

What Can I Do About Relationship Violence?

You can help someone who is experiencing relationship violence:

- **Listen to them and believe them.** Recognize that disclosing to you took great strength and courage.
- **Understand what they are saying and validate their feelings and strength.** Devote your effort to understanding the thoughts, feelings, and experiences they have chosen to share with you.
- **Talk with them about their physical/emotional safety.** One way to open the dialogue is to say, "I am concerned about your safety."
- **Help the person understand that the abuse is not their fault.** The person may feel guilty about being abused. You can help by saying, "It is not your fault" or "You have done nothing to deserve this type of treatment."
- **Support the person's right to control their own life.** Don't expect the survivor to follow your advice. Remember that ultimately they must be making the decisions regarding their own life.
- **Provide helpful resource information.** Give the person numbers to local shelters and/or crisis lines. Encourage them to call.
- **Protect the survivor's right to confidentiality.** Recognize the person's choice to disclose to you. Respect their right to tell whomever they choose.
- **Contact MSU Safe Place.** Even if you aren't experiencing relationship violence personally, we can be a resource for you too. Safe Place staff can provide support, options and resources to help you to figure out how you can best help.

You can help someone who is abusive:

- **Call the police if you witness an assault.**
- **Be a role model for healthy relationships.** Treat your friends and partners with respect.
- **If you feel safe to do so, tell the person that controlling and violence behavior is not OK.**
- **Take a stand against abusive behavior.** Confront jokes about physical, sexual, or emotional violence. Don't reinforce abusive behavior by laughing, minimizing, or ignoring an act of violence or a threat.
- **Contact MSU Safe Place for information and referrals.**

517-355-1100

NOABUSE@MSU.EDU SAFEPLACE.MSU.EDU

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