



How to Support Someone who is Experiencing Domestic Abuse



#We Are With
YOU

If You're Worried That Someone is Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Unless you are trying to help someone who is very open about their experience, it may be very difficult for you to do anything to help this person. Most people who are victims of domestic abuse are unlikely to disclose their situation even to close family members. Remember men as well as women can be victims of domestic abuse.

This guide therefore is for when the person confides in you that they are experiencing abuse.

Things to do:

- **Give the person space and time to talk.**
- **Call them by their name.**
- **Speak slowly and clearly.**
- **Listen carefully. Allow the person tell you how they feel.**
- **Keep calm and reassure the person as you listen.**
- **Be kind. Try to understand how they are feeling.**
- **Do not try to talk over the person - wait for a 'natural' break before speaking and pause, using silence, before you speak to slow down the pace of the conversation.**

NB: Always get help from someone more experienced if you need it.

Say This:

“You are not alone and there are many people like you in the same situation”

(give the person time to talk but never push her for more detail)

“I know this is frightening and difficult for you but you don’t deserve to be treated like this”

(it is important the person understands that nothing she/he could do will justify the abuser’s behaviour)

“Tell me how you are feeling. I would like to understand better so I can help you.”

(This is important. Allow the person time to talk and this will give them relief from the feelings they are holding on to)

“Are you hurt or injured? Do you need medical help today?”

(If so, you will need to arrange to have the person seen by their GP or ED. Seek advice and support from PSNI if the partner is in the home)

“Thank you for sharing that with me. So you feel {frightened /alone/worried...}...”

(Let them know you are actively listening by repeating back key points of what they say)

“If I have missed anything please tell me.”

(Pause)

Don’t tell her/him to leave the relationship or try to offer other advice. This has to be the person’s own decision. Your primary concern is keeping the person safe and signposting to help.

Say This:

“I am concerned about you and would like to link you with services that can give you more help than I can. Would you like me to give you some information about getting the support that you need?”

(See page 4 for details of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse helpline which will be able to give personal, immediate, expert support. Advise her/him to ring this first. If the person prefers, you can also ring the helpline and seek advice on their behalf)

Make sure the person has your contact details. Tell them that you will ring back the next day to check in with them again and agree an approximate time.

Never put yourself in danger by, for example, offering to talk to the abuser. It can be extremely challenging providing support for someone who is a victim of domestic abuse. Make sure you get support for yourself after dealing with a call of this nature.



Where to get Help

The **Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline continues to operate 24/7** and provides information and support via phone, email and webchat during this stressful time. One of the Helpline Operators will be there if you need a listening and caring ear. You can call

0808 802 1414

email

help@dsahelpline.org

or visit

<https://dsahelpline.org>.

They will refer on to specialist help, for example, support for men, support for LGBTQ+ etc. You can ring on behalf of the person or seek advice about what to do next.