

## **Invalidation Patterns**

**Dismissive Non-Verbal's:** Using non-verbal behaviors to invalidate or dismiss another person during a task or conversation that would otherwise call for your undivided attention. (i.e. Eye rolling, grabbing and playing on your cell phone while someone is speaking to you.)

**Ordering:** Telling or ordering another person to feel or look. "Be happy, just get over it." "Don't look at me like that." "Take that look off of your face."

**Defending:** This is an attempt to deny another person's perception as invalid. "You've got it all wrong." "It was only a joke."

**Emotional Isolation:** This is an attempt to make a person believe they are the only one who feels a certain way. "You are the only one who feels like that." "No one else has ever said that to me."

**Minimizing Your Feelings:** This is an attempt to downplay the significance of an emotion. "It's not that bad." "You're getting upset over nothing."

**Using Reason:** A fallacious attempt to use 'reason' to show another person's emotions/feelings are illogical. "There is no reason to feel that way." "Let's just stick to the facts."

**Clichés:** Using clichés can invalidate another person's feelings and/or experiences. "That life." "Sh\*t happens." Religious clichés can also invalidate others who do not share the same beliefs. "God doesn't give you more than you can handle." "God has a reason for everything."

**Denial and Confusion:** This is the denial to accept or acknowledge another person's feelings and instead instill confusion. "You don't mean that, you know you love me." "How can you say that - it's not true."

**Refusal/Intolerance:** Similar to denial, but more aggressive. This is an attempt to avoid addressing or discussing an issue by refusing to discuss it, or an unwillingness to accept any belief or view that goes against your own. "I'm not doing this again!" "I'm sick of hearing this!"

**Sarcasm:** This is a thinly veiled attempt to disguise feelings of anger, hurt, contempt or disgust. It is usually an attempt to hide feelings of hostility or judgement underneath superficial humor. "This is the perfect time to bring this up. It's exactly what I needed right now." "Hey, thanks for doing the laundry" (when the laundry has not been done).

**Making Jokes at Others Expense** – Using inside jokes, snide or sarcastic comments, and/or passive aggressive remarks. This is an attempt to insinuate another person's identity is something to be laughed at. "If you need help with your computer, go ask Bob" (yet Bob is not very knowledgeable or adept with computers).

**Mocking:** Similar to 'Making Jokes at Other's Expense', although with a more overt and cruel tone and intention. "Poor baby, did I hurt your feelings?"

**Comparison** – Comparing one person to another sends the message that you are not as important as another more perfect person with whom you are being compared to. "Well, your brother got an A on *his* test." "You should be more like Mark; he gets to work early every morning."

**Lecturing** – This one presents an attitude of, “You’re wrong for what you said or did and it is my job to correct and scold you for it.” Or “You obviously don’t know what you’re talking about, so let me inform you from my vast knowledge of the subject.” It also indicates to the person that they are not intelligent and therefore need to be educated.

**Intellectualizing** – Avoiding emotional content, the other person’s emotions, and turning it into not just brainiac talk, but also sending the message that the other person is not intelligent or less intelligent. Often combined with ‘talking down to’ &/or ‘lecturing’.

**Threatening** – Threatening another person in any way, shape, or form based on what they have said or done is an invalidation of their communication.

**Talking Down To** – Taking a superior position indicates to the other person that they are less than you and therefore what they have to offer is meaningless.

**Name Calling** – Name calling devalues a person and their worth.

**Sexualizing** – Turning what has been said or done into sex-based content, whereas it was not intended that way, therefore changing the meaning of the communication entirely.

**Ignoring** – Indicating to another person that they do not exist or that they are not worthy of your acknowledgement or communication. The classic example is the ‘Silent Treatment.’

**Resentments** – Holding a resentment against someone or holding it over their head in an attempt to influence them, therefore invalidating what they have to say.

**Guilt Tripping** – Attempting to influence another person to abandon their position and adopt yours by encouraging them to feel guilty. “Go to your friend’s house if you want. I’ll just be home cleaning all day.”

**Shaming** – Attempting to illicit feelings of shame in another person. “Look how you made your mother feel!” “All you ever think about is yourself.”

**Anger/Rage** – Utilizing anger or rage to overpower what someone else is trying to communicate.

**Discounting** – Cheapening or minimizing what someone else has offered.

**Passive-Aggressiveness** – Indirectly addressing an issue or indirectly expressing emotions as opposed to directly speaking about your thoughts and/or feelings. One example of this is back-handed compliments.

**Neglect** – Neglecting a person indicates to them that they are not worth your time or effort and therefore not valid as a person.

**Abuse (Hitting/Physical assault)** – Abuse is the ultimate invalidation tactic. It sends the message that not only is another’s opinions and emotions not valid, but their physical presence is disturbing and not wanted.

**Isolating** – This occurs when a person attempts to isolate another from the adaptive people, places, things, activities that bring them pleasure and support.

**Breadcrumbing** – Has become popular in recent years with the increase in social media/dating app usage as a means of establishing intimate relationships. This is a pattern where one partner will provide small bits of interaction (i.e. short and/or infrequent texts/calls; short periods of intense contact followed by periods of silence/low/no contact).

**Victim Mentality** – Believing and/or working to convince another person that negative things/events are the fault of others or outside factors which they have no control over in situations where this is not accurate. “I wouldn’t have bought that new car if you just gave me your old car.”