



Dad Central

Facts for Fathers

Recognizing Unhealthy & Abusive Relationships

Arguments and disagreements are part of every relationship. However, some kinds of conflict are damaging and can wear down and harm a relationship that was once fresh and strong.

Research has shown that couples are more likely to divorce

when their conflicts regularly include any of the following four negative communication styles:

Criticism

Attacking your partners' personality or character, rather than focusing on the behaviour that is bothering you.

Contempt


Tearing down, insulting, or disrespecting your partner.

Defensiveness

Responding to problems with denial, excuses, or counter-attacks.

Stonewalling

Shutting down, avoiding, or refusing to be part of discussions of problems.



If you add any of the following, you have a recipe for conflict that is not only damaging, but also abusive:

Suspicion, jealousy or distrust

Feeling like you need to know your partner's whereabouts and activities when you're not around, monitoring her actions and her friends, not trusting her sexual fidelity.

Intimidation

Having arguments that end because you have intimidated or hurt your partner – for example, yelled very loudly, broken something, or said something that was very hurtful.

Control

Being in a relationship where one person makes most or all the important decisions about how you make and spend your money, who you hang out with, or how you raise your children.

Alcohol or drugs

Things tend to get worse when you or your partner's use of alcohol or drugs is the source of conflict or when you get in arguments while drinking or using.

If any of these troubles are part of your relationship with your partner, it is time to **take action.**

Talk with each other and try to build trust, friendship, and intimacy. Reach out to other couples, supportive family members or therapists to stop the problems before they get worse.



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Want to know more?

Dad Central Ontario has booklets and other resources for fathers.

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