

Psychologically, intentionally ignoring someone to control, punish, or manipulate them is called the silent treatment, stonewalling, or ostracism. It is considered a form of emotional abuse and a "cold shoulder" tactic used to evoke insecurity, guilt, or compliance. When done to avoid conflict, it is sometimes called a "demand-withdraw" pattern.

Key Aspects of Ignoring Someone:

- Stonewalling: A specific term for withdrawing from a conversation to avoid conflict or refuse to communicate.
- Ostracism: The act of excluding or ignoring someone, which can cause intense emotional and even physical pain.
- Emotional Manipulation: Ignoring can be used to make the other person feel desperate for validation.
- Physical Effect: Research indicates that the silent treatment activates the same area of the brain responsible for detecting physical pain.
- Ghosting: A modern, often technology-based, form of ignoring where someone cuts off all communication without explanation.

Ignoring someone can also be a, often unhealthy, coping mechanism or a way to manage being overwhelmed.