

How to support a friend experiencing relationship abuse



HullDAP
working in partnership
to tackle domestic abuse





How to help...

Here are some tips to keep in mind when trying to support a friend who is experiencing abuse

- 1 Set up time to talk**

Take your friend aside, away from others and give yourself the time to talk without distraction. They may try to avoid this or feel uncomfortable about this so try not to push them and simply reassure them that you're their friend and want to help them. If they're not ready to talk then do not push them, just reassure that you're there if they need you.
- 2 Let your friend know you're concerned about their safety**

It's helpful to have your concerns written down so you don't go off track and can be clear. Again reassure them that you're worried about them and here to help

- 3 Be supportive**

Your friend's partner may have said things about you, be aware of this because abusive partners want their victim to be alone and isolated. Try to avoid turning the talk into an argument, remain calm, and show them you want to be helpful.
- 4 Offer help**

Remain clear that you're there to help in anyway, make sure though the help is something you can do. For example; don't offer to be an emergency contact for your friend as you have your own life and can't take on this responsibility. It is better to offer them support options which you can find on www.hulldap.co.uk and provide simple help such as sitting with them while they read a leaflet or call a helpline.
- 5 Avoid giving orders**

Saying "You just need to dump them", will not help your friend. It seems such an easy thing to do when you're not in the relationship but ending a relationship is very difficult. Instead, say something like, "I get scared thinking about what might happen to you." Remain positive and offer your support but allow your friend to make their own decisions. If you tell them to end it or run away it might make them go silent and not come to you in future.
- 6 Make a safety plan**

Safety planning sounds like a difficult task but it means simple things like; advising them to keep their phone with them at all times, fully charged with credit, remembering a number they can ring if they lose their phone and need help, making sure they tell people where they're going, and most importantly in an emergency ring 999. Giving them a helpline number can be really helpful, and even calling a helpline yourself to ask about safety planning.
- 7 Encourage your friend to talk to others**

It's great you're there to help your friend but they will need as much support as possible, this can include help from domestic abuse agencies. Offer to help find a local domestic abuse support service and offer to go with them. Offer to support them to access a health worker, youth worker, or a tutor, the doctor, or the police. Remember to make these simple offers that you can commit to.
- 8 Encourage your friend to do other things**

This can be difficult as the perpetrator wants them to be alone with them but helping your friend find as much support as possible will benefit them. These can include social groups, clubs, or activities.

Though remember that the perpetrator wants them isolating so don't be disappointed if they refuse or try to force them but continue to be supportive.

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Ending the relationship

This might be the best outcome, and what you want, but don't push them to this. Ending the relationship doesn't mean they're out of danger, it can often increase the chance of harm as it's not what the abuser wants. At this time they will need support around as they may feel quite lonely and upset. This might seem strange when the relationship has not been positive but they will feel sad that it's ended and because of things the abuser might have said. Introduce them to some support as it will help them to recover and learn ways to avoid harmful relationships in future.

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If they decide to not to act

No matter what your friend decides, remember it is their decision and be supportive. You can still say you're concerned but reinforce that you're there to help – they may come to you later when they're ready. Don't forget they might be scared about finishing with their partner.

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If you are seriously worried about their safety seek advice

Also, if your friend has a child(ren) or is pregnant and your worried about their safety, speak to a trusted adult, safeguarding lead, or alternatively ring any of the agencies listed below for advice.

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You can't 'rescue' your friend

Remember this is your friends' decision and they need to feel in control. Be there to offer support and listen to them.



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01482 318759
www.hulldap.co.uk



Useful contact numbers:

Women's Aid Children & Young
People's Service (support for
young people male/female
aged 0-19): **01482 474133**

Childline: **0800 1111**

START (supporting young men
aged 16-17): **01482 613978**

The Warren Project: **01482 218115**

Hull Women's Aid: **01482 446099**

www.hullwomensaid.org

Hull DAP: **01482 318759**

www.hulldap.co.uk

www.thehideout.org.uk

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 999