

SAFETY ISSUES

If you are seriously worried about a person's safety, or the safety of any children involved, there may be times when you should act, even without their knowledge or consent.

This might be a very difficult thing to do – it may feel like you are betraying their trust. But 3 women are murdered each week by a partner or ex-partner, male victims are murdered and so are children. Domestic abuse can be very serious and a matter of life or death. If you do not act and something terrible happens, you will have to live with that forever.

Even if your friend is angry at the time, they will probably be grateful for your intervention when they have had time to recover and reflect.

You can talk to someone by calling your local police station or calling **Crime Stoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111**

USEFUL NUMBERS & LINKS

National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 2000 247 www.womensaid.org.uk

Welsh Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 8010 800

Scottish Domestic Violence Helpline
0800 027 1234

Men's Advice Line
0808 801 0327 www.mensadvice.org.uk

Advice and support for men in abusive relationships

Broken Rainbow 0300 999 5428
www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

For LGBTQ people experiencing domestic violence
(Chinese Information & Advice Centre)
(English, Cantonese & Mandarin)

08453 131 868 ext 211 (Women's Project)

08453 131 868 ext 221 (Young People's Project)

East European Advice Centre
020 8741 1288 (Offers English, Polish and Russian)

Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151

Respect 0845 122 8609

(For perpetrators seeking to address their behaviour)

Rights of Women free Legal Advice Line
020 7251 6577 or 020 7490 2562 (textphone)

Southall Black Sisters 020 8571 9595

Advice for Asian, African and African-Caribbean women

Victim Supportline 0845 30 30 900

(Local support for male or female victims)

National Stalking Helpline 0300 636 0300

Karma Nirvana 0800 5999 247

A national helpline that provides guidance and support for those at risk of honour based violence

National Offender Management Service Victim Helpline

0845 7585 112 If you have unwanted contact from a prisoner (by letter or telephone) or are worried about their release.

Rape Crisis www.rapecrises.org.uk 0808 802 9999

The national helpline number can also be used by male victims or friends and family of the victim.

Bursting the Bubble

www.burstingthebubble.com

Website for teenagers living with family violence

Get Connected

www.getconnected.org.uk Free email and telephone helpline that finds young people the best help whatever the problem.

E-victims www.e-victims.org

Provide advice to those who are affected by electronic crime such as malicious e-mails and cyber stalking.

The Hideout

www.thehideout.org.uk Women's Aid website for children and young people living with domestic violence.

Respect not Fear

www.respectnotfear.co.uk Website for young people about healthy relationships, with games and activities.

ChildLine 0800 1111

Get help and advice about a wide range of issues, talk to a counsellor online, send an email or post on the message boards.

A WMWA Programme

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To order more leaflets or other CRUSH resources contact:

West Mercia Women's Aid

P O Box 74, Hereford HR4 9WB

01432 356146 (general enquiries)

Email: crush@westmerciawomensaid.org



Someone you know is in an abusive relationship

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



WHAT SHOULD I DO TO HELP?

It happens to anyone

Anyone you know could experience domestic abuse. It could be a female or male friend, relative or colleague. They might have told you outright, or you might have found out by witnessing or overhearing arguments or fights; you might have noticed bruises or other injuries. What should you do?

Don't get in the middle

You might feel angry that someone you care about is being abused. It is natural to feel like confronting the abuser and "having it out with them" –DON'T! It is unsafe for you and unlikely to do any good. They may take it out on your friend and put them at greater risk. Don't get in the middle of fights – call the police on 999 if someone is getting hurt.

They might think it's normal behaviour

Your friend might not think they are being abused; they might think it's just normal behaviour. This is probably because their confidence is low or because abuse has been a common feature in their life. They may need time to realise this, so pushing them could make them clam up and stop confiding in you. They may be in denial, finding constant excuses for the abuser's behaviour; blaming themselves or believing things will change. You can help by gently pointing out that there is never an excuse for abuse; that it is unacceptable and that physical violence is a crime; everyone has the right to live without fear of abuse.

Why they stay

People stay in abusive relationships for many reasons – including fear, believing things will change, emotional blackmail, shame or pride. Sometimes people get worn down and feel helpless and unable to make a decision or help themselves.

What can you do to help?

- Listen and encourage them to talk. This may take a few attempts. It's okay to tell them you're worried about them and why.
- Don't blame or judge them; don't tell them they are crazy to stay – remember this can happen to anyone
- Believe what they tell you
- Reassure them that the abuse is not their fault
- Let them know you will continue to support them
- Don't push them to leave – they need to do this in their own time
- If they are ready to leave, help them make a safe plan – remember this is the riskiest time
- It takes a lot of strength to leave an abusive relationship – keep encouraging and supporting them
- Encourage them to get support. There are numbers on this leaflet that can help and put them in touch with specialist services. If they don't want to do this, ask if there are other trusted friends or family to support them.