

Concerned for Someone Else? How Do I Help Them?

How you can help:

- ✓ **Listen** to them, try to **understand** and take care **not to blame** them. Tell them that they are not alone and that there are many people like them in the same situation
- ✓ Acknowledge that it **takes strength** to trust someone enough to talk to them about experiencing abuse. **Give them time** to talk, but **don't push them** into too much detail if they do not want to
- ✓ Acknowledge that they are in a **frightening** and very **difficult** situation
- ✓ Tell them that **no one deserves to be threatened or beaten**, despite what their abuser has told them. Nothing they can do or say can ever justify the abuser's behaviour
- ✓ **Support** them as a friend. Encourage them to express their own feelings, whatever they are. **Allow them to make their own decisions**
- ✓ **Don't tell them to leave the relationship if they are not ready** to do this. This is their own decision
- ✓ Ask if they have suffered physical harm. If so, offer to go with them to a hospital or to see their GP (there are many GP's in Coventry who are using our IRIS service which provides training and support directly into Coventry Haven Women's Aid, and is extremely discreet)
- ✓ Help them to report the assault to the **police** if they choose to do so
- ✓ **Offer to keep a record** of any incident that they dictate to you, or send pictures of their injuries so they can delete them
- ✓ Be ready to provide information on organisations that offer help to victims and their children. Explore the available options with them
- ✓ Tell them about **Coventry Haven Women's Aid; helpline 0800 111 4998 (7 days a week) and Drop-In sessions around the city at various venues Monday – Friday; please call 0800 111 4998 to find out details of today's venues. Our website provides full details of all of our services: www.coventryhaven.co.uk**
- ✓ Go with them to visit a solicitor if they are ready to take this step
- ✓ **Plan safe strategies for leaving the abusive relationship**
- ✓ **Arrange an agreed plan and or a password, so you both know what to do if they need you in an emergency and how you would communicate**
- ✓ Let them create their own boundaries of what they think is safe and what is not safe; don't urge them to follow any strategies that they express any doubt about
- ✓ Offer your friend the **use of your address and/or telephone number** to leave information and messages, and tell them you will look after an **emergency bag**, containing important documents etc, if they want this
- ✓ Look after yourself while you are supporting someone through such a difficult and emotional time. Ensure that you do not put yourself into a dangerous situation; for example, **do not offer to talk to the abuser about your friend/family member** or let yourself be seen by the abuser, as a threat to their relationship
- ✓ **Do not talk to any other friends or family without their consent; this may cause her issues that you may not be aware of**

Supportive questions you could ask, to open a conversation, if you suspect there might be abuse happening:

- *How are you doing at the moment?*
- *Your wellbeing is important to me and I've noticed that you seem distracted/upset at the moment – are you ok?*
- *If there's anything you'd like to talk to me about at any time I'm always here to support you*
- *Is everything all right at home?*
- *You don't have to tell me anything, but please know that I would like to support you if and when you feel ready*
- *What support do you think might help? What would you like to happen? How?*
- *How can I help you?*
- *I believe you, you are not alone*
- *I know this is difficult to talk about but I'm here when you are ready*

Please note that we are more than happy to support **you** too in how to help a friend, if you yourself need assistance with how best to offer safe support. Please call us on 0800 111 4998 / 02476 444 077 or via email:

info@coventryhaven.co.uk with your contact details.



www.coventryhaven.co.uk



Coventry Haven Women's Aid



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