

In the Mind of the Abuser

Though abusers may claim they are not in control of themselves or their behavior, this is false. It is important to recognize that abusers use deliberate, calculated methods of controlling their victims. These tactics are as follows:

Method	What It Looks Like	Example(s)
Excuse-Making	The abuser makes excuses to justify his behavior.	-“My parents never loved me.” -“My parents beat me.” -“I had a bad day, and when I walked in and saw this mess, I lost my temper.”
Blaming	The abuser shifts responsibility for abusive actions from themselves to others. This allows them to be angry with the other person.	“If you would keep your mouth shut while I am disciplining the kids, I wouldn’t hit you.”
Redefining	The abuser redefines the situation so that the problem lies not in them, but the outside world.	The abuser doesn’t come home for dinner as he said he would; instead, he arrives home at 4 a.m. and says the victim is a terrible cook and that’s why he didn’t come home.
Success Fantasies	Abusers often believe they would be rich, famous, or extremely successful if only other people weren’t holding them back.	Abusers often put other people down as a way of building themselves up.
Lying	Abusers often attempt to control situations by lying. They often believe they are smarter than everyone else and that no one sees through their lies.	-Lying about where they were -“I will quit drinking.”
Assuming	Abusers often assume they know what others are thinking or feeling.	“I knew you would be mad because I went out for a beer after work, so I figured I might as well stay out and enjoy myself.”
Above the Rules	Abusers generally believe they are better than other people and don’t have to follow the rules that ordinary people do. This attitude is commonly referred to as “criminal thinking errors”.	-Breaking the law -Making their own rules
Making Fools of Others	The abuser combines tactics to manipulate others.	-Using tactics that include lying, upsetting another person just to watch their reactions, and provoking fights between or among others. -Trying to charm the person they want to manipulate by feigning a great deal of interest in/concern for them in order to get on their good side.
Fragmentation	Abusers usually keep their abusive behavior separate from the rest of their lives.	It is not uncommon for abusers to attend church on a Sunday morning and abuse their partner that same night.
Minimizing	Abusers do not take responsibility for their actions by trying to make them seem less important than they are.	-“I didn’t hit you that hard.” -“I only hit the kids to teach them discipline.”
Anger	Abusive people use anger as an excuse when they abuse.	-“I lost it.” -“I just blew up.”
Playing Victim	Many abusers pretend to be the victim in the relationship in order to manipulate others into siding with them.	-“You have been unfaithful.” -“You have abused me.”
Closed to Criticism	Abusers are often closed-minded and self-righteous. They are not open to anyone opposing their opinions or criticizing them.	Abusers believe it is their right to behave whatever way they want/say whatever they please.
Ownership	Abusers are often very possessive. They often believe that anything they want should be theirs.	Justifying controlling others’ behavior, physically battering others, and taking things that don’t belong to them because it is “their right”.