

## How to Help a Friend Who May be in an Abusive Relationship

- **Set up a time to talk.** Try to make sure you have privacy and won't be distracted or interrupted.
- Let your friend know you're concerned about their safety. **Be honest.** Tell them about times when you were worried about them. Help them see that what they're going through is not right. Let them know you want to help.
- Be supportive. **Listen to your friend.** Keep in mind that it may be very hard for them to talk about the abuse. Tell them that they are not alone, and that people want to help.
- **Offer specific help.** You might say you are willing to just listen, to help them with child care, or to provide transportation.
- Don't place shame, blame, or guilt on your friend. **Don't say, "You just need to leave."** Instead, say something like, "I get scared thinking about what might happen to you." Tell them you understand that their situation is very difficult.
- **Help them make a safety plan.** Safety planning includes picking a place to go and packing important items.
- **Encourage your friend to talk to an expert who can help.** Offer to help them find a local domestic violence agency. Offer to go with them to the agency, the police, or court.



- If your friend decides to stay, continue to be supportive. Your friend may decide to stay in the relationship, or they may leave and then go back many times. It may be hard for you to understand, but people stay in abusive relationships for many reasons. **Be supportive, no matter what your friend decides to do.**
- Encourage your friend to do things outside of the relationship. **They need time with friends and family.**
- If your friend decides to leave, continue to offer support. Even though the relationship was abusive, **they may feel sad and lonely once it is over.** They may need help getting services from agencies or community groups.
- Keep in mind that you can't "rescue" your friend. They have to be the one to decide it's time to get help. **Support them no matter what their decision.**
- **Let your friend know that you will always be there no matter what.**