

Profile of an Abuser

Spousal abusers come from all social, educational and cultural backgrounds. And while their backgrounds may differ, abusive men do tend to have many characteristics in common.

An abusive partner will often:

- ▶ be jealous and imagine his partner is having affairs.
- ▶ try to isolate his partner.
- ▶ try to control his partner.
- ▶ have a Jekyll and Hyde personality.
- ▶ have other problems with the law.
- ▶ have an explosive temper and fly into a rage without provocation.
- ▶ tell his partner that the abuse is her fault.
- ▶ use insults, putdowns or slanderous names to abuse his partner in addition to physical assault.
- ▶ come from a family where violence is practiced.
- ▶ be more violent when his partner is pregnant or soon after giving birth.
- ▶ deny the beatings or their severity, seeming not to remember them.
- ▶ be skilled at manipulating others.¹

"I was at a point where I felt I had to ask my husband's permission to do anything. If I turned on the radio he would come along and change the channel or turn it off; if I would sing he would turn on the radio; if I was watching television he would turn it off; at night he would put his arms around me... wouldn't let me go, even to go to the bathroom he wouldn't let me up."

"During a session with the marriage counselor [abuser] said, 'I'm sorry, but I just didn't think you'd fly off the chair like you did' ... and he's just not taking it as a bad thing - he was down-playing it, like it was just a push - that it's [my] fault [that I] went flying that far. They're amazing the way they can justify what they do."

"I'd be saying [to the police], 'But he [abuser] doesn't live here - he kicked in the door.' ... he'd be outside telling the other cop that we live together, that 'I don't know what happened, she was drinking tonight and she went wingy.' He'd have poured beer all over me...and the police would think I was drunk. These guys are masters at manipulating the police, master manipulators."

1. Adapted from: Transition House Association, Prince Edward Island, April 13, 2000

"[I]t was kind of a Dr. Jekyll/Mr Hyde - two personalities. And when he was hurting me he looked like he was really intending to kill me and when he was saying he was sorry, he really, really looked like he was truly sorry."

Woman Abuse
and the
PEI Justice System
Research Team

of the
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for
Family Violence
Research

www.isn.net/~tha/womanabuseresearch/

The quotes in this document are from PEI women interviewed in 1999 during herStory of woman abuse and the PEI justice system, a project of the Woman Abuse and the PEI Justice System Research Team of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research.