



# 2GetHelp Wellness Center

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## ABUSE INDICATORS

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Listed below are some characteristics you might experience if you have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused. No person will experience all the indicators. Just because you may have some or many of the characteristics does not mean you have been molested. The symptoms you are experiencing may mean you received poor parenting or were raised in a dysfunctional home. Carefully read over the list. If you think you may have been molested, or if any of these symptoms are causing problems, be sure to talk over your feelings and concerns with one of our therapists.

1. \_\_\_ Fear of being alone in the dark, sleeping alone; nightmares, night terrors (especially of pursuit, threat, entrapment)
2. \_\_\_ Swallowing and gagging sensitivity; repugnance to water on one's face when bathing or swimming (suffocation feelings)
3. \_\_\_ Alienation from the body, not at home in own body; failure to heed body signals or take care of one's body; poor body image; manipulating body size to avoid sexual attention
4. \_\_\_ Gastrointestinal problems; gynecological disorders, including frequent vaginal infections
5. \_\_\_ Wearing a lot of clothing, even in summer; baggy clothes; failure to remove clothing even when appropriate to do so, while swimming, bathing, sleeping; extreme requirement for privacy when using bathroom
6. \_\_\_ Eating disorders, drug or alcohol abuse; other addictions; compulsive behaviors
7. \_\_\_ Self-destructiveness; skin carving; self-abuse
8. \_\_\_ Panic attacks, with need to be in control
9. \_\_\_ Need to be invisible, perfect, or perfectly bad
10. \_\_\_ Suicidal thoughts, attempts, obsession, including "passive suicide"
11. \_\_\_ Depression, sometimes paralyzing; seemingly baseless crying
12. \_\_\_ Anger issues; inability to recognize, own or express anger; fear of actual or imagined rage; constant anger; intense hostility toward entire gender or ethnic group of the abuser
13. \_\_\_ Splitting (depersonalization); going into shock, shutdown; constantly in crisis; a stressful situation always is a crisis; psychic numbing; physical pain or numbness associated with a particular memory, emotion (i.e. anger) or situation (i.e. sex)
14. \_\_\_ Rigid control of one's thought process; humorlessness or extreme solemnity
15. \_\_\_ Childhood hiding, hanging on, cowering in corners (security-seeking behaviors); adult nervousness over being watched or surprised; feeling watched; startled response
16. \_\_\_ Trust issues; inability to trust; total trust; trusting indiscriminately
17. \_\_\_ Going to the extreme: high risk-taking, "daring the fates"; inability to take risks
18. \_\_\_ Boundary issues; control, power, territorial issues; fear of losing control; obsessive/compulsive behaviors, attempting to control things that don't matter just to control something
19. \_\_\_ Guilt, shame; low self-esteem, feeling worthless; high appreciation of small favors by others
20. \_\_\_ Pattern of being a victim, victimizing or punishing oneself after being victimized by others, especially sexually for women; for men, sexual domination, sexual conquests

21. \_\_\_ Feeling demand to “produce & be loved”; instinctively knowing and doing what the other person needs or wants; relationships mean big trade-offs, love was taken, not given
22. \_\_\_ Abandonment issues, jealousy, manipulation, fear of being alone
23. \_\_\_ Blocking out some period of early years, especially age 1-12, or a specific person or place
24. \_\_\_ Feeling of carrying an awful secret; urge to tell, fear of its being revealed; certainty that no one will listen; being generally secretive; feeling “marked”, the “scarlet letter”
25. \_\_\_ Feeling crazy; feeling different; feeling oneself to be unreal and everyone else to be real, or vice versa; creating fantasy worlds, relationships, or identities, especially for women: imagining or wished self to be male (i.e. not a victim)
26. \_\_\_ Denial, no awareness at all; repression of memories; pretending; minimizing “it wasn’t that bad”; having dreams of memories “maybe it’s my imagination”; strong, deep, “inappropriate” negative reactions to a person, place or event: “Sensory flashes” (i.e. a light, place, physical feeling) without a sense of their meaning; remembering the surroundings, but not the event
27. \_\_\_ Sexual issues: sex feels “dirty”; aversion to being touched, especially in gynecological exam; strong aversion to, or need for, particular sex acts; feeling betrayed by one’s body; trouble integrating sexuality and emotionality; confusion of affection; sex dominance, aggression, and violence; having to pursue power in sexual arena, which is actually sexual acting out (self-abuse & manipulation, especially among women; abuse of others, especially among men); compulsively “seductive” or compulsively asexual; must be sexual aggressor; impersonal, “promiscuous” sex with strangers, concurrent with inability to have sex in intimate relationship (conflict between sex & caring); prostitute, stripper, “sex symbol”, porn actress; sexual acting out to meet anger or revenge needs; “sexaholism”; avoidance; shutdown; crying after orgasm; all pursuit feels like violation; sexualizing of meaningful relationships; erotic response to abuse or anger, sexual fantasies of dominance or rape; revulsion to or fear of opposite sex relationships
28. \_\_\_ Pattern of ambivalent or intensely conflictive relationships, intimacy is a problem; focus shifted from incest issues
29. \_\_\_ Avoidance of mirrors (connected with invisibility, shame/self-esteem issues, distrust of perceived body image)
30. \_\_\_ Desire to change one’s name to disassociate from the perpetrator or to take control through self-labeling
31. \_\_\_ Limited tolerance for happiness; active withdrawal from happiness, reluctance to trust happiness
32. \_\_\_ Aversion to making noise, including during sex, crying, laughing or other body functions; verbal hyper-vigilance, careful monitoring of one’s words; quiet-voiced, especially when needing to be heard
33. \_\_\_ Confusion about sexual identity or confusion about sexual preferences; upsetting or distressful homosexual fantasies, disturbing “pictures” before and/or during sexual activity