

If Someone You Know is Being Abused...

Ways to Help a Friend in Need

COMMUNICATE

- **Ask direct questions, gently. Give ample opportunity to talk. Don't rush into providing solutions.**
- **Listen without judging. An abused person often believes their abuser's negative messages. They feel responsible, ashamed inadequate, and are afraid they will be blamed.**
- **Let the person know that you support and care about them, that they are not responsible for violence, and that only the abuser can stop the violence.**
- **Explain that physical violence in a relationship is never acceptable. There's no excuse for it; not alcohol, drugs, not financial pressures, depression or jealousy.**
- **Make sure the person knows they are not alone, millions of Americans suffer from abuse, and find it difficult to leave.**

EDUCATE

- **Explain that domestic violence is a crime, as much of a crime as robbery or rape, and that they can seek protection from the justice system.**
- **If the person has children, reinforce their concern for them, let them know that domestic violence is damaging. In fact, you may want to reach out to support the children and let them know you are there for them, too.**
- **Let the person know that it is likely that, in spite of promises, the violence will continue and may escalate.**
- **Emphasize that when they are ready, they can make a choice to leave the relationship, and that there is help available.**
- **Provide information about local resources; phone numbers to local domestic violence hotlines, support groups, counseling, shelters and legal advocacy programs.**

ACT

- **The person may need financial assistance, help them find a place to live, a place to store belongings, or help care for pets. They may need assistance to escape. Decide if you feel comfortable helping in these ways.**
- **Contact your local domestic violence program yourself for advice and guidance.**
- **If the person is planning to leave, remind them to take important documents such as birth certificates, passports, health insurance cards, etc. Help them plan in advance.**
- **If the person remains in the relationship, continue to be their friend while at the same time firmly communicating that the person and children (if any) do not deserve to be in a violent situation.**
- **If you see or hear an assault in progress, call the police. Do not intervene yourself.**