

# How to Help A Friend Who Is Being Abused

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Here are some ways to help a friend who is being abused:

- **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 her safety.** Be honest. Tell her about times when you were worried about her. Help her see that what she's going through is not right. Let her know you want to help.
- **Be supportive.** Listen to your friend. Keep in mind that it may be very hard for her to talk about the abuse. Tell her that she is not alone, and that people want to help.
- **Offer specific help.** You might say you are willing to just listen, to help her with childcare, or to provide transportation, for example.
- **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 her you understand that her situation is very difficult.



**Help her make a safety plan.** Safety Planning includes picking a place to go and packing important items.

- **Encourage your friend to talk to someone who can help.** Offer to help her find a local domestic violence agency. Offer to go with her 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 she 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.** It's important for her to see friends and family.
- **If your friend decides to leave, continue to offer support.** Even though the relationship was abusive, she may feel sad and lonely once it is over. She also may need help getting services from agencies or community groups.
- **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.**

<http://womenshealth.gov/violence-against-women/get-help-for-violence/how-to-help-a-friend-who-is-being-abused.html>