Are you in an abusive relationship? You may be if you have a partner who:

- Says they cannot live without you
- Breaks or hits objects to intimidate you
- Threatens to hurt themselves or others if you break up
- Slaps or shoves you in a seemingly playful way, but it happens often and doesn't seem right
- Has severe mood swings or frequent bad moods
- Blames past bad relationships on everything or everybody else instead of accepting any of the responsibility
- Lashes out at you when they are having a bad day
- Dislikes your parents and friends and tries to minimize your contact with them

Then you may need to disengage from the relationship and/or seek help. Note that being hit or physically abused is only one sign of an abusive relationship. You can be in an abusive relationship without ever being hit. Call a professional: This is one problem that you cannot handle yourself.

These Warning Signs were Adapted from the National Teen Dating Violence Prevention Initiative© 2006 American Bar Association
Relationship violence in the college population

Research indicates that approximately 25-30% of the college population have experienced battering in dating relationships, while some individual studies have found as many as 60% of the college student population had experienced dating violence.

Although both genders can be verbally, physically or sexually assaulted, in 95% of all reported cases of dating violence, men are the perpetrators.

If you find that you are involved with a partner (of either gender) who is sexually, verbally, emotionally or physically abusive, tell someone close to you and seek assistance from the University Counseling Center at 298-2453 or the Western Illinois Regional Council at 309-837-3941 for help, support and intervention.

What is physical abuse?

Sometimes physical abuse does not result in physical injury. However, the atmosphere of fear and violence these acts create is abusive and results in the emotional pain that accompanies physical abuse. You have been physically abused if another person has done any of the following to you:

- Held you down or held you from leaving.
- Pushed, shoved, choked or bit you
- Tied or otherwise physically restrained you.
- Thrown you down or against a wall.
- Thrown things that may or may not have hit you.
- Locked you out of your residence.
- Abandoned you in dangerous places.
- Refused to help you when you were sick, injured, pregnant, or if you are physically disabled.
- Locked you in a room or closet.
- Deprived you of sleep.
- Forced you to ride in a car while your partner was driving dangerously.
- Forced you off the road or kept you from driving.
- Ripped your clothing.

Adapted from: Delaware County Community College
http://www.dccc.edu/health/abuse/physical.htm

What is verbal abuse?

Verbal abuse is a way of communicating that leaves the listener feel:

- Attacked and devalued (Belittling, name calling, blaming are hallmarks of this behavior)
- Afraid and worried about angering or offending their partner
- As if they are nothing and are consistently treated as ‘not good enough’ and ‘less than’
- Controlled and manipulated
- Stuck in a cycle of anger, emotional chaos and drama that they are helpless to de-escalate
- Constantly hurt, surprised and thrown off balance by their partner’s intentionally hurtful comments, behaviors, put-downs and “jokes”

Verbal abuse is a consistent pattern of relating and will not just go away on its own. Even simple disagreements and discussions with an abusive partner can become hateful and abusive. Anger is the issue for the abuser, and the abuser must own up to the inappropriateness of their way of relating to their partners in order to change these patterns. If they do not seek help, verbal abuse may escalate into physical abuse and the danger felt by partners may be very real.

Adapted from: Delaware County Community College
http://www.dccc.edu/health/abuse/physical.htm