**WHAT IS EMOTIONAL ABUSE?**

Emotional abuse is most commonly understood as a pattern of verbal aggression, intimidation, manipulation, humiliation, and/or gaslighting. Over time, this pattern diminishes a person’s sense of identity, dignity, self-worth, security, and/or emotional safety. It is sometimes referred to as psychological abuse, mental abuse, or emotional violence. It may co-occur with physical or sexual abuse. It can occur in a variety of types of relationships, not just between intimate partners.

**HOW TO RECOGNIZE EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Victims of emotional abuse may experience:

- Intimidation, sabotage, threats, invalidation
- Manipulation and/or gaslighting
- Public or private shaming including name calling, put-downs, insults, humiliation, excessive sarcasm, and/or comparisons
- Degrading, extreme jealousy
- Silent treatments, indirect communication, denied necessities, inconsistency, unrealistic expectations
- Trivializing, scapegoating, blame-shifting, projecting
- Forced isolation and/or constant observation
- Love-bombing and/or drastic changes in behavior

**WHO CAN EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL ABUSE?**

Anyone can experience (or perpetrate) emotional abuse, regardless of relationship status, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual activity, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, citizenship status, or economic status.

**WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF EXPERIENCING EMOTIONAL ABUSE?**

People who experience emotional abuse may have anxiety, depression, PTS or PTSD, decreased self-worth, feelings of worthlessness, lack of trust, questioning of reality, second guessing oneself, feelings of isolation, feelings of being trapped, feeling silenced, and/or suicidal thoughts or behavior.

**WHAT IS...**

- **Coercion** is used to force or trick someone into acting in a way they might not otherwise through the use of threat, force, or manipulation.
- **Manipulation** is attempts to alter someone’s emotions, perceptions, or beliefs of something or someone.
- **Gaslighting** is a tactic used to make someone doubt themselves or question their perception of reality.

**HOW DO I HELP TO PREVENT EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN MY COMMUNITY?**

Learn about emotional abuse and how to recognize the signs, discuss these signs and the impacts of emotional abuse with your family and friends, support those who may be experiencing isolation or public humiliation, interrupt jokes about forms of emotional abuse, discuss ways it may be present in different types of relationships, support education about healthy relationships in schools and the community, and support organizations doing support and advocacy work.
WHAT DO I DO IF I, OR SOMEONE I KNOW, HAS EXPERIENCED EMOTIONAL ABUSE?

If experiencing emotional abuse, it is important to prioritize yourself and your needs and engage in stress mitigation and coping techniques as you are able. Reaffirm to yourself your value and what you know to be true, seek out a trusted individual or organization that you can talk to, establish boundaries (if it is safe to do so), and create a safety and/or exit plan. If a friend reaches out to you about experiencing emotional abuse, listen, avoid judgement, research resources, and support your friend’s choices and feelings about their own safety.

HOW DOES EMOTIONAL ABUSE IMPACT THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY?

LGBTQ+ individuals may experience threats of outing as a means to coerce or manipulate. Someone’s sexuality or gender may be used as a threat or questioned, either by an abuser or by someone’s community. LGBTQ+ individuals may experience barriers to services or lack of education about resources specific to them due to their status within the LGBTQ+ community or fear of stigma. These reasons are why BRAVO is here – we work specifically with LGBTQ+ individuals and understand the unique needs of the community. If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional abuse, please reach out to a BRAVO advocate.

RESOURCES:

BRAVO (Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization)

National Domestic Violence Hotline
Call: 1-800-799-7233 TTY: 1-800-787-3224 (24/7)

How to Recognize Coercive Control
Healthline
www.healthline.com/health/coercive-control

What Emotional Abuse Really Means
OneLove
www.joinonelove.org/learn/emotional-abuse-really-means/

The Trevor Project
Call: 1-866-488-7386 Text START to 678678 (24/7)

Emotional Abuse
The Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness
www.stoprelationshipabuse.org/educated/types-of-abuse/emotional-abuse/

*This is not a comprehensive list of all available resources, but rather resources we have chosen to highlight for distribution. If you would like additional resources, additional information, or a resource sheet on another topic please let a BRAVO advocate know.