

What is Gaslighting?

Gaslighting is a psychological manipulation tactic in which an individual or group induces someone to question their truth, memory, or perspective.

It is frequently used to exert influence over someone by making them feel confused, insecure, or reliant on the gaslighter. This can happen in various situations, such as with partners, families, friends, and workplaces. It frequently involves patterns of manipulation. Recognizing it is the first step toward overcoming its effects.

Common Signs of Gaslighting.

- The gaslighter denies it by saying "It never happened,"
- Emotions are referred to as "too sensitive" or "overreacting."
- Dispute what they previously stated or done.
- They make you believe you can't trust yourself, so you rely on them for "truth."
- They dismiss your emotions as "too sensitive" or "overreacting."

Effects of Gaslighting on Mental Health

Gaslighting can cause lasting psychological harm, including self-doubt, anxiety, depression, isolation, low self-esteem, emotional exhaustion, and difficulty trusting oneself. These effects are especially severe when experienced in childhood or over long periods.

How to Respond to Gaslighting

- Trust Your Feelings and Perceptions
- Set Firm Boundaries
- Limit Engagement: Avoid arguments that are intended to confuse and manipulate you.
- Seek Support
- Educate Yourself: Learning about gaslighting might help you build counter-strategies.
- Reaffirm Your Reality: Say affirmations like, "I trust my perception," or "My feelings are valid."

Healing from Gaslighting.

Recovery from gaslighting takes time, but it is doable with the correct assistance. Therapy may help you:

- Build self-trust and confidence.
- Recognize and address self-doubt.
- Develop healthy relationships and limits.
- Develop strategies for dealing with manipulation.
- Process the emotional damage created by gaslighting.

If you have been gaslighted, remember that you are not alone.

Resources for Further Support

- **Books:** *The Gaslight Effect* by Dr. Robin Stern, *Why Does He Do That?* by Lundy Bancroft
- National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-799-7233)
- **Websites:** Psychology Today, The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Healing is possible, and you deserve to reclaim your truth and well-being.