

# **Warning Signs That A Man May Become Disrespectful and Abusive With You**

The following is a list of warning signs that often indicate that a man is “at-risk” to become disrespectful and abusive with his female partner. These signs are not, in and of themselves, a guarantee that a man will become abusive. Men may not have all, or even most, of these but all are, in fact, “red flags” that a woman should not minimize or ignore early in a relationship. They are divided into high-risk markers and other important warning signs.

## **High-Risk Markers**

- 1) He experienced or witnessed abuse and violence in his home as a child
- 2) He is or has been cruel to pets or other animals
- 3) He has a history of vandalism when he was young
- 4) He has been in fights and has been physically violent with other men (in the past or present)
- 5) He has been arrested for offenses like disorderly conduct or assault
- 6) He breaks, throws or hits things when he is angry
- 7) He has been controlling and abusive with previous partners but excuses his behavior by talking about how badly she treated him or about her “bad behavior”
  - he may talk about what a “bitch” she was or refer to her in other demeaning or judgmental ways and blames her for the problems in the relationship or their “break-up” while taking little or no responsibility himself
- 8) His friends and family think of or talk about him as a “hot-head” or as “having a short fuse”
- 9) He demands sex or pressures you to be sexual with him and expects that it is your responsibility as his partner to be sexual whenever he feels like it no matter how you are feeling at the time
- 10) He becomes physically forceful during sex and ignores your requests for him to stop hurting you
- 11) He becomes negative, cruel, explosive, or hostile when he uses alcohol or drugs
- 12) He harshly disciplines or is (or has been) cruel to children (and/or talks about how this approach is actually “helpful” to children learning to be responsible)

## **Other Important Warning Signs**

- 1) He becomes explosively angry and verbally abusive when he is around you even though his explosiveness might not be directed at you personally
- 2) He is overly sensitive and easily irritated by minor frustrations and annoyances that are an ongoing part of everyday life
- 3) He seems like a “Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde” and his moods change abruptly, often for no apparent reason and he tends to deny that this is happening
- 4) He becomes angry, volatile, hostile, and aggressive when driving

- 5) He makes threats to hurt others and then dismisses and minimizes them by saying *“Everybody thinks/talks that way,” “I didn’t really mean it,”* or *“What I said is ‘no big deal’”*
- 6) He minimizes and discounts his angry behavior or becomes defensive and reactive when confronted about how he experiences and expresses his anger
- 7) He talks about you being “too sensitive” when you express concerns about his angry words or actions toward you or others
- 8) He punishes you by sulking and withdrawing when you won’t say or do what he wants you to do but then tends to deny doing this (e.g. saying *“There’s nothing wrong”*)
- 9) He has had “feuds” or held “grudges” in the past with family or friends
- 10) He uses his alcohol or drug use to excuse his offensive, hurtful, and disrespectful behavior to others  
*...e.g. saying “That was just the booze talking; it wasn’t really me” or “I was just too drunk to know what I was doing”*
- 11) He is self-absorbed and self-centered and has difficulty experiencing and showing empathy and compassion for others
- 12) He frequently struggles with low self-esteem and negativity, generally sees himself as a “victim,” and tends to blame others for most or all of his feelings, problems, and difficulties in life
- 13) He becomes jealous of anyone and anything that takes your time or energy away from his time or his relationship with you
- 14) He is very possessive and tries to make you feel “bad” or guilty if you don’t want to be with him at a particular time or “enough” of the time
- 15) He may think and say to you that your friends and family don't really like him and he often encourages you to spend less time with them and more time with him
- 16) He becomes very controlling about where you go, who you see, what you wear, what you think and say, and other areas of who you are as a person
- 17) He often discounts your feelings by not listening to you, interrupting you, or talking over you
- 18) He refuses to accept “no’s” from you and limits you have set with him
- 19) He acts as if he’s always “right” and is intolerant of differences between people and perspectives that are different from his own
- 20) At the beginning of the relationship, he pushes for an “instant” involvement and pressures you to make an exclusive commitment to him before you feel ready to do this
- 21) He makes it clear, from early on in the relationship, that he expects the two of you *“were meant for each other”* and that you will *“always be with him”*
- 22) Since he views men as superior to and more competent and capable than women, he feels entitled to be “in charge” in your relationship and make the important decisions that need to be made
- 23) He tends to believe in rigid, traditional, and stereotypical gender roles and expectations for both men and women