

GASLIGHTING

A FORM OF MICRO-ACCRESION

What Is Gaslighting?

In personal relationships and in the workplace, gaslighting is "...a form of manipulation that goes beyond invalidation to make [the victim] question [their own reality or] sanity"

- Scientific American, 2022



Gaslighting Behaviours

- ☐ pretending not to understand when you do
- ☐ Labeling the other's thoughts as crazy or imagined
- ☐ Questioning the other person's memory of events when they remember correctly
- ☐ Pretending to forget what actually occurred
- ☐ Denying promises made in the past
- ☐ Trivializing the other person's feelings as being too sensitive when their reaction is somewhat normal
- ☐ Minimizing their behaviour by saying "It was just a joke" or "You're way too sensitive"

Victim's Feelings

- ☐ question their own reality and beliefs
- ☐ feeling isolated and powerless
- ☐ decreasing self-esteem; increasing disorientation, self-doubt
- ☐ difficulty functioning in school, at work or in social situations
- ☐ high risk for anxiety and depression -- suicidal thoughts
- ☐ PTSD



"you begin to feel that there is something wrong with you because one of the most important people in your life is telling you this" (J/tem, L., 2007)

Protecting Oneself

Are you or is someone you know being gaslit? These are some symptoms to watch for and some techniques for protecting yourself and others who are being manipulated through gaslighting.



Symptoms (an incomplete list)

- ☐ having trouble making even simply decisions
- ☐ constantly second-guessing oneself
- ☐ questioning your own feelings, judgments, observations
- ☐ feeling lonely and trapped
- ☐ doubting own memory and sanity
- ☐ being on edge and feeling threatened all the time
- ☐ disregarding own needs in favour of abuser's reality (fawning)
- ☐ ...and many more...

What You Can Do for Yourself

- ☐ talk to others about what is happening
- ☐ focus on actions, not words
- ☐ remind yourself that you are not the reason for the gaslighter's abuse
- ☐ don't try to argue with the gaslighter
- ☐ practice trusting yourself again (once you have ended the relationship)



What You Can Do for a Friend

- ☐ seek them out, be with them
- ☐ tell them you trust them and their interpretation of events
- ☐ recommend seeking help from a mental health counsellor
- ☐ do not try to argue with the gaslighter
- ☐ do speak with the ombuds (for students) or HR rep (for employees) to protect your friend and others

- ☐ talk about mental health at peer meetings
- ☐ host lunch and learn about gaslighting
- ☐ watch the 1940's movie "Gaslight"



Educate Yourself & Be an Advocate

Recommendations to add to the List?
Let us know at the address below!

For more information about gaslighting, see <https://www.newportinstitute.com/resources/mental-health/what-is-gaslighting-abuse/>. Book by Robert Stern, PhD: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Gaslight_Effect. For gaslighting in the workplace, see: <https://www.forbes.com/health/mind/what-is-gaslighting/>. Research paper on systemic misogyny through gaslighting: Stark, C. "Gaslighting, Misogyny, and Psychological Oppression", in The Monist, Volume 102, Issue 2, April 2019, Pages 221-235, <https://doi.org/10.1093/monist/on007>

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