



Wedding Bells
OR
Warning Bells?

If this is love - why do I feel so bad?



Romance And Love?

A new relationship – you're in love. Emotions of love are strong and sometimes blind us. We believe in the power of love. It is easy to get carried away with our emotions and beliefs about roles in romantic relationships. When that happens we often ignore or deny the warning signs that all is not as it could be. We can easily dismiss "not OK" behaviours, think "they are not always hurtful" because we want to believe in our partner.

Behaviours that seem to show love and care can sometimes change. Early caring can turn into jealousy. Jealousy can become controlling. Women tell us that abusive behaviours get worse as time goes on. Serious abuse and violence become ways to control you.

Women we have worked with have reported that the warning signs were there early in the relationship but they believed their partner would change. They thought their love and care would change their partner.

Self Esteem and Abuse

Self-esteem is the good image of ourselves we get from others. Self-esteem starts in our early experiences as children. But even a strong woman cannot continue to feel good about herself if she is always criticised, put-down and insulted.

We might think that a woman who has good self-esteem wouldn't end up in an abusive relationship. Or she wouldn't continue to put up with abuse. Both these beliefs are not true.

Most women describe their partners as loving and caring when they first met – but then things changed.

So What Is A Respectful Relationship Like?

Many women tell us that they feel more valued and have greater self-esteem where their partner:

- Respects them and values their opinion
- Acknowledges their contribution
- Listens to them and takes them seriously
- Accepts that it is ok to say "no" to things they do not like
- Is willing to compromise when there are differences
- Makes it "ok" for them to make mistakes and learn from them
- Treats them as equals

If this is Love, then why do I feel so bad?

Often the first indication that something is wrong in a relationship is how you feel. Here is a list of some of the ways a woman might feel when they were experiencing disrespectful or abusive behaviours.

Uncomfortable	nervous	tense	guilty	confused
Humiliated	upset	unheard	stressed	
Anxious	inadequate	fearful	watching what you say	

Remember that we all have some basic human rights

- To be safe
- To be treated with respect
- To express and communicate our ideas
- To have our own beliefs (including religious beliefs)
- To think our own thoughts and act on our own consciences

We also have rights in relationships

- The right to say no to any relationship
- The right to have a choice about who we want to spend time with





Effects of Family / Whanau Violence

The effects to family violence are far-reaching, long term and devastating for everyone. The family is the basis of society. Everyone in a family should be respected, cared for, supported and nurtured. When we fulfil our responsibilities to each other, we all feel safe and valued.

Effects on Victims

Hurt to victims may continue long after the abuse has stopped.

Emotional Effects

- Living in fear
- Inability to trust
- Despair & hopelessness
- Hiding feelings
- Loss of confidence
- Feeling alone
- Self-blame

Social Effects (short term / long term)

- Isolation from friends & family
- Education interrupted
- Unable to work
- Drug & alcohol abuse
- May need welfare

Physical Effects

- Damaged eyesight, hearing, speech, memory. Coordination or mobility
- Harm to unborn child / miscarriage
- Death

Psychological Effects (serious / long term harm)

- Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, phobias
- Eating disorders
- Diminished ability to learn or make decisions
- Self-blame
- Suicide may result

Effects of Family / Whanau Violence on Children

Children living in situations of family violence are likely to suffer serious emotional harm. They are also likely to suffer psychological neglect and physical abuse. Living with the demands of a violent partner makes parenting very difficult.

Children who are involved in or witness violence in their homes may:

- Be extremely fearful, have nightmares
- Show signs of nervousness or shyness
- Show destructive behaviours, tantrums, or physical aggression
- Be easily distracted, lack concentration for learning or play
- Become withdrawn, uncommunicative, isolated and block or hide feelings
- Find it difficult to trust others and make friends
- Get sick often, lack appetite, not want to eat
- Be uncooperative, unruly, or angry
- Be unhappy, worried, anxious, lack enjoyment of life
- Demand excessive amounts of attention
- Be unable to confide in, or trust, parents or adults

These behaviours describe possible effects—they don't necessarily indicate violence.

Physical damage to children can be long-term or permanent. Hearing, sight, speech, brain function and mobility can be impaired through shaking, blows, kicking. This can also affect the child's normal physical development.

Every year children die from injuries inflicted by a member of the family.





Warning Signs In Your Relationship

Warning Signs

Your partner

- Is jealous and doesn't like you talking to other people
- Criticises your friends and wants you to stop seeing them
- Wants to know where you are and who you are with all the time
- Tries to control your contact with your family
- Criticises what you say, do and wear
- Ignores and neglects you
- Expects sex on demand.

If the above statements apply, then your partner is attempting to control your life. If you allow this to continue, you will become isolated and more dependent on him.

Danger Zone

Your partner

- Tries to embarrass you in front of friends and family
- Says a "your money is ours and mine is my own"
- Embarrasses you and makes you feel stupid
- Makes you keep secrets about the violence or abuse
- Blames you for things that go wrong
- Makes jokes which put you and other women down
- Calls you fat, lazy, stupid, ugly, slut – hurts your feelings and makes you feel bad
- Ignores your ideas and your needs and preferences

If any of these are true for you, then your partner is putting you down. They are trying to make you feel less confident and less in control.

Hazard Lights

Your partner

- Drives too fast or does other dangerous things which scare you
- Goes too far when you're playing around, hurts you, holds you down to make you feel helpless and overpowered
- Gets angry or violent when drinking or using drugs
- Threatens to break your belongings or destroy your property
- Threatens to hit you, hurt your friends, family or pets
- Threatens to leave you or commit suicide
- Forces you into unwanted sexual acts using threat, guilt or force
- Hits or physically abuses you – even if he feels sorry afterwards

Generational Effects Of Violence

Children may believe that

- It's normal for men to hit and abuse women
- Violence is the way to get others to do what you want
- It's normal for women to accept abuse violence from their partners





If you are reading this book and think some of this may apply to you - there are people who can help and support you:

If you are in immediate danger, **call the Police 111**

North Harbour Living without Violence: (09) 489 3770 or www.livingwithoutviolence.org.nz

Women's Refuge Crisis line: 0800 REFUGE or 0800 733 843

www.womensrefuge.org.nz

North Shore Hospital: (09) 486 8900

Shine 0508 744 633

Shakti Asian Women's Centre 0800 742 584

Family Violence Advice

Rodney /Hibiscus Coast 0800 321 361 (24/7)

North Shore 0508 744 633

West Auckland 836 1987 / 027 492 9940

To report breaches of protection orders: 489 4008

For non-urgent help, you will find support at:

Family Court: (09) 916 9046

North Shore District Court Victims Advisor: (09) 916 5739

Other websites that can help:

www.expect-respect.org.nz. A New Zealand site for younger women written by Pru Fisher for Safer Families North Shore.



From Zonta Auckland North Shore
www.zans.mywebsite.net.nz

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