



DANGER SIGNALS: THE LISTS

DANGER SIGNALS + ISOLATION = HIGH RISK

1. ISOLATION -- THE SETTING FOR ABUSE

Abusers use many methods to create and enforce isolation, as part of their planning. Isolation is relational; it is a situation in which we are "set apart," when others can't see us or contact us, or when we can't be heard. Isolation can exist in a one-on-one situation or when we are out-numbered. It happens when our resources and social contacts are limited, and can occur emotionally, physically, financially, or politically.

2. SPACE -- DISRESPECTFUL, NON-CONTACT BEHAVIOR

Patterns of controlling behavior often have underlying expectations of compliance and are built into complex systems of dominance, including financial controls and social restrictions. Examples of non-verbal behavior: staring, gestures, "peeping," ignoring and refusal to communicate, mad-dogging and inappropriate emotions with eye contact, standing or sitting too closely, invasive movements, stalking behaviors, invasion of privacy (your room, desk, home, notebooks, letters, pc files, journal or diary, eavesdropping), offensive pictures or calendars, use of drugs/alcohol, ETC.

3. WORD -- INAPPROPRIATE SPEECH AND VERBAL MESSAGES

Inappropriate tone of voice (patronizing, sarcastic, angry, "dripping with venom," autocratic or snobbish), undermining and insults, threats and name-calling, belittling, mimicking or mocking, shaming or embarrassing, teasing, blaming, guilt-tripping, racist, classist, sexist, homophobic remarks, gossip and third-person remarks (talking to others about you), patterns or habits of verbal manipulation, semantics of blaming, ETC.

4. TOUCH -- UNWELCOME PHYSICAL CONTACT (OPEN OR SECRET)

Touch is one of the most powerful, necessary, and wonderful behaviors between humans. Unwelcome touch is not just a subtle error or a random expression of meanness. Because it implies intimacy, it is a HUGE trigger whenever it occurs, at any age. Especially for youth, this is extremely problematic; there can be a biological pleasure response, even during abuse. It also triggers over-reaction, either inappropriate aggression or passive self-blame. Identifying ALL unwelcome touch as inappropriate behavior allows us to detect intent more quickly and act to prevent further aggression. When unwelcome touch is genuinely accidental, it is simple to resolve when we stand up for our boundaries.

Examples: crowding, bumping, pinching, patting, poking, grabbing, stroking, massaging, brushing up against, picking up, pulling or pushing, throwing down/tackling, bear-hugging, cornering, hugging, kissing, knuckle-rubs, slapping, wrestling, holding too tightly or pinning, hitting, kicking, throwing objects, damaging property, harming animals, ETC.

A GOOD SOCIAL NETWORK IS A PREVENTION FACTOR

Females with a wider and more trusted social network are safer.

**Expand your social circles. Extend your friendship
and support to other girls and women.**