



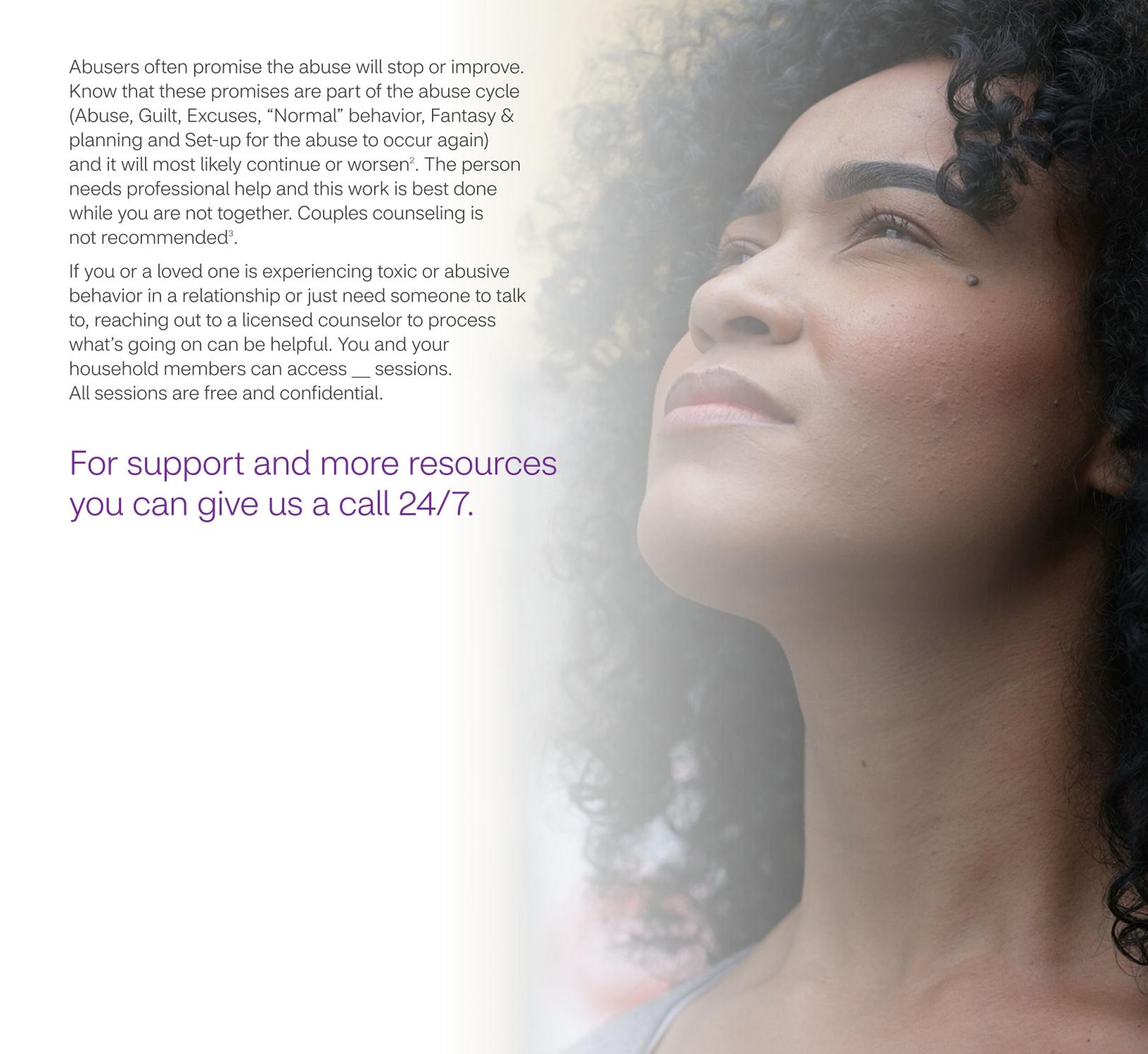
Early warning signs of an abusive relationship

Have you ever been blindsided in a relationship? It seemed positive in the beginning but then turned into something toxic or abusive. If so, you're not alone. Learning warning signs of an abusive relationship can help you make healthy decisions about your relationships and steer clear of danger.

Here are some common behaviors that abusers use that can act as a red flag for you when you notice them taking place¹.

- **Clingy behavior.** You just met and you've already received several texts, calls, and been asked to commit to several dates because they "miss you" or "can't stand to be apart from you." In a nutshell, they do too much, way too soon.
- **Isolate you from friends and family.** They want you all to themselves.
- **They don't respect your boundaries.** Behavior like showing up uninvited to where you are hanging out, or not knocking when entering your home or office. In general, just showing a complete lack of respect for what you're doing and it feels invasive to you.
- **They compliment you but also put you down at the same time.** This is a tactic used to confuse you. They act like they are being loving but you end up feeling bad. This breaks an individual down over time and can contribute to low self-esteem.
- **They often are unable to say they are sorry without putting the blame on you or someone else.** They may say, "look what you made me do!" or "I'm sorry you feel that way."
- **Threatening harm** to self or others if you break up with them.
- **Controlling behavior.** They may make decisions for you without asking like ordering your meal for you or telling you what you're going to do. You may start to question your ability to make "good" decisions on your own because they become the one who makes the decisions.
- **Physical aggression and unpredictable mood swings.** One minute they are fine and the next you are in a fight. They may lack self-control and fly off the handle with anger quickly when dealing with everyday situations.

¹Safe Steps. [Some common early warning signs of abuse](#). Accessed September 2022.



Abusers often promise the abuse will stop or improve. Know that these promises are part of the abuse cycle (Abuse, Guilt, Excuses, “Normal” behavior, Fantasy & planning and Set-up for the abuse to occur again) and it will most likely continue or worsen². The person needs professional help and this work is best done while you are not together. Couples counseling is not recommended³.

If you or a loved one is experiencing toxic or abusive behavior in a relationship or just need someone to talk to, reaching out to a licensed counselor to process what’s going on can be helpful. You and your household members can access __ sessions. All sessions are free and confidential.

For support and more resources
you can give us a call 24/7.

²Domestic Violence and Abuse. HelpGuide.Org. Accessed September 2022.

³National Domestic Violence Hotline. [Should I Go To Couples Therapy With My Abusive Partner?](#) Accessed September 2022.

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