



WARNING SIGNALS OF A DANGEROUS RELATIONSHIP:

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE YOU KNOW WHO IS BEING ABUSED

Each year, millions of women are physically, mentally, and sexually abused by their partners. With that statistic in mind, chances are you know someone who is being abused. Perhaps that someone is a friend, family member, co-worker, or neighbor. How is it that you can help? The information on this page will provide assistance.

Possible Indicators that Someone You Know Is Being Abused

Fingertip bruises

Bruises that don't seem congruent with explanation, e.g., a black eye said to be caused by running into a door

Wearing heavy makeup

Wearing long-sleeved shirts, especially in the summer

Slow movement as if very sore

Always rushing home from work

Always needing "permission" from partner before engaging in an activity

Partner calling or visiting numerous times a day

Unexplained absences from a reliable worker

Extreme worry/concern regarding a partner's reaction

Public ridicule by partner

Possible Ways to Help Someone Who Is Being Abused

Educate yourself on the issue of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a serious crime, not a private family matter. There is no typical abuser or victim of abuse. Call a local women's shelter for more information.

Find a way to mention domestic violence to her. Listen if she's willing to talk. Share what you know about the issue.

Offer support. Do not victim-blame or minimize the abuse. State that no one deserves to be abused or beaten. Offer encouragement and point out strengths.

Don't give up. Leaving an abusive partner is not as easy as packing and walking out the door. In the first place, leaving a batterer is dangerous; many women have to flee in fear of their lives. Other factors are involved as well when a woman remains in a violent situation. It is important to keep our own self-agenda out of the way when offering support to another individual. We each must have the right to make our own decisions based on what we feel is right or best at the time for ourselves. This isn't easy to do, but it is a must.

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