



This list can help you recognise if you or someone you know is in a violent relationship:

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- **Destructive criticism/verbal abuse**
Name-calling, mocking, accusing, blaming, yelling, swearing, making humiliating remarks or gestures are all examples of verbal abuse.
- **Pressure tactics**
Rushing you to make decisions through 'guilt-tripping' and other forms of intimidation, sulking, threatening to withhold money, manipulating the children, telling you what to do.
- **Abusing authority**
Always claiming to be right, telling you what to do, and making big decisions.
- **Disrespect**
Interrupting, changing topics, not listening or responding, twisting your words, putting you down in front of other people and saying bad things about your friends and family.
- **Abusing trust**
Lying, withholding information, cheating on you, being overly jealous.
- **Breaking promises**
Not following through on agreements, not taking a fair share of the responsibility, refusing to do child care or housework – not seeing this as a man's role
- **Emotional withholding**
Not expressing feelings, not giving support, attention or compliments, not respecting feelings, rights or opinions and giving the 'silent treatment'.
- **Minimising, denying, blaming**
Making light of behaviour and not taking your concerns about it seriously, saying the abuse didn't happen, shifting responsibility for abusive behaviour, saying you caused it.
- **Self-destructive behaviour**
Self-destructive behaviours include abusing drugs or alcohol, threatening suicide and/ or other forms of self-harm, deliberately saying or doing things that will have negative consequences e.g. telling off the boss which may result in being fired.

- **Isolation**

Preventing or making it difficult for you to see friends and relatives, monitoring phone calls, telling you where you can and cannot go.

- **Harassment/stalking**

Making uninvited visits or calls, following you, checking up on you, leaving unwanted gifts, embarrassing you in public, refusing to leave when asked, are examples of harassment and stalking.

FINANCIAL ABUSE

- **Financial Control**

Interfering with your work or not letting you work, refusing to give you or taking your money, taking your car keys or otherwise preventing you from using the car, threatening to report you to Centrelink.

GAS LIGHTING

Gas lighting is one of the most extreme, dangerous and effective forms of emotional and psychological abuse and is mostly carried out intentionally.

Gas lighting is a game of mind control and intimidation that is often used by narcissists as a way of controlling, confusing and debilitating someone. The term was coined in the 1938 play, and the film adaptations that were created from it. In the play the husband used forms of manipulation in an attempt to drive his wife crazy. For example deliberately dimming the gas lights in the house but telling his wife she was imagining it.

The whole intention of gas lighting is to decrease someone's self-esteem and self-confidence so that they are unable to function in an independent manner and for the abuser to create a dynamic where they have complete control over their victim.

Some warning signs that gas lighting is taking place:

Apologising... The victim will constantly be apologising for doing things wrong, even if they haven't done anything wrong – feeling sorry for everything means the accountability and responsibility for all wrong-doings has been claimed by one person, the victim. This ensures the perpetrator remains innocent and the victim is continuously guilty.

Can't make decisions... Decision-making becomes increasingly difficult for the victim; they feel that whatever they choose will be the wrong choice. Everything they do or say is wrong, so they feel that they are no longer capable of making rational decisions about anything, so they leave it to the abuser giving that person even more power and control prolonging the toxic dance.

Change... Change is not always easy to notice, since most change happens bit by bit so the process can feel very natural in some ways. However, if the victim thinks back to who they were before the relationship and who they are now, they will probably see significant differences.

Confusion... Victims of gas lighting will often be in a constant state of bewilderment and confusion constantly doubting their own mind and thought processes. Their

instinct fails to kick in because whenever it does it is very quickly told it is wrong, so it becomes a silent tool that ensures the gas lighter remains on top of their game. The victim will know there is something seriously wrong, but find it extremely difficult to work out what. The person being gas lighted will always be wondering if they are overly sensitive as they always feel triggered to react to the gas lighter's behaviour.

Withdrawn... The one being gas lighted will become withdrawn and often reclusive, as they feel so low and beaten down that they have little confidence to socialise with anyone. The victim will feel safer spending time alone than with other people, so when those around them question what is wrong, or what is happening within their relationship, the victim will not have the answers to justify what is going on.

Due to either depression or severe anxiety, the victim will find it extremely difficult to function normally within society or even with close friends or family. The abuser, at this stage, has won the battle of control, as, without anyone to confide in the victim will find it difficult to work out that the abuser is causing the damage. The abuser will not want anyone to figure out their game, so they will work hard to make sure their victim becomes alienated from anyone who could offer support

There are many reasons why someone would want to gas light another person – but it is always done for personal gain. The abuser has very little interest in their victim, other than using them for their own twisted benefit. When the victim becomes so low, that they are no longer of any great use to the gas lighter the relationship will die out. The abuser will distance themselves by ignoring and using silent treatment as an intense emotional torture.

The victim will have no idea what to do to please their abuser and will often try anything to win over their abuser to regain the affection that was shown in the beginning stages. By now though, it is far too late, any little amount of respect that the abuser had for their victim will have been completely depleted and it is unlikely that the dynamic will change again.

Anyone who has come through this type of experience will feel debilitated at first; however they will only be temporarily weakened. They will bounce back stronger than before, having learned painful but valuable lessons along the way, the most important lesson – having complete faith in their intuition. As difficult as it may be to accept, there are always red flags and warnings signs in the initial stages.