

You have the power to end abuse. Below are ways you can help a friend in an abusive situation, whether your friend might be hurt or might be hurting someone else. If you need help, call 1-800-LifeNet and talk to someone. All calls are strictly confidential.



If your friend is being abused by someone else...

Talking with a friend in an abusive relationship can make a big difference. Sometimes, it can be difficult to know what to say or how to say it, especially if you've never dealt with this issue before.

Things you can do:

- Listen first to what your friend has to say.
- Talk to your friend in private and keep what he/she says confidential.
- Let your friend know why you are concerned. Be specific. Refer to incidents you have personally witnessed instead of what you have heard from others.
- Offer to get your friend information about help resources.
- Mention other people your friend might talk to - a school counselor, a teacher, or another adult your friend trusts.
- Let your friend know you are available to talk more if he/she needs it.
- Give your friend the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline or LifeNet contact information.

Things you should not do:

- Be judgmental.
- Make your friend feel stupid or ashamed.
- Ask lots of yes or no questions. Instead, give your friend a chance to talk freely.
- Force your friend to make a decision or give ultimatums. Your friend has to decide when he/she is ready to get help or end the relationship. You can't do it for your friend.

If your friend is abusing someone...

If you have seen behavior that makes you think your friend may be hurting his or her partner, you owe it to your friend, and to yourself, to say something. It may be the hardest thing you've ever done, but it could make a real difference in all of your lives.

Things you can do:

- Be specific about what you saw, and how it made you feel - "I didn't like it when you told your girlfriend she was stupid in front of all of us, and I can only imagine how it made her feel."
- Take a stand. "I'm not going to sit here as your

friend and watch this happen and not say anything about it."

- Give your friend a reality check. The abusive actions will have consequences. "This is a crime, and you could be arrested."
- Urge your friend to seek help. He/she can talk to a school counselor, a coach, any trusted adult or even an older sibling.
- Offer to get information for your friend about help resources.

Things you should not do:

- Make your friend feel ashamed. You care about your friend, and you want his or her behavior to change. If you didn't think your friend were a decent person, you probably wouldn't be hanging out with him/her.

For immediate assistance or referrals call 1-800- LifeNet. Another good resource is the National Teen Dating Abuse hotline. Trained peer advocates, teens just like you, can help you locate help and talk about your concerns. Call 24 hours a day 1.866.331.9474 or online chat from 4pm to 2am at www.loveisrespect.org

What you can do to support healthy relationships

How we act around our friends and family and how we react to things we see and hear can help support healthy relationships. If we stand by and say nothing when someone is abusive to another person or when someone tells a joke or story that supports abuse, we are sending a message to the abuser that this behavior is okay.

Below are things all of us can do:

- Don't put up with or use language that supports abusive behavior and attitudes. This is language like "wife-beaters" and "bitch-slap."
- Treat everyone in your life with the respect that we all deserve.
- Be an example for friends and sibling who are younger than you. Show that you care about this issue and they will care too.
- Think about how the movies and shows you watch, the games you play, and the websites you visit affect your attitudes about abusive behaviors.
- Don't laugh at jokes or stories that support abusive behavior and attitudes.

To learn more about issues facing NYC teens and how to deal with them visit www.myspace.com/nycteen_mindspace