

# 13 Reasons Why People Abuse

Hands down, the number one question I get asked in therapy is Why would they do this? Mostly, this stems from a person who has been abused and is trying desperately to understand why their attacker is abusive. There are seven forms of abuse: verbal, mental, emotional, physical, sexual, financial, and spiritual. After a person realizes the full scope of their abuse, it is difficult to comprehend why someone would do it.

Please note that this article is not intended to explain, justify, or rationalize abuse. Nor is it designed to gain empathy or sympathy for the abuser. Abuse is wrong all the time in all circumstances. Rather the intent is to shed light on a question that plagues the abused, to gain understanding that all people do not have the same perspective of right and wrong, and to move the healing process further for those who have been damaged.



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Given that, here are some of the reasons a person is abusive:

1. **They have a disorder.** A small number of the population is anti-social personality disorder (sociopath or psychopath) and sadistic. These disorders gain pleasure from seeing others in pain and even more pleasure when they are the ones inflicting the agony. For them, abuse is a means to an end. They abuse others to gain personal pleasure.
2. **They were abused.** Some abusers act out their dysfunctional behavior on others because it was done to them. In a subconscious effort to resolve their own abuse, they do the same to another person. This type of abusive behavior is identical, meaning it matches almost exactly to their childhood experience.
3. **They were abused, part two.** Just like in the previous explanation, they abuse because it was done to them. However, in this case the victim is the opposite. For instance, a boy who is sexually abused by a man might grow up to sexually abuse girls as evidence that they are not homosexual. The reverse can be true as well.
4. **They watched something.** With the advances in technology comes additional exposure at a young age to glorified abuse. Some movies, songs, TV shows, and videos minimize abuse by making fun of it or making it seem normal. A typical example is verbally attacking on another person by name calling or belittling.
5. **They have anger issues.** Uncontrolled and unmanaged rage frequently produces abusive behavior. The source of this anger varies but it is usually tied to a traumatic event. Unresolved trauma sparks anger when triggered by a person, circumstance or place. Because this anger comes out of nowhere, it that much harder to control and manifests abusively.
6. **They grew up with an addict.** An addict blames others for the reason they engage in their destructive behavior. While the victims are often forced to remain silent and acceptant of their behavior. The end result is a lot of pent up anger and abusive behavior. As an adult, the victim subconsciously seeks out others to blame for their actions.
7. **They have control issues.** Some people like to be in charge. In an effort to gain or remain in control of others, they utilize inefficient means of dominance such as bullying or intimidation. While forced control can be quickly executed, it does not have lasting qualities. True leadership is void of abusive techniques.
8. **They dont understand boundaries.** Abusive people tend to lack the understanding of where they end and another person begins. They see their spouse/child/friend as an extension of themselves and therefore that person is not entitled to have any boundaries. The lack of distance means a person is subject to whatever the abuser decides.
9. **They are afraid.** People who do and say things out of fear tend to use their emotions as justification for why another person needs to do what is demanded. It is as if the fear is so important or powerful that nothing else matters except what is needed to subdue it.
10. **They lack empathy.** It is far easier to abuse others when there is no empathy for how the victim might feel. Some types of head trauma, personality disorders, and environmental traumas can cause a person to lack the ability to express empathy.
11. **They have a personality disorder.** Just because a person has a personality disorder does not mean that they will be abusive. However, the lack of an accurate perception of reality greatly contributes to abusive behavior. If a person is unable to see their behavior as abusive, then they will keep doing it.
12. **They are exhausted.** When a person reaches the end of rope, it is not uncommon for them to lash out at whoever is conveniently close. Think of it as a mental breakdown where all the things stuffed inside come pouring out usually in a destructive rather than constructive manner.
13. **They are defensive.** Defense mechanisms such as denial, projection, regression, and suppression are utilized when a person is backed into a corner. Instead of taking space, they come out swinging and retaliate in an abusive manner.

An abusive person may have some or all of these qualities depending on the circumstances. Remember, this is not about justifying their behavior; rather it is about helping victims to understand why a person might be abusive.