

25 Signs your Narcissistic or Borderline Wife or Girlfriend is Traumatizing You

April 2, 2009 [Dr. Tara J. Palmatier, PsyD](#) [Leave a comment](#) [Go to comments](#)

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Do you experience insomnia, nightmares, fatigue, nausea, aches and pains, and an underlying sense of dread? Do you feel like you're always waiting for the other shoe to drop? Is it difficult for you to trust others because you're worried they'll hurt you? Do you frequently feel ashamed, guilty, and worthless? Are you involved with an emotionally abusive, narcissistic or borderline woman?

Ain't love grand! Being involved with an emotionally abusive, narcissistic or borderline woman can do quite a number on you. If you've been bullied, manipulated, abused, confused, and demeaned by the woman you love, you may have developed a stress reaction from her repeated violations of trust called [betrayal trauma](#) (Freyd, 2008). Betrayal trauma can significantly and adversely affect your physical and psychological well being (Freyd, Klest, & Allard, 2005).

Many men who are abused by their wives or girlfriends [don't recognize their behaviors as abusive](#). These men minimize and misidentify what's happening by telling themselves that she's just "emotional" or, worse yet, blame themselves for her cruel and hurtful behaviors. These men blind themselves to the reality of the situation in order to preserve the relationship.

Alternatively, some men realize her behavior is wrong and abusive, but remain silent. There are two primary [reasons for keeping mum](#):

1. Confronting an abusive woman about her behavior only makes her nastier and you're then subjected to a narcissistic rage episode and/or histrionic drama queen performance.
2. She'll just blame you for everything or deny what she did anyway, so why bother saying anything?

Whether you're suffering in self-induced oblivion or are painfully aware, but keeping quiet, there are consequences to staying in an abusive relationship. Trauma affects you physically and psychologically. It also has a detrimental effect on all of your other relationships or lack thereof.

Common physical and emotional [reactions to trauma](#):

1. Headaches, backaches, muscle fatigue, and stomach aches.
2. Nausea, irritable bowels, diarrhea, or constipation.

3. Increased susceptibility to colds and other illnesses because [chronic stress](#) is weakening your immune system.
4. Insomnia and other sleep disturbances such as ruminative thought or bad dreams.
5. A pervasive sense of [anxiety](#), dread, fear, worry, and/or [panic attacks](#).
6. Depression, the blues, grief, or feeling hopeless about the future.
7. Feelings of helplessness, weakness, and being trapped.
8. Feeling disoriented, confused, and/or overwhelmed.
9. Isolating yourself from others, not communicating with friends and family.
10. Feeling emotionally detached, shut down or numb.
11. Feeling overwhelmed or flooded by feelings that are disproportionate to the situation.
12. Difficulty concentrating, focusing or remembering things.
13. Feelings of guilt, shame, worthlessness and/or blaming yourself for things that aren't your fault.
14. Difficulty trusting others, feeling paranoid (like others are out to get you), feelings of betrayal.
15. Drinking too much, taking drugs, overeating or engaging in other compulsive behaviors to numb and/or soothe yourself.
16. Outbursts of anger, rage, irritability or frustration that are disproportionate to the situation.
17. Mood swings or moodiness.
18. Overly sensitive to criticism.
19. Denying, rationalizing or minimizing the traumatic behaviors.
20. Feeling on edge, jumpy or hypervigilant to possible attacks, always being on the defense.
21. Keeping secrets, censoring or stuffing your feelings, lying to others about what happens in your relationship.
22. Developing false beliefs such as, “*All women are crazy*” or “*Never trust anyone*” or “*Never let your guard down*” or “*Never tell anyone how you're really feeling or what you really think because they'll use it against you.*” These are negative and self-limiting beliefs that keep you from living life fully.
23. Difficulty making decisions, fear of making the “wrong choice.”
24. Not taking care of yourself—eating poorly, not exercising, not getting enough rest, engaging in dangerous activities that could be passive suicide attempts like crossing the street without looking or biking in dangerous areas.
25. Feelings of indifference, fatalism, cynicism, or pessimism.

These are NORMAL reactions to ABNORMAL and abusive behaviors. However, your girlfriend or wife has probably used the stress reactions you're experiencing, because of her, as another device to hurt you. “*Why are you so sensitive? Stop being so defensive! You're a hypochondriac. Stop being such a baby. You're so angry. You're being labile.*” Sound familiar? She uses the trauma symptoms you're experiencing, which she induced, to further traumatize you. Nice.

If you're suffering from the symptoms of betrayal trauma please take the necessary steps to get out of your emotionally abusive relationship and recover from it. Healing from trauma takes time and can bring up a lot of painful emotions that you had to suppress while in your emotionally abusive relationship. This is also a normal part of the process. Try to feel the feelings as they come up without guilt or self-recrimination.

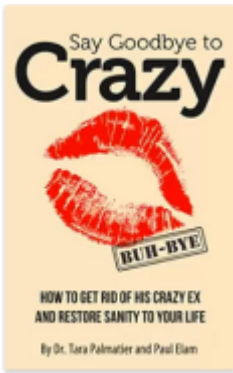
[Other tips](#) to recover from trauma sustained in an abusive relationship include:

Seek support. Share your feelings with someone you trust. If you're uncomfortable talking with friends or family at first because you're ashamed or feel foolish, find a therapist or join a support group.

Don't isolate. One of the effects of being in abusive relationship is distancing yourself from others who care about you. Part of recovery involves reestablishing these connections.

Take care of yourself. Eat well, exercise, rest, and find ways to relax.

Develop a daily routine. This will keep you grounded and help to create a sense of predictability and normalcy after the unpredictability and instability of your life with your emotionally abusive wife or girlfriend.

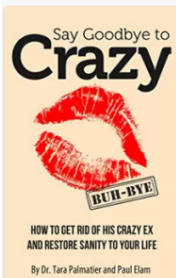


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References:

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