

Emotional Wellness Checklist

How to Help a Victim of Domestic Violence



Both men and women can be victims of domestic violence and the experience can leave them feeling ashamed, embarrassed and very lonely. Here are some Do's and Don'ts when it comes to supporting a loved one who has been or is being abused.

DO

Talk to the victim in private.

Express your concern calmly and genuinely.

Provide concrete examples of what you have witnessed that raises red flags for you.

Listen compassionately.

Empathize and validate their feelings no matter how hard they are for you to understand.

Reassure the victim that the conversation is confidential so they can feel safe to broach this subject with you in the future.

Support their decision regardless of whether you agree. It is the victim's responsibility to make decisions, not yours. The best thing you can provide is support during this difficult time.

DO NOT

Pressure the person to talk or share details. Instead, reassure them that you are available when they feel comfortable to talk.

Expect the victim to reach out. Embarrassment, shame, threats from their partner to talk to others are just a few reasons why victims don't initiate conversation with friends or family. If you are concerned, you should make the first move and then continue to check in based on how comfortable the victim feels.

Tell the victim how they "should" behave, including how they should handle the situation or what they should tell you. The victim is already being controlled by their partner and if they feel controlled by you, they will back away from your friendship.