



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE YOU KNOW WHO IS EXPERIENCING ABUSE?

If you are concerned about a friend who may be experiencing domestic violence or abuse or feels unsafe around someone, review these tips on how to help them find safety and support.

- **If you are worried about a friend's safety, stay in touch and be creative.** Avoid making the abuser suspicious so that communication lines can stay open. If you both have children, for example, you can suggest joint calls between both you and the kids. You can create secret code words to use in conversations that can help you communicate more safely.
- **Ask your friend how they prefer to connect.** It is important to establish a safe communication channel since they will be, in many instances, physically close to the abuser who might be monitoring conversations. Ask them if they prefer an instant message or text over a call, and if there is a specific platform or app they prefer to use.
- **Be supportive and believe them.** Reassure them that they are not alone, and that help is available. Recognize that it may be difficult for them to talk about the abuse. If they want to talk, listen carefully and be empathetic.
- **Respect their right to consent.** Unless you strongly believe that your friend's life is in danger, avoid taking actions without their consent. They know the safety risks best, and, therefore, they should be driving any decisions related to the abuse they are experiencing.



- **Respect their privacy.** Because of safety issues, stigma, feelings of shame, and victim-blaming that survivors often face, it is critical that their experiences and identity remain confidential, unless they give explicit consent to reveal them.
- **Offer practical assistance and share resources.** Let your friend know that you want to help. If you are able, offer them a safe place to stay, transportation, or other forms of support that may increase their safety.