

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS AND ABUSERS

Although both abusers and victims may be either male or female, in this list abusers are referred to as men and victims as women.

VICTIMS:

1. Usually female.
2. Has a nurturing, caring and compassionate disposition with a need & desire to rescue, fix, help, and take care of others.
3. Raised either in an abusive family or in a healthy family environment. If raised in an abusive home, she is likely to stay in the abusive relationship longer.
4. Left home or married young to escape abusive home.
5. Witnessed some form of abuse as child or adult.
6. Low self-esteem.
7. Questions about her right or ability to have a better life than the one she has with him.
8. Underestimates herself; believes that she cannot do better on her own.
9. Feels powerless, hopeless and immobilized by the abuser's control.
10. Loses the ability to make independent decisions and changes on her own.
11. Suffers from depression, suicide ideation, substance abuse, psychosomatic illnesses and workaholism.
12. Has lack of trust in others, especially partners.
13. Has chronic apprehension, agitation and anxiety.
14. Is unable to relax. Disturbed sleeping patterns. Always being hypervigilant.
15. Is a peacekeeper.
16. Blames self for abuse.
17. Doesn't act or feel like herself. People tell her that she has changed.
18. Denies, minimizes and rationalizes abusive behavior.
19. Feels guilty and responsible for the abuser disturbing, threatening or hurting neighbors, family, friends or co-workers.
20. Successful professionally and in life outside of the home.
21. Doesn't take care of herself. Is frequently sick.

ABUSERS:

1. Usually male.
2. Generational history of family violence. As a child, witnessed mistreatment and disrespect of women.
3. Poor impulse control - explosive temper - limited tolerance for frustration.
4. Acts like he is the only person who knows anything. Arrogant and cocky.
5. Doesn't believe rules and laws apply to him.
6. Wants/demands his way all the time.
7. Limited capacity for delayed gratification - very "now" oriented.
8. Insatiable ego needs - quality of childlike narcissism.
9. Low self-esteem - perceived unachieved ideals and goals for self.
10. Grandiose ideas for change and improvement.
11. Describes relationship with partner as closest he's ever had.
12. Jealousy. Accuses partner of cheating on him. Fear of being abandoned or "cheated on".

13. Feels everyone is out to get him. Feels persecuted at job, by family, by society, etc.
14. Lacks awareness of others' personal boundaries.
15. Feels no guilt on an emotional level even after intellectual recognition of abusive episodes.
16. Inability to empathize or provide unconditional love.
17. Assaultive tendencies, which increase with time.
18. Assaultive behavior increases when she is pregnant. Frequent cause of miscarriage.
19. Chooses type of abuse that most effectively pushes the victim's 'buttons'.
20. Blames everyone else for abuse. Accepts no blame or responsibility for failures or for violence.
21. Often, but not always, abuses drugs and/or alcohol.
22. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Personality changes from calm to abusive, or vice versa, in seconds/minutes.
23. Fear overtakes any love and respect for her, so the abuse continues to get worse.