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How Can I Help a Friend?

As the CEO of Rose Brooks Center, I rarely go a week without someone asking me “What do I do if I have a friend who is a victim of domestic violence?” Supporting a friend who is experiencing violence and fear in their own home is a complicated process and there’s no single answer, but here are a few things you can do if someone shares with you that they are victim of domestic violence.

Believe them without judgement. If a friend tells you that they are being abused, believe them. It takes a lot of strength to come forward when you are being abused by a loved one. Remember to not pass judgement by saying things like “Why don’t you leave?” or “Why are you still with him?” Without meaning to, you could be adding to the shame, guilt, or blame your friend already feels.

Educate yourself about the dynamics of domestic violence. In order to support your friend, it’s important for you to realize things like not all abuse is physical and that abuse is likely to increase in frequency and severity over time. A simple web search will offer a lot of great information to know and share.

Utilize and share resources. Rose Brooks Center’s Crisis Line is available 24/7 to anyone who needs support, whether it is the victim or a concerned friend. Our hotline is not only there to help individuals and families who need to come into shelter. We are here to listen to you, give support, do safety planning, and offer resources.

Thanks to supporters like you, Rose Brooks Center is here for individuals and families experiencing domestic violence and for the people who care about them.

Sincerely,

A message from Susan Miller, CEO

A Safe Place for the Whole Family

Mae came to Rose Brooks Center all the way from Arkansas. Her boyfriend had been abusing Mae and her two cats, Toby and Vince, for over a year, but she refused to leave Toby and Vince behind. If she left them behind, she knew her boyfriend would kill them to punish her for leaving.

Unsure where to turn, Mae did a web search to see if there was anywhere that would welcome Toby and Vince and help keep her family safe. She found Rose Brooks Center and Purr Place. She didn’t want to leave her home behind, but Rose Brooks Center was the closest domestic violence shelter where she could be with her cats. Mae immediately called the hotline and for the next month she worked with the Pet Advocate to plan her escape and her journey to Kansas City. There were many challenges and false starts, but at last Mae, Toby, and Vince made it to Rose Brooks Center. They were together and they were safe.

“I’m so grateful for Rose Brooks Center,” Mae says, “without them I could have never left my abuser. Toby and Vince are too important to me and I couldn’t leave them behind. I only hope that more shelters follow Rose Brooks Center’s example and open their doors to the entire family.”

P.S. Our 24/7 Crisis Line is 816.861.6100. We’re here for you.
Education is Key

In 2012, Rose Brooks Center and the Kansas City Police Department partnered together to bring the Lethality Assessment Program to Kansas City. The Lethality Assessment Program, or LAP, provides first responders to domestic violence calls with an evidence-based tool to measure the lethality of each domestic violence victim’s situation. Through a series of 11 yes-or-no questions, officers measure a victim’s risk of being killed by their abuser. When a victim has high risk, the officer then discusses this risk with her and calls Rose Brooks Center’s 24-hour hotline with the victim present.

One of the prime indicators for a victim being at a high risk of being murdered by their partner is strangulation. Unfortunately, more than 50% of the time, strangulation injuries don’t leave any visible signs of physical injury. Also strangulation is minimized by victims and first responders and is ultimately not accurately reported, documented, or prosecuted.

In Kansas City during January, February, and March, 74% of the victims questioned by officers as part of LAP had been strangled by their partner.

In light of these facts, something needed to be done. Rose Brooks Center’s Community Programs team came together and developed a comprehensive training program to help the Kansas City Police Department better recognize, document, and respond to victims experiencing strangulation.

Since Rose Brooks Center began offering “Strangulation: The Unreported Trauma” training, almost 1,400 KCPD officers have been trained. After the training they are able to recognize all the symptoms of strangulation, document injuries and other evidence, and better educate victims about the dangers of strangulation.

In 2015, Rose Brooks Center selected the Vera Institute of Justice to present at their 2015 Communities of Practice, Practices of Promise Conference.

The Lethality Assessment Program, Maryland Model selected Lisa Fleming, Chief Operating Officer, to serve on their 2015-2016 National Advisory Council.

Tanya Draper-Douthit, Director of Community Programs, presented on the SafeCARE Health Clinic at the Futures Without Violence National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence. Since then Tanya has received additional requests for information from five shelters across the United States.

Scott Mason, Director of Development, presented at the 31st Annual Missouri Victim Assistance Network Conference on Trauma and Dating Violence Among Adolescents on how to provide support victims dating violence.

Julie Wilber-Parks, Director of Housing and Economic Advocacy, was selected by the Housing Task Force for its “Train-the-Trainer” project on use of a new assessment tool being implemented metro-wide by homeless service providers.
Back to School

Make sure the kids living at Rose Brooks Center are ready to go back to school with your gift of:

- Backpacks
- Three Ring Binders
- Pocket Folders
- Flash Drives
- Earbuds
- Calculators
- And other new school supplies!

If you would like make a donation or hold a donation drive, please contact Katy at 816.523.5550 ext. 446 or kathleenm@rosebrooks.org

Help End Financial Abuse

Financial abuse happens in 98% of all cases of domestic violence. It may include limiting partner’s access to assets, concealing information and accessibility to the family finances, interfering with their ability to work, or damaging their credit. Financial abuse is especially dangerous because it limits a victim’s ability to leave an abuser.

Domestic violence and financial abuse often go hand-in-hand, but nearly 8 in 10 Americans have not heard about financial abuse as a form of domestic violence.

Check back in September for exciting ways to help end financial abuse with Rose Brooks Center and Purple Purse!