

TYPES OF VERBAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

1. **WITHHOLDING:** By withholding, the verbal abuser is saying, “I’ve got something you want and I can withhold it from you, therefore, I am in control.”
2. **COUNTERING:** The abuser will state the opposite opinion from the victim, just to stay in control. The abuser cannot tolerate the victim having a different opinion or her own thoughts. This common type of abuse destroys a relationship because it prevents discussions, denies the victim’s reality, and is a put-down of the partner’s experience.
3. **DISCOUNTING OR MINIMIZING:** Denies the reality and experience of the abuse. Example: After abusing you, abuser says things like “you’re too sensitive”, “you’re making a big deal out of nothing”, or “I didn’t really hurt you, you’re crazy”.
4. **VERBAL ABUSE DISGUISED AS JOKES:** Cuts to the quick. The abuser usually has a look of triumph. Mocks partner’s intellectual abilities, competency, personality or character.
5. **BLOCKING AND DIVERTING:** Prevents conflict resolution. Can be accusatory, switching topics, or diverting partner from issues with accusations and irrelevant comments.
6. **ACCUSING AND BLAMING:** Accuser blames partner for abuser’s own anger, irritation, or insecurity.
7. **JUDGING AND CRITICIZING:** Expressing judgments in a critical way shows the abuser’s lack of acceptance. Uses negative “you” statements, like “*you’re* always....” or “I wouldn’t be angry if only *you* would do...”
8. **TRIVIALIZING:** Making partner’s feelings, actions, perceptions, thoughts, concerns, and opinions less than they are.
9. **UNDERMINING:** Withholds emotional support of partner; erodes partner’s confidence. “You wouldn’t understand.” “What’s the big deal?” “Who asked you?”
10. **THREATENING:** Threats which bring up partner’s deepest fears are used. “Do what I want or I’ll leave/reject you.” “If you leave, I’ll make sure you never see the children again.”
11. **NAME CALLING:** Most obvious and covert form of verbal/emotional abuse.
12. **FORGETTING:** Constantly forgetting interactions which have had a great impact on partner.

Denial and manipulation, like forgetting promises or agreements.

13. **ORDERING:** Denies equality and autonomy of the partner. Treats partner as a servant. Abuser feels entitled to services.
14. **DENIAL OR CRAZY-MAKING:** Insidious because it denies the reality of the partner. “I never said that!”
15. **INVASIVE BEHAVIORS:** Abuser invades partner’s privacy or personal boundaries. Examples: Abuser reads partner’s private diary/journal; won’t allow partner any private time or space.
16. **ANGER:** The underlying, motivating force behind all verbal abuse is ANGER. Both partners are responsible for their own emotions and behaviors. Abuser attempts to make victim feel responsible for abuser’s anger, insecurities, fears. Victim is not responsible for being yelled at, snapped at, raged at, glared at -- despite the abuser’s demands, accusations, and blaming. Within the context of a verbally abusive relationship, the perpetrator’s anger can stem from a general sense of *personal powerlessness* (“I feel powerless, so I’m going to assert control over you in order to feel better about myself”) or from a sense of *privilege or righteousness* (“I have the right to have my needs met regardless of how it impacts you”). The victim/partner is the scapegoat, used to justify the perpetrator’s abuse. The abuser releases tension and reasserts dominance over partner by the use of verbal/emotional abuse.