

# VERBAL ABUSE

Because words do hurt.

## FREE & CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES

### The Aurora Center

117 Appleby Hall  
 Office: 612-626-2929  
 24-Hour Helpline:  
 612-626-9111  
 Text: "TALK"  
 to 612-615-8911  
 aurora@umn.edu  
 www.umn.edu/aurora

### Student Counseling Services (SCS)

340 Appleby Hall  
 199 Coffey Hall  
 612-624-3323  
 www.uccs.umn.edu

**V**erbal abuse consists of an individual using words that attack or injure another individual. These words cause partners of an abuser to believe falsehoods about themselves or others and constitutes psychological violence in a relationship.

Verbal abuse often occurs in a gradual progression in which the partner adapts to slowly intensifying abuse. Abusers often escalate their abusiveness and their partners adapt and condition themselves to ignore these subtle changes over time. This creates many obstacles for identifying verbal abuse.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF VERBAL ABUSE



### WHAT DOES VERBAL ABUSE LOOK LIKE?

- Calling you names & putting you down.
- Yelling & screaming at you.
- Intentionally embarrassing you in public.
- Preventing you from seeing or talking with friends & family.
- Telling you what to do & wear.
- Using online communities or cell phones to control, intimidate or humiliate you.
- Blaming your actions for their abusive or unhealthy behavior.
- Threatening to commit suicide to keep you from breaking up with them.
- Threatening to harm you, your pet or people you care about.
- Making you feel guilty when you don't consent to sexual activity.
- Threatening to expose your secrets such as your sexual orientation or immigration status.

### WHAT CAN I DO?

- Get professional counseling support. Contact Aurora or SCS.
- Ask your partner to go to counseling with you.
- Set limits by stating what you will and will not accept from your partner. Use "I will not accept..." statements to establish these limits.
- Document incidents of abuse.
- Stay in the present and focus on sudden outbursts directed at you. Call the abuser on every offense once you have established limits.
- Communicate changes that you want in your relationship.
- Be aware that you can leave any abusive relationship.

**GET HELP. GET EDUCATED. GET INVOLVED.**