



MEMORANDUM

To: Students
From: Secure Higher Ed LLC Staff
Re: Recognizing an Abusive Relationship
Date: April 20, 2015

Abusive relationships happen to college and even high school students, both male and female. In some cases, these relationships have fatal consequences. The good news is that high school and college students are well-positioned to end these relationships before they turn violent. The key is recognizing the signs that your partner will eventually turn to violence.

Obviously, if someone early in a relationship touches you in a violent manner, you should at a minimum end the relationship. Immediate physical violence in a relationship, however, is atypical. Abuse is often preceded by a campaign to condition the victim for later abuse. Some of the signs of this campaign include:

- ✓ Isolating you from friends, family, and others or discouraging you from interacting with them
- ✓ Acting jealous
- ✓ Seeking to control what you do and when you do it
- ✓ Putting you down, telling you that you cannot do anything right, belittling you, and/or convincing you that you are incompetent
- ✓ Acting like your memory of events is poor or things you claim to have happened did not happen a/k/a “gaslighting” (the name comes from the classic play *Gaslight*, where the husband tried to convince the wife she was crazy by dimming the gas lights and acting like she was insane when she noticed it)
- ✓ Pressuring you sexually or to take drugs or use alcohol
- ✓ Intimidating you with looks, statements, or weapons
- ✓ Threatening to damage your property or hurt those you love such as pets, friends, or relatives
- ✓ Making you financially dependent on them through discouraging you from working, controlling all the finances, not telling you where assets are kept, or other means

Abusers may attempt to justify these actions as “wanting to just be with you”, “wanting to take care of you”, or “loving you too much”. The truth, however, is that none of these actions are healthy in a relationship, and may well be the precursor to and even worse relationship involving physical abuse.