



HOW TO HELP A FRIEND *in an* ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

WHAT IS RELATIONSHIP ABUSE?

Relationship abuse is the use of intimidation and/or forces by one person in a relationship over the other. It can include any form of verbal, emotional, mental, physical and/or sexual abuse or violence, and happens in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. In an abusive relationship it is not unusual for the abuser to express remorse after a violent outburst and then ask forgiveness, promising that “it will never happen again.”

Unfortunately, it usually does.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Remember you can't “solve” the situation for your friend. But here are some things you can do that are helpful for both of you:

- **ASK.** Does your friend seem to miss a lot of school or work? Have their sleep or eating habits changed? Do they have low self-esteem? Have you noticed bruises on your friend's body? Do they seem sad, distracted or depressed? These may be signs of an abusive relationship, and shame may prevent a person from telling someone else. For these reasons it's OK and important to ask a friend if they are being abused.
- **LISTEN AND BELIEVE.** Let your friend talk; don't be judgmental, interrupt, or give advice. Just sitting and listening to your friend can reassure them that you care and support them. Be patient; sharing about an abusive relationship can be difficult.
- **OFFER TO HELP FIND APPROPRIATE RESOURCES FOR YOUR FRIEND.** Ask in what ways you can help. For example, your friend may ask for your help in contacting the police, or ask you to accompany them on their first visit to a counselor, or victim advocate. Be clear about setting your limits about what you can and can't do. Setting limits supports and empowers both of you.
- **FIND SOME OUTSIDE SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF WHILE YOU HELP YOUR FRIEND.** Helping a friend in crisis can be difficult. It's normal for you to have strong emotional reactions to the situation too. The resources on the following page are good places to go for more information and help for both of you.

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

- **Campus Violence Prevention Program Victim Advocate**
(752-3299); pager (916) 523-2419 | cvpp.ucdavis.edu
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** 752-0871 | caps.ucdavis.edu
- **Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Center** 752-2452 | lgbtcenter.ucdavis.edu
- **Women's Resources and Research Center** (752-3372) for referrals | wrrc.ucdavis.edu
- For residential halls, you can contact your RA or RD

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- **Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Center**, Woodland (Crisis Line 530 662-1133)
- **My Sister's House**, Sacramento (Multilingual Crisis Line 916 428-3271)
- **Women Escaping a Violent Environment**, Sacramento (Crisis Line 916 920-2952)

BOOKS from the WOMEN'S RESOURCES AND RESEARCH CENTER LIBRARY

The Domestic Violence Sourcebook (Berry) 1998

Next Time, She'll Be Dead: Battering and How to Stop It (Jones) 2000

No More Secrets: Violence in Lesbian Relationships (Ristock) 2000

Ditch that Jerk: Dealing with Men Who Control and Hurt Women (Jayne) 2000

Stalking the Soul: Emotional Abuse and the Erosion of Identity (Hirigoyen) 2004

You Can Be Free: An Easy-To-Read Handbook for Abused Women 1997

No Secrets, No Lies: How Black Families Can Heal from Sexual Abuse (Stone) 2004

Stalking the Soul: Emotional Abuse and the Erosion of Identity (Hirigoyen) 2004

In Love and In Danger: A Teen's Guide To Breaking Free Of Abusive Relationships 1997

Teaching to Transcend: Educating Women Against Violence (Sattler) 2000

If you'd like to read more about relationship abuse, visit the WRRC Library, where these books, and others, are available. You can also browse the library catalog online at <http://wrrclibrary.ucdavis.edu>



Women's Resources & Research Center
North Hall, One Shields Ave. Davis, CA 95616
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