

Warning Signs

What are the warning signs? If you find yourself getting in arguments and you don't know why or if either of you tends to pick a fight for no apparent reason, it may be a sign that you are experiencing these addictive tendencies. Does this mean your relationship is doomed? Not necessarily. If both partners are willing to make a conscious effort to stop the addictive behaviors there still is a chance to have a great relationship.

The key is to recognize warning signs that lead to fights before they happen.

Below are some of the warning signs that a drama cycle may be beginning. Arguments tend to progress in this order. Keeping your eye out for these behaviors in yourself or your partner can help prevent escalation.

Warning Signs to Watch For: What are examples of you and your partner's signs?

1. Changes in body language (slouching, looking down, fast breathing, fidgeting, pacing)

2. Changes in voice and language (raising the voice, negativity, being short, using harsh words)

3. Negatively interpreting what the other is saying

4. Invalidating what the other is saying

5. Bringing the past into the conversation

6. Using terms such as "you always" or "you never"
7. Using words and comments intended to hurt the other person

Initially it will be difficult to become aware of the cycle and stop it; just like any addiction, it will take a time to break through the patterns. Don't beat yourself up if you catch yourself in the act—this is the goal! What matters is that you become more aware of these behaviors as they begin so that you can stop yourself *before* that addictive dose of adrenaline kicks in. The more you can stop yourself, the less frequently you will find yourself engaged in that insane drama.

Once you become aware you are doing it, the cycle loses its power.

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