

# Help a Stranger



A community of support is necessary to help a survivor reach safety and peace. Even if you don't know the person experiencing dating abuse, you have the ability to become involved and try to stop dating abuse when you see it. Intervening can have a positive impact on someone in an abusive relationship and may be the difference between safety and danger. Do your part and speak up against abuse.

## What Do I Need to Know?

You can look for warning signs of abuse to help you identify if the situation is, in fact, abusive. If it feels wrong to you, it probably is. Also, know that even if you don't feel safe enough to actually intervene, even standing around and letting the couple know that you are watching and are a witness to what is happening can help.

Try to err on the side of caution. If you think something might be going on, say something. But if you think it may be unsafe for you to do something, stay back.

## Don't Mind Your Own Business

Whether it's the girl from your math class or a stranger you pass on your morning run, you can stop the abuse just by butting in. Start by addressing it directly. Let both individuals know that what's happening isn't right. Reassure the mistreated partner that they don't deserve these actions and inform the violent partner that this behavior is unacceptable and dangerous. If you don't feel comfortable calling out the abusive partner, you can still disrupt the situation by asking to borrow notes for class or striking up a conversation about anything.

Don't want to get in the action? Stand away, but let the couple see that you're watching them. Get out your cell and call for help. You can still give support without physically intervening.

## Put Yourself in Their Shoes

Dating abuse is a scary and isolating experience. If you witness someone else going through it and don't know what to do, try to imagine how you'd want to be helped. Stepping in not only temporarily breaks up the abuse but also offers support to the victim they may not have received anywhere else.

## Treat Them Like a Friend

Watching a friend endure dating violence often leaves you feeling helpless and wanting to do something more. You can give the same care and encouragement to someone you don't know as you would to a friend. Ask yourself how you would feel if no one helped your friend and something horrible happened when you weren't present. Be this stranger's friend and stop the abuse.

## Don't Neglect Your Personal Safety

Your safety is always the highest priority and you won't be able to give the best support if you're injured. If for any reason you feel unsafe, do not approach the couple. Alert an authority figure or call the police immediately. If you do intervene and the abuse continues, step away and get help.

For more information, visit [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

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