

It's over, but she's broke, pregnant

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BY ELLIE TESCHER

DEAR ELLIE: My girlfriend of six months, who moved from out-of-state to be with me, says she has seen too many red flags in me. She wants to break up and move home.

Everyone who knows our situation says her argument with me is small, that she's using me as an excuse. She has no money; I've allowed her to stay with me until she saves for the move. She's cold toward me and unappreciative, feeling only a "deadbeat" would throw someone out when they have nowhere to go.

She doesn't see that this was her decision to leave. I allowed her to stay as the right thing to do, but I don't owe it to her. It has been one month, and I found out last week she's pregnant. She wasn't going to tell me. She's terminating it and says I have no say.

I'm so against this, but have put my feelings aside to be there for her. I still get the cold shoulder and am treated poorly. Again she feels I owe her.

I understand she's alone here. She says she cannot tell her family, but the way I'm getting treated is taking a heavy toll on me. She plans on being here for at least another month.

POORLY TREATED

DEAR POORLY: This is so not about you, so stop bemoaning your "treatment."

She has a right to not want to remain with you for whatever reasons that she feels you're not a good match. She's also disturbed about the pregnancy and is facing the emotional trauma of an abortion. That's a difficult decision, and unless you're prepared to bring up a child on your own and willing to go to court to stop the termination of her pregnancy, she also has the right to make that tough move.

This is not a time for her to feel grateful; if anything, she feels disappointed, depressed and scared. Your standing on the sideline looking for applause is so out of whack with her reality. You do owe her this help, and you're lucky it's for a limited time. Get over yourself.

DEAR ELLIE: I was the victim of a sexual assault a few months ago. It resulted in severe anxiety, many trips to the hospital to be tested for sexually transmitted disease and counseling. I also had to take a leave of absence from work and send my kids to live with my ex-husband.

I'm now in a five-month relationship with a guy who started seeing me a few weeks before the attack. He's trying to be supportive, and acting like my rape happened to him, too. He's protective of me, watching how men behave around me, if they come on to me or scare me (I'm attractive, and this happens often).

Since my rape, we once had unprotected sex. I said we shouldn't continue to do so until I get the results from my tests for sexually transmitted disease. He said we both took a chance with his life, and he occasionally brings it up when he's upset. So I've provided him with my negative AIDS test results at six weeks. I urged him to get tested himself.

I discovered that he's also upset that I slept at a guy friend's house when I felt ill.

Is my relationship going to fail because I was raped? I'm fond of this guy and unsure if I'm hurting him with this issue. Or is he trying to help me not to be so trusting?

Should I even be dating someone right now?

SCARED BUT NOT ALONE

DEAR SCARED: Your most crucial need is continued counseling. You're focused on this still-young relationship, yet there are other important matters, such as dealing with your children again and feeling secure and confident in yourself without this man's protective policing.

Therapist Marilyn Barnicke Belleghem says the current dynamic can lead to his having power over you, when you need to regain your personal power and get your life back on track. "His attitude as she describes it is indicative of someone wanting the attention focused on him. It's also indicative of a controller. She should be fending off unwanted sexual attentions, not relying on him." Take time for yourself, and for your own healing.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline, (800) 799-7233, can help you find crisis counseling, safety planning, emotional support, referrals for shelters and legal services.