



love is respect org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

1-866-331-9474 1-866-331-8453 TTY

Support for a Friend

What would you do if you thought your friend was in an abusive relationship?

Most of the time, violence takes place when the couple is alone. You might not see dramatic warning signs like black eyes and broken bones. So, how can you tell for sure? For one thing, listen to your instincts. You probably wouldn't be worried without good reason.

Here are some **warning signs** to look for that might mean your friend is in trouble and needs your help:

1. Their boyfriend/girlfriend **calls them names** or puts them down in front of others.
2. Their boyfriend/girlfriend **acts extremely jealous** when they talk to friends of the opposite sex, even when it is completely innocent.
3. Your friend often **cancels plans at the last minute**, for reasons that sound untrue.
4. Your friend **frequently apologizes** for their boyfriend/girlfriend.
5. Your friend's boyfriend/girlfriend is **constantly checking up** on them, calling or texting, and demanding to know where they have been.
6. You've seen the boyfriend/girlfriend **lose their temper**, maybe even get violent when they're mad.
7. Your friend is **always worried** about upsetting their boyfriend/girlfriend.
8. Your friend is **giving up things** that used to be important to them, such as spending time with friends or other activities, and is becoming more and more isolated.
9. Your friend's **weight, appearance or grades** have changed dramatically.
10. Your friend has **injuries they can't explain**, or the explanations they give don't add up.

What you can do

Talking with a friend in an abusive relationship can make a big difference to them - whether they are being abused or being abusive. Sometimes, it can be difficult to know what to say or how to say it, especially if you've never dealt with this issue before.

DO:

- **Listen** first to what they have to say.
- Talk to them **in private** and keep what they say confidential.
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- Let your friend know **why** you are concerned. **Be specific.** Refer to incidents you have personally witnessed instead of what you have heard from others.
- Offer to get your friend **information.**
- Mention **other people** your friend might talk to - a counselor, a teacher, or another adult they trust.
- Let them know you are **available** to talk more if they need.
- Give them the **loveisrespect**, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, number or website address.

DON'T:

- Be judgmental.
- Make them feel stupid or ashamed.
- Ask lots of yes or no questions. Give your friend a chance to talk freely.
- Force your friend to make a decision or give ultimatums. They have to decide when they are ready to get help or end their relationship. You can't do it for them.