

THE MEND PROJECT

educate. equip. restore.

Denial:

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

Dismissing:

To diminish the victim's value and all they hold dear with the wave of a hand.

Magical Thinking:

Believing the abuser's problems will go away with apologies or promises alone when much more work is required from the abuser to change.

Pathologizing:

Using psychological terminology to label and mischaracterize the victim in order to place them in a down-graded position. "You're psychotic" or "You're a narcissist."

Playing the Victim:

When the victim confronts the abusive behavior, the abuser takes the position of being offended and slighted. DARVO is the acronym for deny, attack, and reverse victim and offender.

Entitlement:

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

Weaponized Joking:

Saying mean things at the other person's expense and using blame-shifting to deflect. "Stop being so sensitive. It was just a joke!"

Gaslighting:

The abuser repeatedly alters or denies a shared reality to make the victim question their sanity, perceptions, memories, or experiences.

All or Nothing:

Using black-and-white thinking to wrongly judge the victim or divert focus from the abuser's destructive behavior.

Catastrophizing:

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

Rationalization:

To justify destructive behaviors or attitudes with seemingly logical reasons or excuses.

Countering:

Doing the opposite when a victim makes a reasonable request or shares a concern.

Lying:

To confuse the victim or shift blame, the abuser alters or withholds the truth with blatant disregard.

Power-play / Power Over:

Using any means necessary to power over the victim and make them feel unimportant, impotent, and less deserving.

Reductionism:

To strip the victim's ideas, expressions, or actions of value and minimize the abuser's culpability.

Sanitization:

To avoid personal responsibility, the abuser tries to normalize their abuse and convince the victim or others that their behavior is harmless.

Grandiosity:

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

Creating a Cloud of Confusion:

Telling false or grandiose stories to third parties in order to undermine and manipulate the end result or outcome, usually at the expense of the victim.



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themendproject.com
info@themendproject.com

Blame-Shifting:

The abuser habitually places the full responsibility of a problem onto the victim by manipulating the truth.

False Accusations:

Stating a negative lie about the other to place them on the defensive and divert focus from the abuser's destructive behavior.

Retaliation:

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

Scapegoating:

Creating scenarios where facts are mischaracterized to confuse others. This causes the victim to be viewed as guilty and forced to bear the responsibility for the problem. The victim is victimized twice: first, being made the brunt of the situation and, second, being made to bear the resulting shame or punishment.

Disavowal:

Reducing, devaluing, and denying the impact of one's abusive behavior.

Withholding:

Refusing to communicate, listen, or rejoice in one's good fortune as a form of punishment. One of the most toxic forms of abuse.

Broken Promises:

The abuser promises to change their behavior or do better, then denies ever making those promises, refuses to keep them, or says they forgot.

Deflection:

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

Minimization:

To belittle the victim's perspective by intentionally devaluing what's important to them, thereby killing their confidence, creativity, and individuality.

Crazy Making Behaviors:

Passive-aggressive statements or actions to counter, resist, or retaliate, causing the victim significant confusion.

Refusal To Take Responsibility:

To negate or greatly reduce responsibility for one's actions and avoid the hard work required for change.

Undermining:

Criticizing or squelching joy, effort, creativity, or ideas that could bring positive attention to the victim.

Cover-ups:

Attempting to prevent people from discovering the truth about a person's behavior or actions. For example, volunteering in the community or giving gifts to cover up destructive behavior behind closed doors.

Faux Confusion/ Abusive Forgetting:

A form of manipulation where the abuser pretends to be confused or conveniently forgets.

Partial Confessions To Distract From The Real Issue:

Providing half-apologies to the victim, an accountability partner, or a social circle in order to distract or reduce responsibility for the full problem.

