



Signs of emotional abuse



Emotional abuse is any type of behaviour that involves emotional or psychological mistreatment of a person. It includes threats of harm or abandonment, enforced social isolation (such as preventing someone from seeing their family or accessing external services, like education), not respecting privacy. Additionally, it can take the form of intimidating, coercing, or threatening someone. It can also be cyber-bullying, or preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs, their expression of choice and opinion, or meaningful activities and stimulation. In relationships, emotional abuse can also include harassing a partner about imagined affairs or other false claims.

Signs of emotional abuse may include:

- Tearfulness and other signs of distress, including anger in some cases.
- Fearfulness or silence when a particular person is around
- Fear
- Depression
- Confusion
- Loss of sleep
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behaviour
- Aggressive shouting causing fear of violence in a public place
- Low self-esteem, or withdrawal or change in the emotional state of the person
- Changes in appetite, or weight loss or gain
- Insomnia

If you recognise any of these signs and are concerned an adult is the victim of abuse, then it's essential you act on your concerns. 'Speaking out' about abuse could save somebody's life. If you are worried that an adult may be at risk of abuse or harm, please contact:



023 8083 3003
southampton.gov.uk/speakout

If there is an immediate threat to their safety, contact the police by calling 999.