

# RECOGNIZING MANIPULATION & ABUSE

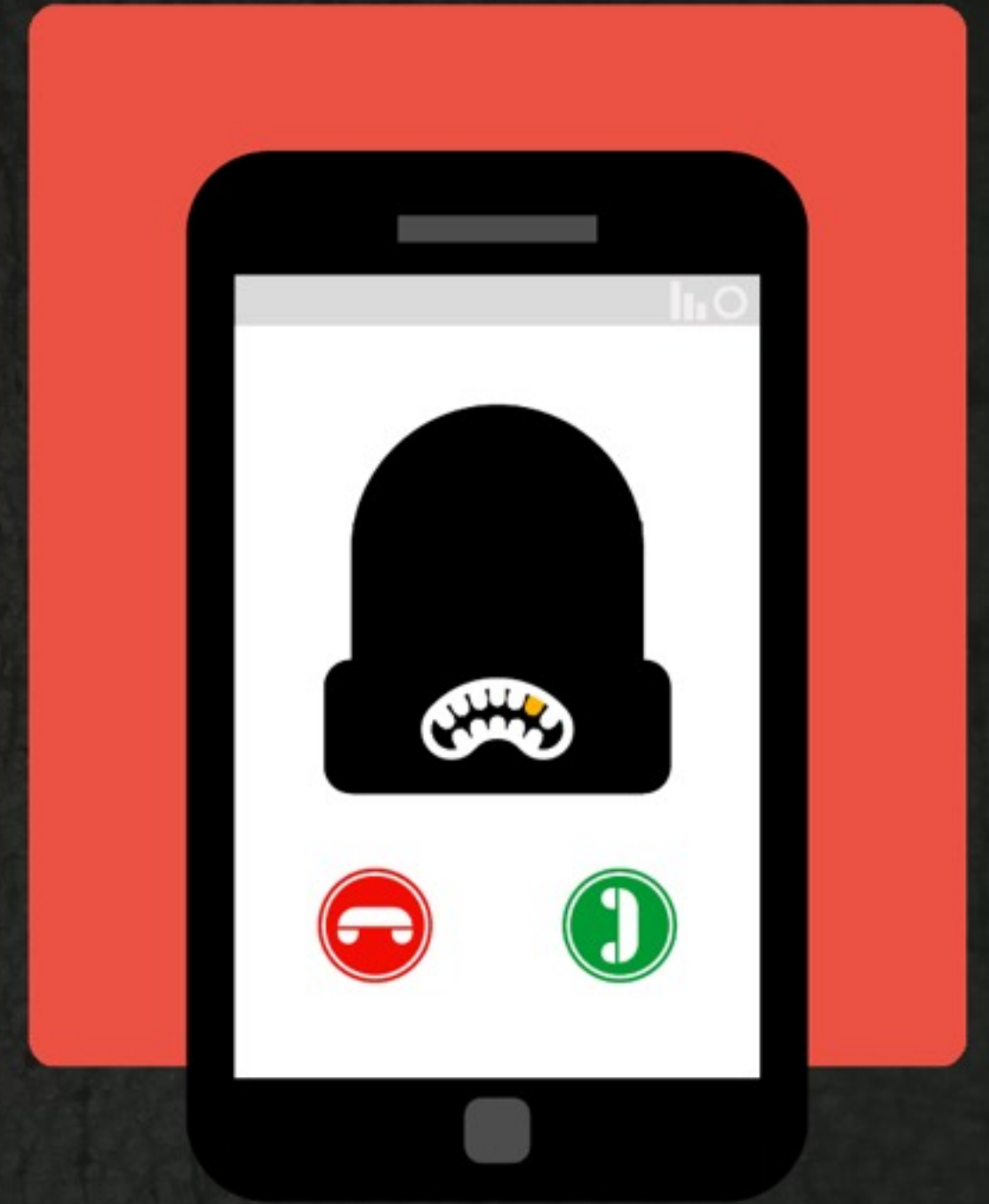




# MYTH BUSTING

**MYTH:** "Abuse means physical violence. If no one's hitting you, it's not abuse."

**FACT:** Emotional abuse, controlling behavior, and psychological manipulation are forms of abuse. They often cause deeper and longer-lasting harm than physical violence.





# THE CYCLE OF ABUSE EXPLAINED

## THE CYCLE OF ABUSE (LENORE WALKER, 1979):

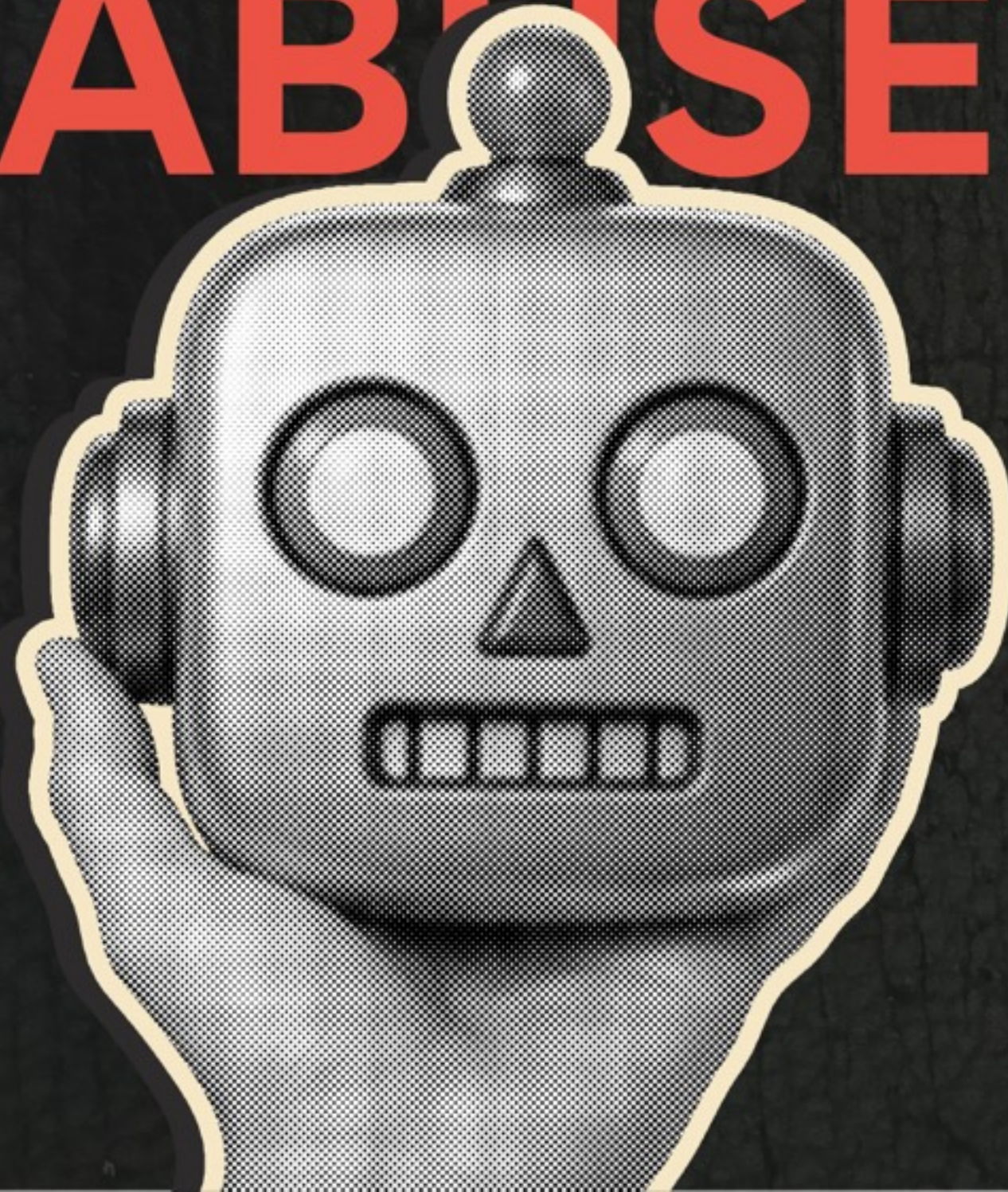
1. Tension building: small conflicts, walking on eggshells
2. Incident: the abusive behavior occurs
3. Reconciliation: apologies, promises, affection ("honeymoon phase")
4. Calm: things seem normal; the cycle restarts

The reconciliation phase is why people stay, and the apologies feel real in the moment. The person you fell for seems to return, yet without change, the cycle repeats and often escalates.





# TYPES OF ABUSE



Emotional/Psychological:  
Insults, humiliation,  
gaslighting, making you feel  
crazy, constant criticism

Controlling behavior:  
Monitoring location, isolating  
from friends/family,  
controlling finances or  
decisions

Coercive control: Using fear,  
threats, or intimidation to  
control behavior

Sexual: Pressuring, coercing, or  
forcing sexual activity; ignoring  
stated limits

Physical: Hitting, pushing,  
restraining, throwing objects



# GASLIGHTING: A CLOSER LOOK

Gaslighting: Making someone doubt their own perception, memory, or sanity.

It sounds like:

- "That never happened."
- "You're being way too sensitive."
- "You're imagining things."
- "Everyone agrees you're overreacting."
- "I never said that."



**The effect: You stop trusting yourself. You start relying on them to tell you what's real. This is the goal.**





# WARNING SIGNS

## Warning signs you're in an unhealthy dynamic:

- You feel anxious or afraid before seeing them
- You change your behavior to avoid setting them off
- You've lost touch with friends or family since being with them
- You feel like you can't do anything right
- They tell you how you feel ("you're not actually upset")
- Their needs always come first; your needs are inconvenient
- You feel relieved when they're not around





# HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

If you think a friend is in an unhealthy relationship:

- Don't issue ultimatums — "it's them or me" usually backfires
- Don't badmouth the partner excessively — it can push them to defend the relationship
- Stay connected — isolation is the abuser's tool; being there is yours
- Say specific things: "I've noticed you seem anxious lately. I'm here."
- When they're ready to talk, listen without judgment
- Know the resources and share them when the moment is right

People leave when they're ready. Your job is to still be there when that moment comes.



Verify



Be Skeptical





# GETTING HELP

If you're in an unsafe situation:

- You can call or text the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- Text START to 88788
- Chat at [thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org) (discreet: it won't show in most browsing histories if you use incognito)

Safety planning:

- Identify a safe place you can go
- Keep important documents accessible
- Tell one trusted person what's happening
- Have a plan for if things escalate

You deserve safety. Full stop.