Relationship Red Flags (warning signs)

These are characteristics many abusers share. Not all abusers have all of these traits, but more than 3 or 4 may be an indication that there is a serious problem.

1. **Quick involvement**
   They get really serious about the relationship too quickly. They may overwhelm the victim with gifts and attention to pressure them to commit.

2. **Extreme jealousy**
   Abusers may be constantly suspicious, and may accuse the victim of flirting if they talk to anyone. They may check and delete phone numbers, emails, and messages.

3. **Controlling behavior**
   They check up on the victim, and get angry if they can’t reach them. The victim may worry about “getting in trouble” with them.

4. **Use of force during an argument**
   An abuser may use force during arguments, including holding the victim down, physically restraining the victim from leaving the room, and pushing and shoving. For example, an abuser may hold a victim against the wall and say, "You're going to listen to me."

5. **Rigid sex roles**
   Male abusers often expect women to serve and obey them.

6. **Jekyll-and-Hyde personality**
   Explosiveness and mood swings are typical of abusers, and these behaviors are related to other traits such as hypersensitivity. This is a way of controlling the victim by being unpredictable.

7. **Isolation**
   They try to cut the victim off from other people who care about them. They accuse people who are supportive of the victim of causing trouble. They may try to prevent the victim from going to work or school or other events that involve other people and not them.

8. **Past Abuse**
   They previously verbally or physically abused a partner. An abuser may say, "I hit someone in the past, but s/he made me do it." An abusive person who minimizes what happened with a previous partner is likely to be violent with their current partner.

9. **Blame others for their problems**
   They make mistakes and then blame you or others. Someone is always doing them wrong; someone is always out to get them. Or they use alcohol and drugs, then blame the behavior on being drunk or high.

10. **Blame others for their feelings**
    They tell the victim, “You push my buttons!” or “If you would just listen to me, I wouldn’t get so angry!” They don’t take responsibility for themselves and their behavior.

11. **Public display of anger or violence**
    They lose their temper quickly. They may punch walls or drive recklessly when upset. They target the victim with verbal and/or physical violence in a public area or in front of other people.

12. **Cruelty to children or animals**
    They get angry and violent when kids have accidents; they tease younger brothers and sisters until they cry. They punish animals brutally or are insensitive to their pain and suffering.

13. **Pressure to cross boundaries**
    They try to use guilt or “love” to manipulate the victim into doing things they don’t want to do.