



CENTER FOR
WOMEN IN
TRANSITION

How I Can Help

When someone I know is experiencing abuse in their relationship:

- ◆ Listen and believe them! Minimizing or excusing the abuse does not help.
- ◆ Show empathy and understanding.
- ◆ Don't automatically tell them to leave. Help them to feel empowered to explore their options, make their own decisions, and support them in their decision making.
- ◆ If they choose to remain in an abusive relationship, you could express concern for their safety and let them know that you are willing to listen and support them no matter what they decide.
- ◆ Affirm that the abuse is not their fault.
- ◆ Direct them to resources that can help with support and safety planning.
- ◆ You could say:

"I support you and I'm here for you."

"I'm worried about your safety."

"You deserve to feel safe, valued, and respected in your relationship."

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive and controlling behavior used to have power over one's partner in a relationship. It can include physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or financial abuse.

Hold someone I know accountable when they are abusive:

- ◆ Be aware of the victim's safety.
- ◆ Be honest and let the offending individual know that abuse is not acceptable.
- ◆ Reiterate that the abusive behavior is a choice. It is not the victim's fault. The abuse ends when the individual chooses to stop their violent or controlling behavior.
- ◆ Offer to support his or her efforts to make changes.
- ◆ When you witness harmful behavior or language, please try to have a *positive* impact and intervene to promote respectful behavior.
- ◆ You could say:

"I care about you as a friend but I cannot condone your behavior."

"There is no excuse for violence, control, or abuse in your relationship."

"You and your partner both deserve to feel safe, valued, and respected."

Center for Women in Transition
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24-Hour Crisis Line
(616) 392-1970
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