

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND LOVED ONE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Get involved:

Very few people find safety without the supportive care of other people around them.

Professional service providers like legal advocates, police, and counsellors cannot replace the power of friends and family helping a person to get free from violence.

You don't always have to say 'the right thing' - your calm, caring presence and kind listening can make all the difference.

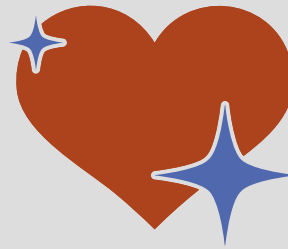
You can:



Be clear with yourself and your loved one about what you can and cannot do to help in their situation. It is okay for you to have reasonable limits to keep yourself safer when you are trying to help your loved ones.



Listen, rather than offering advice. It's important to respect the choices our loved ones make, to try to feel in-control of their situation, even if we don't agree with or understand them.



Remind your loved one that they deserve safety and have real power to make choices for their safety. Offer them empathy and encouragement.



Support your loved one in reaching-out to community services. Help them get the necessary information to stay safer.

Offer to accompany your loved one to police, court, medical, or social services appointments.

Just being physically present with your loved one can help these situations from becoming overwhelming.



Ask your friend how you can best support them. You might also offer to go over questions they have before going into appointments or help take notes during appointments.

It might be enough to help your loved one keep track of appointments, meetings, and court dates. If you have a vehicle, you can also offer to safely transport your loved one to and from these appointments.

You can also offer to provide care to your loved one's elderly or disabled family members, children, or pets while they are attending appointments and meetings.

REMEMBER TO NEVER SHARE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR LOVED ONE WITHOUT THEIR CLEAR PERMISSION.

Offer to store important documents (or back-up copies of peace bonds, restraining orders, custody arrangements, and documented interactions with abusers) in your possession.



Come-up with a secret code word with your loved one, that means you need to contact the police on their behalf right away.

Seek-out your own supportive services so that you can care for yourself appropriately, as well as show-up for your loved ones and friends with caring presence and accurate information.

Ask your friend what justice looks, feels, and sounds like to them in their current situation. It might not be possible to achieve everything that your loved one hopes for, but their feelings are valid.

