

# HOW TO SUPPORT A LOVED ONE THROUGH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Supporting a friend or a family member in an abusive relationship can be challenging here are ways that you can help.



## KNOW THAT ABUSE IS NOT JUST PHYSICAL

Abuse is a pattern of behavior used by one person to maintain power and control over the other. Abuse can affect anyone regardless of age, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or nationality. Abuse can include physical abuse, verbal or emotional abuse (including threats), financial abuse, sexual abuse, and stalking.

## DON'T JUDGE

Acknowledge that they are in a very difficult and scary situation. Let your loved one know that the abuse is not their fault, and they do not deserve it. You can listen to what they have to say rather than letting them know your feelings about their relationship or situation.



## LET PERSON KEEP THEIR POWER

Our love and deep compassion for what is happening can prevent us from letting the person make their own decisions. Remember, deciding to leave the abusive relationship is not our decision to make; it is theirs. On average, victims leave and come back to an abusive relationship 5-10 times before finally leaving for good. Continue to support to them, even as they go through the cycle of abuse.

## RESPECT THEIR PRIVACY

Do not share with others any information about their situation. You have a duty to report certain kinds of abuse (like child abuse or elder abuse), tell this to the victim and make sure they understand before they begin talking with you.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO



- Tell them about resources that are available if you know of any. There are lots of trained professionals who can help. Don't try to be the "expert" – be a friend.
- If you believe someone's life is in danger, call 911.
- Contact Child Protective Services 1-877-237-0004
- Contact Adult Protective Services 1-888-277-8366
- Suicide Prevention Hotline: 988.
- VINE (vinelink.com) is the nation's most reliable and confidential source for updated custody status and criminal case information. Register and stay informed.



Metro Office of  
Family Safety

**Family Safety Center**  
610 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville, TN 37210  
615-880-1100  
**Jean Crowe Advocacy Center**  
100 James Robertson Pkwy #114, Nashville, TN 37201  
615-862-4767

# HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONE.

When supporting a loved one going through domestic violence, it is equally crucial to prioritize your own safety. Being in close contact can sometimes put you at risk.

## SAFETY PLAN



Supportive actions that you can do for your loved one:

- Be their emergency contact.
- Create code words for urgent communication.
- Hold onto copies of important documents and resources.
- Support them as they develop a plan to leave the relationship.
- Advise them to turn to professional help.
- Adjust plan as needed through regular communication.

## PERSONAL SAFETY

Ensure that your own safety is never compromised. If you feel that you are in danger, remove yourself from the situation immediately and seek help.



## EMERGENCY PLAN



Have a personal safety plan in place, including knowing where to go and who to contact in case of an emergency.

- Make sure your phone is always charged.
- Make sure your car always has plenty of gas.
- Call 911 if you ever feel threatened or scared.

## SUPPORT & SELF-CARE

**Seek Support:** Connect with professional resources, such a domestic violence hotlines, counselor, or support groups. You might be able to better support your loved ones if you first support yourself.

**Self-Care:** Taking care of your own mental and emotional well-being is essential. Make sure to engage in activities that help your de-stress and stay balanced.



## SET BOUNDARIES

Clearly define what you can and cannot do to help. Establishing boundaries can prevent you from becoming overwhelmed and ensures that you don't inadvertently put yourself in harm's way.



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