

Things you can do to help a friend or family member who is being abused:

Tell the person who is being abused that you are concerned for his or her safety. Make it clear that you know about the abuse and that you are concerned.

Tell your friend or relative that he or she does not deserve to be abused.

Acknowledge that the abuse is not this person's fault. Remind the friend or relative that the abuser is responsible for the abuse. Tell the person that he or she is not alone.

Be supportive and patient. It may be difficult for the person to talk about the abuse. Let your friend or relative know that you are available to listen or help any time.

Avoid judging your friend or family member. The person may break up with and go back to the abuser many times before finally leaving the relationship. Do not criticize your friend or relative for doing this, even if you disagree with the choices he or she makes.

Encourage the person to talk to others who can provide help and guidance. Offer to help the person talk to family, friends, a teacher or staff person at school or a member of the clergy, or to help them find a counselor or support group. If your friend or relative decides to go to the police, to court, or to see a lawyer, offer to come along, but make sure you don't do the talking when you get there.

Help the person to develop a practical and specific safety plan that focuses on preventing future harm or abuse.

Do not confront the abuser. It could be dangerous for you and your friend or relative.

Remember that you cannot "rescue" the person. It is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt. Your friend or relative must be the one to decide what to do. Your job is to be supportive.

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