

How to Support Someone Facing Abuse



Recognise the signs

Learning to recognise abuse in others is an important skill. Signs someone is experiencing abuse may include:

- Anxiousness or low self-esteem.
- Drastic changes in personality or mood.
- Avoids calls, texts, or socialising.
- Apologises, justifies or blames themselves unnecessarily for abuse.
- Seeks approval or permission from their partner, including to spend money.
- Consistent monitoring or lack of privacy.
- Unexplained injuries or physical marks.
- Flinches or seems afraid of physical touch.
- Extreme relationship highs and lows.
- Aggressive or jealous partner.

Check in regularly and look after yourself

It's important to be consistent with the victim-survivor whilst providing support. Check in regularly with the victim-survivor and offer small ongoing gestures like going for coffee or a walk. Do the same for yourself, set limits, and make time for your own self-care.

Start a conversation

Prioritise the victim-survivor's safety, and choose to start a conversation in a gentle and caring way. Ask open-ended questions and validate their feelings. You could say:

“I've noticed some changes lately. Is everything okay at home?”

Share helpful resources

Helping a victim-survivor to prepare and access resources is a great way to keep them safe. Access the following resources at [Yourtoolkit.com](https://www.yourtoolkit.com):

- Leave in an Emergency Checklist
- Break Free from Domestic Abuse Guide
- Service Directory
- Coercive Control Self-Assessment
- Build and Manage Finance Guide
- And much more...

Create a Safety Plan

A Safety Plan is an exit strategy to make leaving as easy as possible. Encourage the victim-survivor to complete a safety plan, whatever their choice is, and discuss the following:

- Storing an emergency bag: With copies of essential documents, cash, prescription or medications, a change of clothes, a phone charger and any items for children.
- Safe contacts: People or services who can answer an emergency call.
- Exit strategy: Confirm which door, travel route or transport is the safest. Is cash required?
- Children, pets or property: Solve some common concerns for the victim-survivor, including how to talk to children, what to take from the house and where pets can stay safely.

Provide Practical Support to Someone Facing Abuse

Safety first

Prioritise safety, avoid actions that could unintentionally put the survivor at risk.

Remember to always respect the victim-survivor's decisions. Use consistent supportive words.



Offer temporary housing or support moving house.

Store cash, important documents or evidence of abuse in a safe place.

Go with them to police, lawyers and other appointments.

Provide access to a safe computer.



Choose a code word the survivor can send you to call the police or get support.

