

FREE  
EBOOK



*Toxic*  
RELATIONSHIPS

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## What is an Abusive Relationship?

An abusive relationship is a relationship where one partner uses various forms of physical, emotional, or psychological abuse to control and dominate the other partner. The abuse can be overt or subtle, and may take different forms, including verbal attacks, physical violence, emotional manipulation, isolation, and financial control.

In an abusive relationship, the abuser often seeks to exert power and control over the victim, using a range of tactics to maintain dominance.

These tactics may include threats, intimidation, gaslighting, and coercion, as well as physical violence. Over time, the victim may begin to feel trapped, helpless, and powerless, as their self-esteem and self-worth are eroded.

Abusive relationships can occur between partners of any gender, sexual orientation, or age group. It can be difficult for a victim to leave an abusive relationship, as they may fear for their safety, feel dependent on their abuser, or have low self-esteem.

It is important for anyone experiencing abuse to seek help and support, whether from friends, family, or professional resources.

### **Toxic Relationships**

A toxic relationship is a relationship in which one or both partners engage in behaviours that are harmful to the other partner, either physically or emotionally.

In a toxic relationship, there is a pattern of negative behaviours that can cause harm, create emotional pain, and undermine the well-being of the individuals involved.

Toxic relationships can take many forms and may be characterised by a variety of behaviours, such as emotional manipulation, verbal abuse, physical violence, controlling behaviours, and possessiveness. The toxic behaviours in the relationship can make it difficult for one or both partners to communicate effectively, trust each other, or maintain a healthy level of intimacy.

In a toxic relationship, one partner may feel trapped, isolated, or unable to leave due to the fear of the consequences of leaving or a sense of dependency on the other person. The toxic behaviours can also create a cycle of negative thoughts and feelings, such as guilt, shame, and anxiety. It is important to recognise the signs of a toxic relationship and seek help if you are in one.

## Signs of a Toxic Relationship

Only you can tell if the bad outweighs the good in a relationship. But if someone consistently threatens your well-being by what they're saying, doing, or not doing, it's likely a toxic relationship.

Relationships that involve physical or verbal abuse are definitely classified as toxic, but there are other, more subtle, signs of a toxic relationship, including:

- You give more than you're getting, which makes you feel devalued and depleted.
- You feel consistently disrespected or that your needs aren't being met.
- You feel a toll on your self-esteem over time.
- You feel unsupported, misunderstood, demeaned, or attacked.
- You feel depressed, angry, or tired after speaking or being with the other person.
- You bring out the worst in each other. For example, your competitive friend brings out a spite-based competitive streak that is not enjoyable for you.
- You are not your best self around the person. For example, they bring out the gossipy side of you, or they seem to draw out a mean streak you don't normally have.
- You feel like you have to walk on eggshells around this person to keep from becoming a target of their venom.
- You spend a lot of time and emotional strength trying to cheer them up.
- You are always to blame. They turn things around so things you thought they had done wrong are suddenly your fault.

## Types of Toxic Relationship

It's important to note that toxic relationships are not limited to romantic relationships. They exist in families, in the workplace, and among friend groups—and they can be extremely stressful, especially if the toxicity isn't effectively managed.

### **WHEN THERE ARE NEGATIVE BEHAVIOURS**

Some people's constant complaining, critical remarks, and overall negativity create a toxic environment. Other toxic traits may include perfectionism, unhealthy competitiveness, and frequent lying. A person may also let their insecurities bring out the worst in them.

### **WHEN ONE (or both) PEOPLE LACK SELF -AWARENESS**

Open communication is key to any healthy relationship. Both partners should feel comfortable expressing their feelings and opinions, and should be able to listen to each other without judgment or criticism.

### **WHEN A PERSON INTENTIONALLY HURTS OTHERS**

Some people are deliberately rude and hurtful. In these situations, you may feel singled out and targeted through their mean words and actions. A person may also try to control or manipulate you, which is toxic behaviour.

### **WHEN A PERSON IS ABUSIVE**

When people repeatedly and intentionally hurt you, their behaviour can be considered abusive. Whether they are constantly gossiping about you, or they are physically harming you in any way, abuse is never OK.

## Toxic vs. Abusive Relationships

Not all toxic relationships are abusive; however, all abusive relationships can be considered toxic.

In a toxic relationship, there is usually a lack of respect and a violation of boundaries.

Sometimes, this behaviour occurs without the person even realizing they're doing it.

But, if this kind of behaviour is consistently repeated with the active intent to harm the other person, the relationship could be considered abusive.

Abuse can take many forms—such as psychological, emotional, and physical abuse. Abusive relationships tend to also follow the cycle of abuse. For example, the stages of the cycle of abuse usually involve:

1. Tension starts to build.
2. An act of abuse occurs.
3. The person who committed the act apologizes, blames the victim, or minimizes the abuse.
4. There is a period of time during which no abuse occurs; however, the cycle eventually repeats.

In addition, toxic relationships may be more subjective than abusive ones, for instance, if you have a history of being lied to, you might consider anyone who lies a toxic person; someone else might be more willing to let it slide and give the person who lied a second chance.

### **Toxic vs. Healthy Behaviour**

When determining if a relationship is creating toxicity, it's important to look at which behaviours are being displayed most frequently in the relationship.

In other words, if one or both of you are consistently selfish, negative, and disrespectful, you could be creating toxicity in the relationship. But if you're mostly encouraging, compassionate, and respectful, then there might just be certain issues that create toxicity that need to be addressed.