



I think my loved one is being abused, what do I do?

If you suspect a loved one is being abused, it's a serious situation, and taking steps to help shows care and concern. Abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual or sexual, and it's never the victim's fault. Here are some recommendations to follow:

1. Assess for Immediate Danger

If you believe your loved one is in imminent physical harm—such as witnessing an assault or hearing threats—call emergency 911 right away. However, if there's no immediate threat, respect their autonomy, as calling police without their input can sometimes escalate risks or undermine trust. In cases where you're unsure, contact a hotline first for guidance on next steps.

2. Recognize Signs of Abuse

Look for patterns like unexplained injuries, withdrawal from social activities, fear or anxiety around their partner, isolation from friends/family, low self-esteem, or controlling behaviors from the partner. Not all abuse leaves visible marks; emotional tactics like humiliation, threats, or coercion are common red flags. If they haven't disclosed anything, observe without assuming, and avoid jumping to conclusions.

3. Approach Them Thoughtfully

Choose a safe, private time and place away from the suspected abuser to express your concerns. Start gently: "I've noticed some changes and I'm worried about you. I'm here if you want to talk." Listen actively without interrupting and believe what they share—validation can be empowering. Avoid pressuring them to leave or make decisions; they may not be ready.

4. Offer Practical Support

- Reassure them the abuse isn't their fault and they're not alone.
- Help connect them to resources, like creating a safety plan (e.g., identifying safe exits, emergency contacts, or packing essentials).
- Provide options without overwhelming: Offer a ride to a shelter, help with childcare, or assist in finding counseling or support groups.



5. What Not to Do

- Don't confront the abuser directly, as this could endanger you or your loved one and escalate the situation.
- Avoid judgmental questions like "Why don't you just leave?"—leaving is often complex and dangerous.
- Don't share their story without permission, even with good intentions.
- Steer clear of ultimatums; support their pace.

6. Take Care of Yourself

Supporting someone in abuse can be emotionally draining. Seek your own support through hotlines or counseling if needed—it's okay to set boundaries to protect your well-being. Remember, you can't "fix" the situation alone, but your support can make a difference. If things worsen, get professional help.

7. Resources

- ****National Domestic Violence Hotline****: Call 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE), text "START" to 88788, or chat online 24/7 for confidential advice. They can guide you on supporting your loved one or connect to local programs.
- Department of Human Services
<https://www.weld.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Services>
- Dial 211 (United Way's help directory) <https://www.211colorado.org/>
- Resource Center <https://www.tests4weld.com/> for STD testing, pregnancy resources and parenting classes.
- Food Bank <https://weldfoodbank.org/>
- A Women's Place <https://www.awpdv.org/> Domestic Violence shelter and 24-hour helpline
- Genesis Project of Northern Colorado <https://www.genesisprojectnoco.org/> Single-mom housing.
- House of Neighborly Services <https://www.honservice.org/> help with basic needs such as food and clothing.
- Legal Aid <https://www.coloradolegalservices.org/> free legal help