

Domestic Violence:

How to help a friend dealing with Domestic Violence

Do:

- Approach the person in a sensitive way. For example, "I'm worried about you." A person who is abused in a relationship might deny what is going on to protect both the abuser and themselves.
- Believe what the person tells you. It will have taken a lot for the person to talk to you and confide in you.
- Take the abuse seriously. Abuse can be damaging both physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Abuse can be destructive to someone's self-confidence.
- Focus on their safety. Talk to your friend about being safe and how they can protect themselves. Let your friend know that you are concerned for their safety. Develop a safety plan.
- Help them to recognize the abuse and how it may be affecting them. Recognize and support their strengths and courage.
- Help them to understand that the abuse is not their fault. No one deserves to be abused, no matter what they do.
- Help them explore possible help from the legal system.
- Encourage them to come in to FVRC or call us on our crisis line at 919.545.0224

Don't:

- Don't blame them for the abuse or ask judgmental questions like "what did you do to make them treat you like that?" or "why don't you just break up with them?"
- Don't focus on trying to work out the abuser's reasons for the abuse. Concentrate on the safety of the survivor.
- Try not to be impatient or critical of the person if they are confused about what to do or if they still love the abuser. It is difficult for anyone to break off a relationship, especially if they are being abused.

Questions you could ask:

- What can I do to help?
- How has their behavior make you feel? How is it affecting you?
- How have you been coping with the abuse?
- What can you do to make yourself safer?"
- What are you afraid of if you leave?
- What are you afraid of if you stay?

Steps to Empowerment:

1. Identify the abuse
2. Listen and believe her experiences of abuse
3. Assure her that she is not alone and that she is not to blame
4. Defend her right to live without fear of violence
5. Refer her to supportive services in the community and encourage her to seek help

6. Develop a safety plan with her
7. Support her decision

Five things to say to a victim who is unable to leave now:

1. I am afraid for you safety.
2. I am afraid for the safety of your children.
3. It will only get worse.
4. I am here for you.
5. You don't deserve to be abused.

High Risk Indicators:

- Increased frequency or severity of episodes
- Use or threatened use of a weapon
- Presence of a gun in the home
- Threats to kill her, the children, other family members or himself
- Attempts to kill her or himself
- A history of suicidal gestures or attempts by the victim
- Stalking behavior
- Recent loss of job or major change in employment
- Victim perceives situation as very dangerous

Family Violence & Rape Crisis Services

919-542-5445

24-hour Crisis Line: 919-545-0224

Walk-in hours: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

200 East St., Pittsboro

144 N. Chatham St., Siler City