

## Warning Signs of Abusers

*There is no way to spot an abuser in a crowd, but most abusers share common characteristics. Some of the subtle warning signs include:*

- They insist on **moving too quickly** into a relationship. They fall in love quickly and want an exclusive relationship.
- They are charming and shower you with constant love and attention. They seem **too good to be true**.
- They **monopolize your time** without regard to what you want to do under the pretext of love.
- Their love and **“concern” for your welfare** extends to knowing every detail of where you are, when you get home, who you are with.
- They do not take responsibility for their actions and **blame others** (women, other ethnic groups, co-workers...) for everything that has gone wrong in their lives.

*Other, more obvious signs which may appear further into the relationship:*

- They are extremely **jealous**. May accuse you of flirting or having affairs.
- They **try to isolate you** – discourage you from seeing or contacting your friends and family. They try to get you to stop working, going to school or participating in favorite activities.
- They are very **controlling** and begin to try to monitor everything you do: where you go, what you wear, who you call...
- They think **you are their property** and believe it is your responsibility to meet their needs – meals on time, sex on demand – while they can do whatever they wish, ignoring your desires.
- They exhibit a “playful” use of **force during sex**.
- They have a **negative attitude toward women**, calling them names or speaking disrespectfully of past partners. They may “compliment” you by saying you are unlike other women.
- They **criticize or devalue you**, your work, interests, friends and family – sometimes in public.
- They have **two personalities** – a public one where they may go out of their way to impress people and be liked and the private one where it is your job to please them.
- They exhibit anger and **aggressiveness toward others**: road rage, fights at work or bars, cruelty toward animals or children.
- They **break or throw things** when angry.
- They are loving or **passionate after an argument**, and pressure you for sex; or they act like nothing happened and won't discuss it.

***Be aware! Look for the red flags of abusive behavior!***