



HOW TO SUPPORT A FRIEND: ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT IS RELATIONSHIP ABUSE?

Relationship abuse is the use of intimidation and/or force by one person to maintain power over another. It can include any form of verbal, emotional, mental, physical spiritual and/or sexual abuse or violence, and can happen in all types of relationships. In an abusive relationship it is not unusual for the abuser to express remorse after a violent outburst and then ask for forgiveness, promising that “it will never happen again.” Unfortunately, it usually does, thus perpetuating a cycle of abuse.

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? Has their sleep or eating habits changed? Do they have low self-esteem? Have you noticed bruises or signs of physical abuse 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 YOUR FRIEND FIND APPROPRIATE RESOURCES.** 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** (530) 752-3299 | cvpp.ucdavis.edu
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** (530) 752-0871 | caps.ucdavis.edu
- **Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Asexual Resource Center** (530) 752-2452 | lgbtcenter.ucdavis.edu
- **Women's Resources and Research Center** (530) 752-3372 for referrals | wrrc.ucdavis.edu
- For residential halls, you can contact your RA or RD

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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

BOOKS from the WOMEN'S RESOURCES AND RESEARCH CENTER LIBRARY

- *But he'll change: ending the thinking that keeps you in abusive relationships* (Hunter) 2010
- *Ditch that Jerk: Dealing with Men Who Control and Hurt Women* (Jayne) 2000
- *Getting Free: A Handbook For Women In Abusive Relationships* (Nicarthy) 1982
- *The Domestic Violence Sourcebook* (Berry) 1998
- *It's My Life Now: Starting Over After An Abusive Relationship Or Domestic Violence* (Dugan and Hock) 2000
- *In Love and In Danger: A Teen's Guide To Breaking Free Of Abusive Relationships* 1997
- *Next Time, She'll Be Dead: Battering and How to Stop It* (Jones) 2000
- *No More Secrets: Violence in Lesbian Relationships* (Ristock) 2000
- *No Secrets, No Lies: How Black Families Can Heal from Sexual Abuse* (Stone) 2004
- *You Can Be Free: An Easy-To-Read Handbook for Abused Women* 1997

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 wrrclibrary.ucdavis.edu



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