

# THE MEND PROJECT

educate. equip. restore.

## **Denial:**

A fundamental refusal to accept responsibility by living in a false reality.

**Don't Even kNow I'm A Liar**

## **Dismissivism:**

With a wave of the hand, getting rid of the other's value and what they hold dear.

## **Magical Thinking:**

Believing a perpetrator's problems will go away with an apology when it will take much more work than that.

## **Pathologizing:**

Making the victim the problem by inflating their expression of a problem, which is actually caused by the perpetrator in the first place.

## **Playing the Victim:**

Using language or defeatist posture, such as pouting, to avoid accountability and responsibility.

## **Entitlement:**

Unrealistic demands that one is deserving of preferential treatment or double standards.

## **Joking:**

"That was just a joke" can be the first sign of an abusive relationship.

## **Gaslighting:**

Altering or denying a shared reality so that victims feel they are wrong in their perceptions and wrong in their experience.

## **All or Nothing:**

Black and white thinking is one method used to divert the focus in order to disarm the victim.

## **Catastrophizing:**

Creating fear and negative dependence in the victim and blowing things out of proportion.

## **Creating a Cloud of Confusion:**

Telling false and grandiose stories to third parties in order to undermine objectively and manipulate the end result or outcome.

## **Countering**

Doing the opposite when receiving a reasonable request or desire for connection and reciprocity.

## **Lying:**

Either conscious or unconscious, it is the withholding or alteration of truth with blatant disregard.

## **Power-play / Power Over:**

Using any means necessary to make the other emotionally less deserving, impotent and powerless.

## **Reductionism:**

To strip the other's ideas, expressions, or actions of value. This may also take the form of minimizing the perpetrator's culpability.

## **Sanitization:**

To normalize or make artificially acceptable or good.

## **Grandiosity:**

Inflating one's value to diminish the other's.

## **Rationalization/ Excuse Making:**

Goes hand in hand with scapegoating and reverse blaming.

## **Disavowal:**

The belittling and devaluing of the importance of one's abusive behavior.



## **Blaming & Reverse Blaming:**

In blaming, issues are always one-sided or reversed with the problem being laid at the victim's feet.

## **False Accusations:**

An unexpected negative lie told to or about the partner. False accusations often lead to Scapegoating and Gaslighting.

## **Retaliation:**

Instead of problem solving, deliberate "payback" for imagined harm. This can be expressed in aggressive or passive-aggressive behaviors.

## **Scapegoating:**

Creating scenarios, mischaracterizing facts in order to confuse and turn consequences against another so the victim is viewed as guilty or forced to take on the responsibility for the problem; the victim is a victim twice, first by being made the brunt of the situation and second by then being made to bear resulting shame or punishment.

## **Withholding:**

One of the most toxic forms of abuse. A refusal to communicate, listen or rejoice in one's good fortune.

## **Broken Promises:**

Making promises to do certain things or to change, then denying ever making them or refusing to keep them, or saying they forgot.

## **Deflection:**

Defensively refusing to authentically communicate, changing the topic or inventing false arguments.

## **Minimization:**

Abusive belittling of the victim's perspective. The intention is to make what the victim values unimportant, and therefore, kill confidence, creativity, and individuality.

## **Crazy Making Behaviors:**

Intentional distortions of reality for the purpose of making the victim feel confused. A "cousin" of gaslighting.

## **Refusal To Take Responsibility:**

Almost all abusive behaviors are a measure to negate responsibility for one's actions, avoid being seen, divert accountability, or do the hard work of changing.

## **Undermining:**

Undermining is a sneaky way to squelch joy, effort, creativity, or ideas that could bring positive attention to the victim.

## **Cover-ups:**

Doing a molehill of good to cover up a mountain of bad. For example, volunteering in the community or giving gifts.

## **Faux Confusion/ Abusive Forgetting:**

A form of manipulation. They may appear confused or if it is convenient to forget, they forget.

## **Partial Confessions To Distract From The Real Issue:**

A way to distract or gain favor from the victim, an accountability partner, or social circle and protecting oneself from actual consequences.

