

Red Flag Checklist for Emotional Abuse in Relationships

Keep this private for self-reflection — not to share with your partner. This checklist can help you distinguish between healthy conflict and abusive patterns.

Pattern of Criticism or Belittling

- Met with criticism even after thoughtful gestures or efforts.
- Small mistakes escalated into bigger accusations (e.g., 'you never listen', 'you always...').

Responsibility for Their Emotions

- You feel like it's your job to make them feel better or prevent them from becoming upset.
- Their mood or happiness is used as a measure of your worth in the relationship.

Secrecy vs. Privacy

- You avoid telling friends/family what happened out of fear of judgment or disapproval.
- You feel pressure to protect their image, even when their behavior harms you.

Control Through Guilt or Obligation

- Commitments or personal goals are treated as selfish if they don't align with their needs.
- You feel guilty for having interests, plans, or relationships outside of them.

Isolation

- You see friends/family less often because of their disapproval or resulting conflict.
- Encouraged—directly or indirectly—to keep the relationship 'just between the two of you'.

Emotional Volatility

- Reactions are unpredictable—kindness or calm can turn to anger or resentment quickly.
- You feel like you're walking on eggshells.

Substance Influence

- Excessive marijuana or other substance use affects clarity, memory, or emotional regulation.
- Conflicts escalate or linger because important conversations happen when impaired.

Tip: After a conflict, scan the list and note which items occurred. If patterns repeat weekly—or a few times a month—consider discussing with a trusted friend, therapist, or family member.