

HOW TO SUPPORT A FRIEND EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



If you are concerned about a friend or loved one who is experiencing abuse in their intimate relationship, here are some things you may review to assist you in supporting them.

Stay in touch.

Ask your friend or loved one how they prefer to communicate. Keep in mind, that their abuser may be monitoring their communication channels (cellphone messages, calls, social media accounts). Talk about creating a code word. This could be used by your friend to let you know that their abuser is now home or in the room, etc.

Respect their right to autonomy.

Talk to your friend or loved one about creating a safety plan. Avoid taking actions without their consent, unless you believe their life is in danger. Allow your friend the ability to choose how they wish to keep themselves safe. Support them in making those decisions without judgement.

Believe them and provide emotional support.

Reassure your friend or loved one that they are not alone and there is help available when they are ready. Remember that it is not easy for victims and survivors to speak about the abuse they experience or have experienced. Be mindful of this if they choose to share. Do not judge their decisions; Survivors make choices that others may not understand for the purpose of keeping themselves [and their children and pets] safe. Acknowledge that their situation is difficult and you may not understand all aspects.

Provide physical support.

Let your friend know that you want to help. If you can, offer them a place to stay, a ride to work, appointments, etc. Ask them how you can help increase their safety. Share resources with them. This might be the crisis line to the local emergency shelter or information on free counselling supports and groups. Remember to ask your friend what they need. As everyone's situation is unique, so are their needs.

**24/7 Crisis Line: 613-966-3074 or toll free
1-800-267-0533**