

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIM

- Found in all socioeconomic, educational, ethnic, racial and age groups.
- Are psychologically, verbally, and physically abused.
- Engages in excessive minimization and denial.
- Has a long-suffering, martyr-like endurance of frustration, passive acceptance, internalizing anger.
- Economically and emotionally dependent.
- Subject to depression, high risk for secret drugs and alcohol, home accidents.
- Unlimited patience for discovery of “magic combination” in solving marital and abusive problems.
- Being unsure of their own ego needs, defining self in terms of their partner, children, family, job.
- Low self-esteem.
- Unrealistic hope that change is imminent, belief in “promises”.
- Gradually increasing social isolation including loss of contact with own family and friends.
- Inability to convince partner of loyalty, futilely guarding against accusations of “seductive” behavior toward others.
- Compliant, helpless, and powerless.
- Constant fear gradually becomes cumulative and oppressive with time.
- Helplessly allowing containment through confinement/restriction by mate, mistakenly interpreted as sign partner “cares”.
- Gradually losing sight of personal boundaries for self and children (unable to accurately assess danger).
- Accepts all blame.
- Believe that transient acceptance of violent behavior will ultimately lead to long term resolution of family problems.
- Emotional acceptance of guilt for mate’s behavior, thinking mate “can’t help it”, considering own behavior as provocative.
- Generational history of witnessing abuse in family and/or being abused.
- Occasionally participating in pecking order battering.
- Exhibits behavior, which either diverts or precipitates mate’s violence; but level of carelessness increases over time.

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- Poor sexual self-image, assuming that role is total acceptance of partner's sexual behavior. Attempts at abstinence result in further abuse.
- At high risk for assaults during pregnancy.
- Frequent contemplation of suicide—may have history of attempts.
- Frequently wishes partner was dead. Occasionally completes homicide in self-defense.
- Feels powerless in custody issues, lives in fear that children will be “kidnapped”.
- Believes all the myths about battering relationships.
- Is a traditionalist about the home--strongly believes in family unity and the prescribed feminine sex-role stereotype.
- Accepts responsibility for the batterer's actions.
- Suffers from guilt, yet denies the terror and anger he/she feels.
- Presents a passive face to the world but has the strength to manipulate their environment enough to prevent further violence and being killed.
- Has severe stress reactions, with psychophysiological complaints.
- Uses sex as a way to establish intimacy.
- Believes that no one will be able to help resolve the predicament except themselves.
- Probably grew up in an emotionally dysfunctional home.
- Treated as “Daddy's Little Girl” as a child
- Generally believes in traditional roles, divorce is not acceptable.
- A good mother and concerned about her children wants to protect them.
- Feels embarrassed and ashamed of the situation, and feels that something must be the matter with him/her to have this happen.
- Feels powerless about making the violence stop.
- Projects total responsibility onto self for relationship.
- More capable than he/she perceives.
- Assumes responsibility for change in spouse after incident.
- Higher occupational potential than spouse.