

What You Can Do To Help:

- Supply her with referrals to local agencies that help victims of domestic violence.
- Listen without judging – give her plenty of time to talk; listening comes before discussing solutions.
- Continue to be her friend while expressing your concern for her safety.
- Understand that comments about the abuser often will be mixed messages – she will express both good and bad feelings.
- Educate yourself about domestic violence.

Remember...

There are many signs to look for that may suggest someone you know is in an abusive situation. You should be aware of:

- Unexplained injuries
- Someone stalking, monitoring and/or following her
- Repeated phone calls and/or disruptive visits to the workplace
- Absenteeism
- Unexplained changes in performance

Help Is Available

Many places offer 24-hour support, emergency shelter, advocacy and information about resources and safe options for victims of domestic violence. Call the statewide hotline for county resources.

NJ Domestic Violence Hotline
(Translators available in any language)

1-800-572-SAFE (7233)
609-392-2990 TTY

Women's Referral Central
1-800-322-8092

This hotline provides information and referrals on various issues concerning NJ's residents, including child care, discrimination, displaced homemaker, employment, housing, job training, legal assistance and more.

What To Do When You Care...

A support guide for families and friends of domestic violence victims



www.nj.gov/dcf

What To Do When You Care

Sometimes, people want to help victims of domestic violence, but don't know what to say. This brochure is designed to help people who find themselves in a support role for a victim of domestic violence. It will give you some helpful tips on how to be truly supportive and outlines the things you should do - and not do - to help.

There are many programs throughout New Jersey that provide confidential help to individuals who are victims of domestic violence. For more information, call the New Jersey Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-572-SAFE (7233).



What You CAN Say To Someone You Suspect Is Being Battered:

"I care about you and I'm sad this is happening to you. You don't deserve to be abused. The violence will get worse. I am afraid for your safety."

You should:

- Emphasize that you are concerned. Let the victim know you are supportive and that she is not responsible for what is happening to her – it's not her fault.
- Emphasize that when the victim is ready, there are a number of options available to help her. Allow her to make the decision that she needs help. Do not try to diagnose or treat the problem yourself, but offer to help her, including making contact with referral agencies.
- Demonstrate that you respect her decision if she decides to stay with her partner, even though you may not agree with it. Some victims leave and return to their partners several times. Let her know you support her no matter what and that going back does not mean failure.

What NOT To Say To Someone You Suspect Is Being Battered:

"If someone hit me once, I would leave. I don't know why you don't just leave!"

- You don't know why she isn't leaving. Her reality is probably very different than yours. Leaving a partner can be a very difficult process and often is a dangerous process for victims of domestic violence. In most cases, the most dangerous time for a victim is right after she leaves.

Also:

- Don't dismiss her fears of him as if she is overreacting.
- Don't try to instill shame in her for making the decision to stay or return to the abusive relationship.
- Don't tell her she is a battered woman – let her tell you.

Let the victim decide what to do and what is best for her. She knows her own situation the best. Do not put yourself in physical jeopardy to help. You cannot help anyone if you are hurt.