

# Union of Saints, Covert, Covert Emotional Abuse, Manipulation

When someone learns your wounds or triggers and *intentionally* uses them to hurt, control, or get a reaction, that's manipulation. Depending on how they do it, you'll also see terms like **gaslighting**, **emotional blackmail**, **triangulation**, or **narcissistic abuse**. All of those fall under the umbrella of emotional/psychological abuse when the purpose is power or control.

## Common names & what they mean (short)

- **Emotional/psychological abuse:** using words, actions, or omissions to demean, control, or harm someone emotionally.
- **Gaslighting:** denying your experience or making you doubt your reality.
- **Emotional blackmail:** using threats, guilt, or withdrawal of love to get compliance.
- **Covert/sly abuse:** subtle jabs, "jokes," or micro-attacks that chip away at you over time.
- **Narcissistic manipulation:** exploiting vulnerabilities to maintain control or superiority.

## Signs you're being targeted

- They repeatedly bring up a known hurt to "tease" you or get a reaction.
- They deny hurting you or call you "too sensitive" when you object.
- They frame cruel comments as "just joking" and accuse you of overreacting.
- You feel confused, anxious, shameful, or like you're walking on eggshells.
- The pattern is intentional and repeated, and stops only when you give in.

## Why it's damaging

It attacks your sense of safety and self-worth. Subtle abuse is especially harmful because it's easy to dismiss or rationalize — which means it compounds over time and erodes confidence, boundaries, and mental health.

## What you can do (practical steps)

1. **Trust your experience.** You don't have to justify your feelings. If it feels manipulative, it probably is.
2. **Name it to yourself.** Labeling the behavior (e.g., "That's emotional manipulation") removes some of its power.
3. **Set a clear boundary** and a simple consequence. Examples you can say:

- “Don’t joke about that. It’s not funny to me. If you continue, I’ll leave the conversation.”
  - “When you bring that up to get a rise out of me, I’m ending this interaction.”
4. **Use short scripts** (keep it unemotional):
    - “I don’t accept that. We’re done talking about this.”
    - “That hurt me. Please stop.”
    - If they gaslight: “My experience is valid. I’m not discussing it while you deny what happened.”
  5. **Document patterns.** Keep brief notes or texts showing repeated behavior — this helps you validate what’s happening and is useful if you need outside help.
  6. **Limit contact if needed.** Reduce exposure, mute, block, or go low/no contact when possible.
  7. **Get support.** Talk to trusted friends, family, or a therapist. A neutral professional can help you assess patterns and safety.
  8. **Plan for safety.** If the person escalates or you feel threatened, remove yourself and reach out to emergency services or local support hotlines.

### **If the behavior is severe**

If the manipulation is part of ongoing control, isolation, threats, stalking, or any physical intimidation — treat it as abusive and seek help from local domestic violence services, a therapist, or authorities as appropriate.

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***You are absolutely allowed to protect your emotional well-being.***