

Does This Sound Familiar? A Self-Assessment Worksheet for Relationship Dynamics

Introduction

If you're beginning to question the dynamics in your relationship, you're not alone. Many people experience subtle or overt patterns of behavior that leave them feeling confused, hurt, or powerless. This 4-page worksheet helps you assess whether certain situations or behaviors in your relationship resonate with you, potentially indicating unhealthy or manipulative patterns, such as emotional abuse or gaslighting. You don't need to answer every question—use this as a starting point to reflect on your experiences, gain clarity, and take steps toward healthier boundaries. This tool is for personal use or in collaboration with a trusted friend, therapist, or advocate. If you feel unsafe, prioritize your safety by contacting a crisis line or local support service (see resources at the end).

Section 1: Assessing Relationship Patterns

This section presents a series of statements about relationship dynamics. Rate how often these situations occur in your relationship using the scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always. There's no need to answer every question—focus on those that resonate most. After each, reflect on your experiences to uncover patterns and their impact on you.

Self-Assessment Questions

For each statement, circle or mark your response (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always) and use the reflection prompts to explore further.

1. **Your partner twists your words or accuses you of things you didn't say or do.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - Reflection Prompt: Have you noticed specific examples where this happens? How does it make you feel (e.g., confused, invalidated)? Does it affect your trust in the relationship?
 - Example: "My partner often says I 'yelled' at them, even though I spoke calmly, leaving me doubting my memory."
2. **You constantly feel like you're walking on eggshells, afraid of upsetting your partner.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always
 - Reflection Prompt: What behaviors from your partner make you feel this way? Are there specific topics or actions you avoid to prevent conflict? How does this impact your daily life?
 - Example: "I avoid mentioning my work successes because my partner gets jealous and sulks, so I feel anxious all the time."
3. **Your accomplishments are minimized, while your partner exaggerates their own.**
 - Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always

- **Reflection Prompt:** Can you recall a time your partner downplayed your achievements? How does this affect your self-esteem or confidence? Does your partner seek praise disproportionately?
 - **Example:** “When I got a promotion, my partner said, ‘It’s not that big a deal,’ but they boast endlessly about their minor work wins.”
4. **Your partner blames you for their emotional outbursts or bad behavior.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What specific incidents stand out? How does this make you feel (e.g., guilty, responsible)? Does it prevent you from addressing your own needs?
 - **Example:** “After they yelled at me, they said, ‘You made me so angry by being late,’ even though I had a valid reason.”
5. **It seems like conversations always revolve around your partner’s needs and interests.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** Do you feel heard or valued in discussions? Are your needs consistently overlooked? How does this imbalance affect your relationship satisfaction?
 - **Example:** “Every time we talk, it’s about their day or problems, and I rarely get to share mine without being interrupted.”
6. **When you express hurt or concern, your partner dismisses your feelings or makes you feel like you’re overreacting.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What specific phrases or behaviors do they use (e.g., “You’re too sensitive”)? How does this impact your ability to communicate openly?
 - **Example:** “When I said I felt hurt by their criticism, they laughed and said, ‘You’re just being dramatic.’”
7. **You find yourself constantly apologizing, even when you’re not sure what you did wrong.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What triggers these apologies? Do you feel pressured or manipulated into saying sorry? How does this affect your self-worth?
 - **Example:** “I apologized for being ‘distant’ after they ignored me for days, even though I didn’t do anything wrong.”
8. **Your partner uses guilt trips to manipulate you into doing what they want.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What specific guilt-inducing statements do they make (e.g., “If you loved me, you’d do this”)? How does this influence your decisions or behavior?
 - **Example:** “They said, ‘I’ll be so lonely if you go out with friends,’ so I stayed home feeling guilty.”
9. **Your partner gives you the silent treatment or withdraws affection as punishment.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How long does this behavior last, and how does it affect you emotionally? Does it make you feel controlled or insecure?
 - **Example:** “After an argument, they ignored me for three days, leaving me anxious and desperate to make amends.”
10. **You start to doubt your own judgment and perceptions of reality.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**

- **Reflection Prompt:** Are there moments where you question what's real (e.g., "Did I really say that?")? How does this impact your confidence or decision-making?
 - **Example:** "They convinced me I forgot an important date I clearly remembered, making me feel like I'm losing my mind."
11. **Your partner has a pattern of breaking promises or letting you down.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What specific promises have they broken (e.g., financial, emotional)? How does this affect your trust or expectations?
 - **Example:** "They promised to attend my work event but canceled last minute, leaving me embarrassed and unsupported."
12. **They show a dramatic difference between how they treat you in private vs. in front of others.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** How do they act differently (e.g., charming in public, critical in private)? Does this confuse or isolate you?
 - **Example:** "In public, they're affectionate and polite, but at home, they criticize everything I do."
13. **You feel controlled or like you need permission to make personal decisions.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What decisions feel restricted (e.g., career, friendships)? How does this impact your autonomy or independence?
 - **Example:** "I can't join a new club without their approval, or they get angry and guilt-trip me."
14. **Your partner criticizes your appearance, friends, or family to undermine your confidence.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What specific criticisms stand out? How do they make you feel about yourself or your relationships?
 - **Example:** "They said my friends are 'toxic' and I'm 'gaining too much weight,' making me doubt my worth."
15. **You feel exhausted and drained after interactions with your partner.**
- **Never * Rarely * Sometimes * Often * Always**
 - **Reflection Prompt:** What about these interactions leaves you feeling depleted (e.g., arguments, manipulation)? How does this affect your overall well-being?
 - **Example:** "After every conversation, I feel emotionally drained from defending myself or walking on eggshells."

Tool: Use a journal or spreadsheet to track your responses over time, noting patterns (e.g., "Often" or "Always" responses). Highlight 2-3 statements with the highest frequency and explore why they resonate.

Section 2: Reflecting on Patterns and Taking Action

After completing the self-assessment, reflect on your responses to gain clarity and identify next steps. This section provides tools and strategies to address unhealthy dynamics and prioritize your well-being.

Reflection Questions

- **What patterns or themes stand out in your responses?**
 - Example: “I noticed I often feel controlled and doubt myself, especially when my partner manipulates or criticizes me.”
- **How do these dynamics affect your emotional, mental, or physical health?**
 - Example: “I feel anxious, depressed, and exhausted, which impacts my sleep and work performance.”
- **Are there specific behaviors or situations you’d like to change in your relationship?**
 - Example: “I want to stop apologizing unnecessarily and set boundaries around criticism.”

Tool: Use a reflection journal to answer these questions weekly, tracking changes in your feelings and relationship dynamics. Set a goal (e.g., “Talk to a friend about my concerns by next week”).

Action Steps

Based on your reflections, take proactive steps to address unhealthy patterns and protect your well-being.

1. **Set Boundaries:** Identify 2-3 boundaries you’d like to establish (e.g., “No criticism of my appearance”) and practice assertive communication (e.g., “I feel hurt when you comment on my weight, and I need you to stop”).
 - **Tool:** Use a boundary-setting worksheet (available on [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)) to outline your needs, consequences, and communication plan.
2. **Seek Support:** Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or professional (e.g., therapist, domestic violence advocate) to discuss your concerns.
 - **Tool:** Refer to the resources section for hotlines and support groups. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233) or, in Canada, the Canadian Women’s Foundation line (1-866-863-0511) for confidential guidance.
3. **Document Patterns:** Keep a journal or digital log of incidents, including dates, behaviors, and your feelings. This can help you clarify patterns and, if needed, provide evidence for legal or therapeutic support.
 - **Tool:** Use a secure app like Day One or a password-protected document to store notes safely.
4. **Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that boost your well-being, like exercise, meditation, or hobbies, to rebuild confidence and resilience.
 - **Tool:** Use apps like Calm or Headspace for guided mindfulness, or join a local support group for emotional validation.
5. **Assess Safety:** If you feel physically or emotionally unsafe, create or update a safety plan (see “Creating Your Safety Plan” worksheet for guidance).
 - **Tool:** Work with a domestic violence advocate to develop a tailored escape plan, including safe places and emergency contacts.

Brainstorm: Write down 3-5 specific actions you’ll take based on your assessment, including timelines (e.g., “Call a therapist within two weeks” or “Set one boundary next time we

argue”).

Section 3: Understanding Unhealthy Dynamics

This section provides context to help you recognize potential signs of emotional abuse, manipulation, or gaslighting, which may align with your responses.

Common Signs of Unhealthy Relationships

- **Gaslighting:** Your partner makes you doubt your reality, memory, or perceptions (e.g., “You’re imagining things” or “That never happened”).
- **Emotional Manipulation:** They use guilt, silent treatment, or withdrawal to control your behavior (e.g., “You owe me this because I’ve done so much for you”).
- **Control and Isolation:** They restrict your decisions, criticize your supports, or limit your independence (e.g., “You don’t need your friends; I’m all you need”).
- **Undermining Confidence:** They minimize your achievements, criticize you, or compare you negatively to others (e.g., “You’re not as smart as my ex”).

Tool: Use a checklist from resources like the National Domestic Violence Hotline (<https://www.thehotline.org/>) to compare your experiences with common abuse indicators. Rate your confidence in identifying these patterns (e.g., 1-5 scale) and seek a professional opinion if unsure.

Why This Matters

Recognizing these patterns can help you:

- Understand the impact on your mental health (e.g., anxiety, low self-esteem).
- Decide whether to address issues directly, seek support, or consider ending the relationship.
- Build resilience and reclaim your autonomy.

Reflection: Write a paragraph about how these signs relate to your relationship. Are there behaviors you’ve overlooked or normalized? How might recognizing them change your approach?

Additional Notes

- **You Are Not Alone:** Millions of people experience similar dynamics, and help is available through hotlines, therapists, and support groups.
- **Trust Your Instincts:** If something feels wrong, it’s worth exploring, even if you’re not sure. Your feelings are valid.
- **Confidentiality:** Keep this worksheet in a secure location (e.g., password-protected file, with a trusted friend) to protect your privacy, especially if your partner might access it.

Further Resources

- **National Hotlines:**
 - U.S.: National Domestic Violence Hotline – 1-800-799-7233, <https://www.thehotline.org/>
 - Canada: Canadian Women’s Foundation – 1-866-863-0511, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/services.html>
- **Local Support:** Contact your local domestic violence shelter or crisis center (e.g., ShelterSafe.ca for Canada) for region-specific help.
- **Books:**
 - *Women Who Love Too Much* by Robin Norwood – Insights on unhealthy relationship patterns.
 - *The Human Magnet Syndrome* by Ross Rosenberg – Understanding codependency and toxic dynamics.
- **Online:**
 - Psychology Today (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/>) – Find therapists near you for relationship counseling.
 - Loveisrespect.org – Resources for teens and young adults on healthy relationships.
- **Apps:**
 - *Bright Sky* – A safety app for domestic abuse survivors with resources and tracking.
 - *7 Cups* – Free online therapy and peer support for relationship concerns.

Final Thoughts

Questioning your relationship is a courageous step toward clarity and empowerment. This worksheet helps you assess patterns, reflect on their impact, and take action to prioritize your well-being. Whether you decide to address issues, seek support, or make changes, you deserve respect, safety, and happiness. Start by completing this assessment, reaching out to a resource, or journaling your thoughts—your journey to a healthier relationship begins here.