



Vesta Resource Guide

Muskoka

Is There A Problem?



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Is There A Problem?

It wasn't anything you could put your finger on. She was telling you a story, almost like it was a joke, but something in her tone caught your attention and made your stomach knot up.

There's something wrong here.

You don't know what it is exactly and you definitely can't just ask, *hey hun, is everything okay? Is he hurting you?*

How do we know if there's a problem?

There are signs. Gender-based violence follows pretty standard patterns because abuse isn't about love or jealousy. It's always about power and control.



Signs to Look Out For

Here are the 10 most common signs* to keep your eyes open for:

1. Her boyfriend/husband/partner is just plain mean. He humiliates her, makes fun of how she dresses, and is super harsh in front of everyone. He says he's just joking but it doesn't feel like teasing and you can see she's being hurt by his words. You can only imagine what he must say to her when there's no one around.

2. She's told you stories about having to have sex just to make him happy. He's pressuring her into doing things that she doesn't like and/or are painful. She's making it seem like a normal part of a relationship, the normal kind of compromises, but something sounds weird and you suspect that she's not telling you the worst parts.



*Source:

https://canadianwomen.org/blog/warning-signs-abusive-relationship/?gclid=CjwKCAjw57b3BRBIeIwA1lmytv3K10reCVIY2eCzAMc_u2BF2MgrS_q1RL_9WkwpxFvpor0s_QFk8txoC8dlQAvD_BwE

Signs to Look Out For

3. You know she's doing things she doesn't want to do, like drugs and stealing, just to make him happy.

4. He's always texting, calling, and showing up uninvited.

He has to know where she is all the time. Sometimes he doesn't let her leave the house and will even hide her purse. You wonder if he's going through her phone and breaking into her Facebook. He tells her who she can be friends with and who she can't talk to.

5. She doesn't control her own money. He makes her work, or refuses to let her work. And he controls all the money and spending. She can't make any decisions around money without him and he keeps their financial situation a secret from her. You suspect he's stolen money from her.

6. He's used physical force (push, punch, slap, choke, shake, used objects/weapons) and you know he's hurt other people (children, pets, family members, friends, neighbours). He's even destroyed her stuff. Her stories make it clear that he's threatening violence, and sometimes those threats aren't words – he just glares and does something to make sure she knows he can hurt her and others.



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7. He's manipulating her with religion and using it to justify hurting her. And she's being forced to practice his religion (or he's not letting her practice her religion).

8. When she called him on his behaviour he told her it was because he loved her so much. He said it would never happen again. It was better for a little while but then the same behaviours started again.

9. When she called him on his behaviour he blamed her and said it was all her fault. He said she made him act like this.

10. She's told him she was going to leave and he threatened to kill himself (or he threatened to kill her).

Abuse and gender-based violence doesn't always start with major physical violence. It often begins with emotional, sexual, financial or spiritual abuse that slowly cuts her down, makes her feel alone, and like no one else will love her.

She may even believe that this is all her fault and feel too ashamed to talk about it. Even with you. Not every situation will show each of these 10 signs, but the pattern of abuse from words to actions will be similar.



**BE READY WHEN SHE
NEEDS YOU.**

#AskingForAFriend



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