

How to Help a Friend Who is Being Abused

- Set a time to talk. Set aside a time to talk privately with your friend. Make sure you talk in a quiet place where you won't be distracted.
- Let your friend know you're concerned about her safety. Be honest. Help her to see the abuse. Tell her about times when you were worried about her safety. Help her see that what she's going through is not normal and that she deserves better. Let her know you are concerned about her and want to help.
- Let your friend know you understand she's in a tough situation. Make sure she knows the abuse is not her fault. Tell her that she is not alone, that she has many people who love her and care about her. Let her know there is help and support out there.
- Be supportive. Listen to your friend. Keep in mind that it may be very hard for her to talk about the abuse. Let her know that you are there to help her.
- 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."
- If your friend decides to stay, continue to be supportive. She may decide to stay in the relationship. Or she may leave and then go back to the relationship many times. It may be hard for you to understand, but there are lots of reasons people stay in abusive relationships. Be supportive, no matter what your friend decides to do.
- Encourage your friend to do things outside of the relationship, with friends and family.
- Help her make a safety plan.
- If your friend decides to leave, continue to be supportive. Even though the relationship was abusive, she may still feel sad and lonely once it is over.
- Encourage your friend to talk to someone who can help. Offer to help her find a local domestic violence agency. If she decides to take this step and get help, offer to go with her to the agency, to talk to friends and family, to the police, or to court.
- Keep in mind that you can't "rescue" your friend. She has to be the one to decide it's time to get help. Support her no matter what her decision.
- Let your friend know that you will always be there no matter what.