

Manipulation Tactics and Emotional Abuse

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The Issue

Our focus issue is that people are not aware of how others manipulate the people around them. We believe an important root cause of this issue is a lack of education.

We feel we (as students) would be less vulnerable to manipulation if our school districts had more programs for social emotional interactions before they occur, but in our research our school districts don't offer that.

Our goal is to educate teens about different manipulation tactics by raising awareness of gaslighting, love bombing, guilt tripping, and moving goal posts. By doing this we will help students be able to recognize these common manipulation tactics in their school.



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Manipulation Tactics

- **Gaslighting:** A manipulation tactic to make someone question their reality, feelings, and thoughts.
- **Love Bombing:** A manipulation tactic where one showers a person with love and affection early in a relationship, leaving them feeling dependent on the manipulator.
- **Moving Goalposts:** A manipulation tactic when someone changes the rules to give one side an advantage and the other a disadvantage.
- **Guilt Tripping:** A manipulation tactic where a person makes another person feel guilty to get what they want.



Take Action

A few ways to take action individually:

- Be aware of the people and situations in your life that may show signs of emotional abuse. This means to be well educated and focus on the way your peers, teachers, and even parents are treating you and others around you.
- Also, if you believe you're being manipulated, try your best to report your situation to a trusted adult like a teacher, school authority, a counselor or parent/guardian.

How we can make effective change on a government level:

- Bring our issue to a powerful community group like the school board or school administration.
- Talk to your guidance counselor about issues in a constructive tone to make some change in your SEL (social emotional learning) program, because the root cause of our problem is people are undereducated on emotional manipulation.

What We Learned

- **Kaiser:** I learned about the danger and power of emotional abuse on the human brain, especially on teens.
- **Easton:** I learned that 55 percent of teens reportedly have experienced emotion manipulation/abuse from peers, parents, or other authority figures.
- **Lael:** I learned about different manipulation tactics other than gaslighting including love bombing, guilt tripping and moving goal posts.
- **Ahmad:** I learned about the different methods of manipulation and abuse.
- **Maddie:** I learned that there are a wide variety of manipulation methods that abusers might use
- **Eliam:** I learn about guilt tripping this week , guilt tripping is a form of manipulation tactics .
- **Francisco:** I learn about 4 manipulation tactics gaslighting, love bombing, guilt tripping and moving goal post what are and use
- **Vee:** I learned about changing goal posts and how to work with a team.

Resources

Interview with Ms. Hiya Bhatte

<https://healthier.stanfordchildrens.org/en/data-shows-emotional-abuse-increased-among-teens-during-pandemic/#:~:text=New%20data%20from%20the%20Centers,stressors%20that%20were%20already%20there.>

“Effects of emotional bullying” prompt, Google Gemini, July 25 2025 version

manipulation tactics infographic, mindJournal

<https://www.thehotline.org/resources/what-is-gaslighting/>

<https://469tips.com/bullying#:~:text=Did%20You%20Know?,threats%2C%20and%20inappropriate%20sexual%20comments.>

<https://www.fwisd.org/about/fort-worth-isd-forward/2020-21-education-plan/about/fort-worth-isd-forward/2020-21-education-plan/social-emotional-support-for-virtual-and-in-person-instruction>