Union of Saints, Spectrum of Abuses

SPECTRUM OF ABUSES

VERBAL & PHYSICAL SEXUAL LIFE-EMOTIONAL THREATENING

Less severe More severe

Table of abuses organized on a spectrum from less extreme (though still harmful) to more extreme. This is not meant to minimize the "less extreme" forms—since all abuse is damaging—but rather to show the progression in severity and risk to safety.

Level	Type of Abuse	Examples	Impact / Risk
Mild (but still abusive)	Verbal & Emotional Abuse	Insults, name-calling, belittling, humiliation, guilt-tripping, shaming	Erodes self-esteem, creates fear, emotional scars
Controlling Behaviors	Isolation, monitoring, financial control, restricting access to work or education	Limiting social contacts, controlling money, excessive jealousy	Reduces independence, fosters dependency
Psychological Manipulation	Gaslighting, threats of abandonment, silent treatment	Making someone doubt their reality, constant intimidation	Creates confusion, self-doubt, emotional instability
Harassment & Intimidation	Stalking, following, excessive surveillance,	Constant checking up, veiled threats	Increases fear, sense of being unsafe

Level	Type of Abuse	Examples	Impact / Risk
	threats (without physical violence)		
Property Damage	Destroying possessions, punching walls, slamming doors	. .	Intimidates and signals escalation toward violence
Physical Abuse (Lesser)	Pushing, grabbing, slapping, restraining	Shoving during an argument, blocking escape	Begins physical domination, potential escalation
Physical Abuse (Severe)	Punching, kicking, choking attempts, beating with objects	Repeated hitting, holding down, burning, use of weapons	High injury risk, strong warning sign of escalation
Sexual Abuse	Coercion, unwanted touching, rape	Forcing sex, ignoring consent, pressuring with threats	Deep trauma, violation of bodily autonomy
Life-Threatening Abuse	Strangulation, use of weapons, attempted murder	Choking until unconscious, threatening or attacking with knife/gun	Extremely high lethality risk, often predictor of homicide

Note:

- Abuse often escalates over time, starting with verbal/emotional forms before progressing to physical or life-threatening violence.
- **Strangulation** is considered *one of the most extreme and dangerous forms of abuse*, because it's strongly correlated with later homicide in abusive relationships.