

**Center for Domestic Peace**  
**Home of Marin Abused Women's Services**

**The 6 Types of Abuse: The PEEVSS**  
**Are you abused?**

**Physical** abuse can be described as abuse to you or abuse that is done around you. Physical abuse to you includes hitting, restraining, blocking, spitting, squeezing, shaking, stalking, strangling, drowning or locking you out of your house. Physical abuse around you includes throwing, striking, breaking, or upsetting objects. It can also include killing pets to frighten you, and destroying clothing, jewelry, photos, or personal items that are important to you. The message this sends is that "You're next!"

**Emotional** abuse is deliberately withholding the 4 A's (Acceptance, Appreciation, Attention, & Affection) from you for the sole purpose of controlling or coercing you. This involves behavior such as putting you down, calling you names, telling you that you are crazy or using mind games or manipulations. This can also include treating you as a servant, making all the "big" decisions and acting like the master of the castle. Emotional abuse can involve isolating you by controlling what you do, who you see, talk to and where you go. Emotional abusers may use the children to make you feel guilty or using visitation as a way of harassment. The "silent treatment", the "evil eye", "the look" and the "big stink" are also forms of emotional abuse. The "evil eye" is a look that displays the wishes of negative or harmful things on you or displays anger or hatred. "The look" is a facial expression which shows that a person is angry and on the verge of being verbally or physically violent. The "big stink" is a body posture such as folded arms, hands on hips and/or a scowling face. These behaviors carry such messages as "Don't you dare ask me for anything right now!"

**Economic** abuse is controlling your financial resources. It includes such behaviors as trying to keep you from getting or keeping a job, making you ask for money, giving you an allowance, taking your money, forbidding you to work or handle your own money.

**Verbal** abuse can be described in terms of the **5 T's**: Threatening, Teasing & Taunting, "Thingifying", and Trivializing.

To threaten verbally is to use words that imply physical violence will be done to you or the children, such as "I'm gonna kick your butt if you try that again!" or "You don't even wanna ask me questions like that."

Teasing and taunting can start out playfully and evolve into abuse. It includes name-calling, jokes, sarcasm, and ostracism.

Thingifying is a word we use to describe being called a name that makes you seem like an object. These can be profane words or insults such as "filthy", "lazy", "nasty", and "stupid". Thingifying makes it easier for violence to be committed, in the same way that it is easier for soldiers to kill an enemy with a nickname like "The Jerries", "The Krauts" or "Charlie".

To trivialize you verbally is to use words that imply that you are inferior such as: "You can't do anything right. You'll never get a job. You are unfit. Who'd want you?" Mimicking or imitating your tone of voice when you're angry. Repeating what you say as if you're too stupid to understand.

**Sexual** abuse is sexual behavior that crosses your boundary without your permission. It can be physical in nature, such as pressuring or forcing you to have sex when you don't want to or to do sexual things that you don't like. Sexual violence of a verbal nature is talking about sex when you don't want to or using sexual words that you don't want to hear. Sexual violence of an emotional nature includes flirting with someone else in your presence, or threatening to have an affair.

**Spiritual** abuse takes place when someone behaves in such a way that your spirit, will, or morale is drained and even demeaned as a result of any of the above types of abuse. Spiritual abuse also includes mocking your spiritual beliefs and customs, or denying practice of these. It can also include using improper interpretation of spiritual doctrines to control you or other family members.

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