

## ABUSE AGREEMENT

Abuse is a general term for the misuse of a person or thing. Abuse can be something as simple as intentionally damaging a piece of equipment, or as serious as severe maltreatment of a person. Abuse may be direct and overt, disguised and covert, or may simply be in the form of hurting those who depend upon us for love by withholding that love or by treating them in an insensitive manner. If you were to think of 'Love' as being something that 'focuses on what is *good* or *present* and 'contributes positively' to others, 'Abuse' would be something that 'focuses on what is *wrong* or *missing*' and 'takes away from', 'hurts' or 'destroys'.

PHYSICAL abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, poking, withholding vital medicine, refusing to help someone with a medical need or neglecting their physical needs.

Included are actions such as throwing things, slamming doors with tremendous force, breaking things or *threatening* to damage or injure something or someone.

EMOTIONAL abuse includes frequent rejection, criticism, shunning or disapproval; overt or veiled threats (of any kind, even threats involving financial or physical security and wellbeing); harassment; stalking; screaming, using foul or abusive language or rude expressions intended to offend or hurt; coercion; intimidation; purposeful embarrassment or humiliation; acts of dominance and oppression; behaving in an openly disrespectful, condescending or cruel manner.

The following check-list of indicators is a gauge to help determine whether YOU are possibly *being* abusive to others. Answering 'yes' to any number of these could be cause for concern (*Reversing* this list will help determine if you are BEING subjected to abuse).

1. You do not listen to them or you consistently ignore their requests.
2. They attempt to understand *your* feelings, but *you* don't genuinely attempt to understand *theirs*.
3. You dismiss their difficulties or issues as being unimportant or as being 'an overreaction'.
4. You generally put your needs before theirs.
5. You *expect* them to perform tasks that are very difficult, unpleasant or humiliating, and when they *do* perform these tasks you exhibit little or no appreciation, rarely even saying you love them.
6. They "walk on eggshells" around you in an effort not to provoke you.
7. You use 'drama or emotional displays' in order to remain the center of attention or get your way.
8. You manipulate them into feeling guilty for things that have little to do with them.
9. You attempt to destroy any outside support they receive by belittling that support (or cutting it off) in an effort to retain control over them or their emotions.
10. You don't take responsibility for hurting them or others.
11. You blame other people and things for *your* challenges and circumstances.
12. You perceive yourself as being a martyr or victim and expect preferential treatment.
13. You say things like you 'hate them' and you treat them badly when you are unhappy with them.
14. You say you 'love them' and treat them well when they behave according to *your* will.
15. You *rarely* feel they 'behave according to your will', thus you rarely say you love them.
16. You *focus* on what you disapprove of in them and compare them negatively to others.
17. You scorn, ridicule, insult, denigrate, belittle, mock or berate them alone or in the presence of others.
18. You intentionally harm them either emotionally or physically (or *threaten* to do so).

I have read this document and fully understand its meaning. As a result, I agree that under no circumstances will I treat those in my family in an abusive manner (per the definition of this document). Should I fail to abide by this agreement I understand that there will be dire consequences, which will range from a suspension of my privileges to being asked to leave this home, depending upon the severity of the infraction.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_