

How to Help a Friend in an Abusive Relationship

Don't gossip.

- Talk in private.
- Don't tell other people anything without your friend's permission.

Believe the story.

- Listen and believe your friend.
- Acknowledge feelings and let your friend know he or she is not alone.

Tell the person that he or she didn't deserve to be abused.

- The abuse isn't your friend's fault. Never blame your friend.
- No one deserves to be abused.
- Tell your friend you care and how concerned you are.

Let your friend make his or her own decisions.

- Respect your friend's right to make a decision when she or he is ready.
- Each of us must make decisions about our own lives.

Make a safety plan.

- What has your friend done in the past to keep safe from the abuse?
Is it working?
- Does she or he have a safe place to escape to, if necessary?

Give help.

- Ask your friend how you can help.
- Give emotional support; help your friend focus on his or her strengths and skills.
- Learn more about dating violence. Know the resources in your community.
- Is there a hotline?
- What legal, medical, or counseling options are available?
- Offer to go with your friend for help.

Based on the "Friends Wheel" in *Safe Dates: An Adolescent Dating Abuse Prevention Curriculum*, second edition, by V. Foshee and S. Langwick (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2010), and www.theredflagcampaign.org/index.php/dating-violence/helping-a-friend/.