	1+
POSITIVE PARTNER TRAITS [Higher ratings indicate more positive traits.]	

SCORING: SYNDROME OF RESPONSE TO ABUSE

Categories are scored to highlight negative effects of and adaptations to ongoing abuse/control, so the higher the score the more significant the impact. Minimum scores below denote significant emotional, psychological, and physiological negative impact in each category, and can be considered separately.

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES TO RELATIONAL STRESS	6+
EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO RELATIONAL STRESS	12+
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE OF SELF	12+
SYMPTOMS OF PTSD	12+
PHYSIOLOGICAL SX OF CHRONIC STRESS	4+
POSITIVE PERSONAL TRAITS [Higher ratings indicate more positive traits.]	