

Safety in an Emotionally Abusive Relationship: Checklist

At Home

If, at any time you feel unsafe or in danger at home, you should get away from the situation and call the police.

Your personal safety is ALWAYS your priority so, if necessary, leave the premises.

What To Do

1. Go Somewhere Safe

Find a safe, lockable room in your residence (bedroom or bathroom)

or

Go to a separate location (trusted friend's house ... by prior agreement).

2. Call the Police

This may not be necessary, but it is always a good idea to inform them if you feel unsafe or in danger.

If you are **regularly** in a situation where you are being threatened, controlled or abused, have the following prepared for an emergency departure.

Have Ready

An overnight bag packed and hidden, including:

- Change of clothes and toiletries.
- Savings account documents (passbooks, statements).
- Passport, driving licence, address books.
- Spare cash.

Extra Safety Measures

Always ensure that your:

- Emergency contact numbers are safely stored with a trusted friend.
- Mobile phone is with you.
- Personal information is protected (secure passwords/safe storage).

This may seem extreme, but abuse can escalate rapidly, especially in those with poorly developed or volatile emotions, like narcissists.

Escape may need to be quick!

At Work

If you encounter abuse or feel unsafe at work, there are usually more options to choose from. You certainly should NOT have to handle it alone.

What To Do

1. Find Somewhere Safe that You are Not Alone

Abuse usually happens away from other people in secluded or less popular areas. Placing yourself amongst other people is likely to stop the behaviour immediately.

- If you are in an office, or a room without windows, simply leave the room without explanation or with minimal interaction, like, “Excuse me.”
- In some cases, you may be able to walk to another building or populated area, like Reception.
- If no communal space is readily accessible, retreat to the toilets and lock yourself in a cubicle.
- The idea is to put space between yourself and the person acting inappropriately.

2. Report the Incident

Companies are required to have procedures in place to ensure the safety of their employees.

- In some cases, such as with a colleague, it may be possible to discuss the issue directly with them to ensure that misunderstandings on both sides are resolved. If that does not work, it may be possible to include a mutually trusted third party as adjudicator, to resolve the situation.
- If that does not work, or is not possible, the first line of reporting is usually the person responsible for managing the suspected abuser. This may include speaking to a member of staff at ‘Head Office’ if it exists.
- If this is not possible (such a person does not exist) or in appropriate (there is a conflict of interest for the person to whom you should report the incident), it is worth finding a member of management in another department, or an HR manager (or person responsible for managing HR on behalf of the company).
- Once you have made your report, the company’s internal procedures should dictate the next steps to take to achieve resolution.
- If you are unhappy about action taken (or lack of it) you can consult with an independent advisor.

For Ongoing Safety Also Consider

Emotional abuse is usually far more subtle than other forms, so it may not be appropriate to report a first instance. HOWEVER, there are steps that you can take to manage the abuse and control it.

- Keep written records of interactions with the person concerned, including date, time and nature of incident.
- Sometimes it can help to let the other person know that you are recording the meeting for later reference and to do so on a 'phone. This will help to keep the situation under control (an abuser is unlikely to say anything that may be recorded).
- Communicate with the person only when needed. Keep all interactions in writing wherever possible. If something is agreed verbally, send an email confirming what was agreed, responsibilities and timelines. If appropriate, copy in another team member for accountability purposes.
- Keep all personal records away from the workplace or securely locked in a safe and secure place.
- Try to keep any face-to-face interaction in busy or communal settings and places with an easy exit.

Your own safety and sanity are your prime concerns. Take whatever action is necessary to protect and preserve these.