

Women's

AID

North Ayrshire

FOCUS ON LOVEBOMBING

Affection today. Abuse tomorrow.



Love bombing is a form of psychological and emotional abuse that involves a person going above and beyond for you in an effort to manipulate you into a relationship with them.



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WHAT IS LOVEBOMBING?

It looks different for every person, but it usually involves some form of:

- Excessive flattery and praise.
- Over-communication of their feelings for you.
- Showering you with unneeded/unwanted gifts.
- Early and intense talks about your future together.

Love bombing can happen intentionally or unintentionally. Although it's most often recognized by romantic partners, your family members and friends can love bomb you, too.

WHY IS LOVEBOMBING A BAD THING?

Love bombing is a type of emotional manipulation. It's a tactic that is trying to force your trust and dependence, so the love bomber quickly becomes the most important person in your life. Later in the relationship, it's easier for them to devalue or discard you, or make you feel like you're the one who has been doing something "wrong". You're more likely to bend to their will, or do things you don't want to do to "win back" their affection.

The abuser uses lovebombing to create environment of fear, control and submission. They can deny that they've done anything wrong – "why would you question my love?"

Love bombing often leads to further psychological and physical violence.

STAGES OF LOVEBOMBING

The act of love-bombing another person often occurs in three stages:



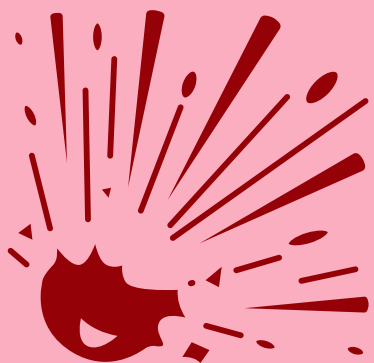
Idealization

You may be bombarded with gifts, compliments, and affection to “hook” you into letting your guard down. You may feel so happy that you don’t see the potential for being manipulated.



Devaluation

In this stage, you feel comfortable in the relationship but soon notice red flags. Your partner may put demands on your time or get angry if you spend time with others. This is when gaslighting can start – when your partner may try to convince you nothing is wrong with their behavior.



Discard

During this stage, you may confront your partner about their harmful behavior, and establish healthy boundaries. Your partner will avoid accountability, refuse to compromise, or break up with you. He might come back and try to restart the relationship, which begins the cycle all over again.

LOVEBOMB WARNING SIGNS



1. They give you needless gifts

A love bomber might shower you with unexpected gifts as tokens of their affection. Though gift-giving is a love language for some people, this becomes a problem when the gifts are unnecessary, unwanted, extravagant or over-the-top. If you make it known that you don't want these gifts and they keep giving them to you anyway, this is a red flag that you're being love bombed.

LOVEBOMB WARNING SIGNS



2. They're in a rush to lock things down

People who love bomb tend to jump the gun. They'll be quick to call you their soulmate, or they'll talk about meeting you as if it was a lifelong dream. They might want to introduce you to close friends and family members right off the bat, even when it feels too soon. And they're likely to bring up the idea of commitment early in a relationship, or even skip major milestones to rush toward a happy ending.

LOVEBOMB WARNING SIGNS



3. They're always available and demanding of your attention

A person who love bombs will seem to depend on you for comfort, time, energy and dedication. Over time, they may become more demanding by getting angry with you or jealous of other friends or family members.

When this happens, they may present unfair ultimatums that force you to choose between them and other people you care about — and even other responsibilities you have to work, hobbies and more.

LOVEBOMB WARNING SIGNS



4. They can't take 'no' for an answer

No means no in every circumstance. Full stop. But if you tell a love bomber you're not OK with their behaviour or try to set up healthy boundaries, they're likely to become argumentative, question your line of thinking and may even push you into believing you're wrong for saying no in the first place.

LOVEBOMB WARNING SIGNS



5. They like you better when you're alone

By isolating you from your family and friends, an abuser amplifies their control over you.

Sometimes, this can be very obvious, like if they don't let you do certain activities, go to certain locations or spend time with other people. Other times, their control is more subtle, like if they get moody, angsty or sad whenever you try to do something without them.

LOVEBOMB WARNING SIGNS



6. They over-communicate their love for you

Love bombing doesn't always involve obvious displays of gift-giving, grand gestures and face-to-face manipulation. Sometimes, it can happen more subtly in day-to-day conversation.

A person who love bombs might check in frequently about what you're doing when they're not around. Maybe they over-communicate how they feel about you or check up on your location. They might overdo it online by posting too frequently how they feel about you in an attempt to gain public acceptance of your relationship.

LOVEBOMB WARNING SIGNS



7. You feel overwhelmed, uneasy or off-balance

It's normal to question if you're on the same page as your partner. We all love at different paces and in different stages, and what feels right for someone else may not feel right for you. If you ever feel uneasy, off-balance or overwhelmed — and you communicate these feelings to your partner but they don't reciprocate those feelings or respond in healthy, positive ways — these are signs trouble may be brewing.

CAN A RELATIONSHIP SURVIVE LOVEBOMBING?

Can a relationship survive when you've been love bombed? The answer is that it's largely up to the individual who's doing the love bombing. In some cases, you might be able to start a conversation about your healthy boundaries, define what behaviour is acceptable and see if there's an opportunity for your partner to learn and adapt. But if you try to have this conversation and their behaviour continues or gets worse, you'll want to consider how to end the relationship safely.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM LOVEBOMBING

Set clear boundaries from the outset of your relationship and communicate them assertively to your partner. If they cross your boundaries, consider it a warning sign that your partnership may not be all that it seems.

Protect your independence. Never allow the love-bomber to isolate you from friends and family – no matter how much they try to do so. Always keep your own life, interests, hobbies, interests and social connections and seek support from trusted individuals who can provide perspective and guidance.

Most importantly, **always listen to your gut feelings;** don't just ignore them. If it seems too good to be true, it may well be so.

HOW TO TALK TO A FRIEND ABOUT LOVEBOMBING

If you have a friend who is in a new relationship, and it sounds like things are moving really fast, you might be worried about them being love bombed. Being too direct about your concerns can sometimes backfire – and even make your friend think they shouldn't talk to you about their relationship.

A safer approach is to ask your friend to think about how they feel about it. **Support them to trust their instincts.** Ask things like:

How do you feel when they say that?

What would happen if you wanted to slow things down?

Do you feel like an equal in this relationship?

Most importantly, make it clear that you care and will be there for your friend.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL ABUSE

1

Acknowledge the abuse. This can be difficult, especially if you have been in denial or if the gaslighting was subtle.

2

Talk to someone you trust: a friend, family member, or an organisation like Women's Aid.

3

Record details about what happened. Include dates, times, locations, if you can. This can be helpful if you decide to report it, but it's also useful for you to see patterns of abuse.

4

Consider reporting the abuse. This is entirely your choice, and you can change your mind later.

5

Seek help from a professional who specialises in domestic abuse to help you through the healing process.

WHO CAN HELP SURVIVORS OF LOVEBOMBING?

In an emergency, call 999. There are lots of organizations to help women in Scotland who have experienced emotional abuse.

Safe Spaces

You can use a safe space in whichever way works for you. They provide a safe and discreet way to reach out to friends and family, and contact specialist support services. Find a safe space near you:

uksaysnomore.org/safespaces/

North Ayrshire Women's Aid

A specialist local service that provides emotional and practical support to women affected by domestic abuse.

01294 602 424

nawomensaid.com

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Free 24-hour helpline for women who have experienced domestic abuse and violence, with all female advisors.

0808 2000 247

nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Scottish Women's Rights Centre

Free and confidential legal information affected by gender based violence such as domestic abuse.

08088 010 789

scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline

Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone with experience of domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members and friends.

0800 027 1234

Victim Support

Victim Support Scotland provide support, practical assistance, and information to victims and witnesses of crime in Scotland.

Their service is free and confidential.

victimsupport.scot/

0800 160 1985