

## How do I know that I am a Batterer

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It is a widely held belief that battering is always physical. In order to recognize that we are batterers, we first need to widen our understanding of what we mean by domestic violence. It can include the following:

1. **Physical:** punching, kicking, denying sleep, biting, choking, pulling hair, denying good nutrition or medical care; forced sexual activity.
2. **Emotional:** use of derogatory or degrading names; threats of physical abuse; denial of the victim's feelings and abilities; blaming the victim for the violence; threatening to abuse the children; accusations of promiscuity, etc.
3. **Material:** keeping the victim economically dependent; destruction, misuse, theft or extortion of another person's money, property or possessions.
4. **Social:** teaching that women are not as capable or important as men and need to be protected and controlled; isolation or denial of any freedom; driving away friends and family.

Understanding the scope of domestic violence makes it easier for us to identify the characteristics or behavior in us that can be classified as abusive behavior. No list of characteristic behavior can ever be complete or include all the nuances of individual attitudes and behavior. If we are honest, however, in our desire to know if we are batterers, the following list of behaviors will be helpful:

1. We have unrealistic attitudes. We have rigid ideas of what we expect of ourselves as men and what we expect of our partners.
2. We try to always be in control. We fail to realize that our partner experiences us as frightening and intimidating.
3. We become explosive. When we try to control others, we lose control over ourselves and this results in abusively explosive behavior.
4. We hide our feelings. We either hide our feelings or are totally unaware of them. We think this is manly, but buried feelings often build up and surface as anger at our partners.
5. We are poor communicators. We either don't respond or we come across as too strong.
6. We don't listen. We don't listen to our partner's feelings, ideas, and opinions. We tend to tell our partners how they are thinking and feeling.
7. Fear of intimacy. We see intimacy as a threat when we allow someone to get too close to our real feelings.

If you recognize yourself in any of the above, please seek help before the situation escalates and is beyond repair. Contact "Men Stopping Violence" at [www.menstoppingviolence.org](http://www.menstoppingviolence.org) or call the national domestic violence hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE to find resources in your community.