



How to help a loved one who is in an abusive relationship

Do:

- Let your friend know you believe them.
- Encourage them to call one of the domestic abuse hotlines. Fort Bend Women's Center takes calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 281-342-HELP (4357).
- Listen to what your friend is saying. Interrupting and saying things like, "I would never put up with that!" is unhelpful and may actually do harm.
- Tell your friend they don't deserve to be hurt and that they are not to blame. No one deserves to be mistreated and there is no excuse for abuse.
- Point out the unfairness of how your friend is being treated and what your fears for them are.
- Allow your friend to feel the way they do.
- Find out what your friend wants to do about their relationship and support them no matter what they decide.
- Let your friend know abuse usually gets worse over time.
- Tell your friend you'll be there if they ever need you.
- Expect your friend to be confused, about their feelings and about what to do. Expect them to change their mind, maybe even a few times.
- Watch your body language and respect your friend's right to personal space. If your friend has been hurt, they may not want to be hugged.
- Help your friend become informed. Tell them help is available. Remember: your friend may feel guilty after sharing the story of their abuse for 'telling' on their partner.

Don't:

- Make judgments. Your values and beliefs may be different, and there is a big difference between helping figure out solutions and telling what someone should or should not do.
- Give advice. Instead, talk about your friend's choices, help them find out who may be able to help, and offer to go with them.
- Ask unnecessary questions. Your questions must be helpful, not nosy.
- Overreact. If you do, your friend may feel stupid or embarrassed. If you let your feelings get in the way, it won't help theirs.
- Confront your friend's abusive partner about the abuse. If the partner is violent, it may be dangerous for you and your friend.

Source: [Domestic Violence Resource Center](#)