

## Questions to Ask Your Friend if You Are Worried About Their Relationship

- How have things been with you two lately?
- What is an argument between you and your partner usually like?
- What have you been doing to try to work things out?
- How does [partner's name] treat you when they're upset?
- What do you wish things between you guys were like?
- When is the last time you were truly safe and happy in your relationship?
- What do you want out of a partner?
- How do you see things playing out if nothing changes?
- What's keeping you in the relationship?
- What are you thinking about doing?
- How can I help?

\*Source: LoveisRespect.org

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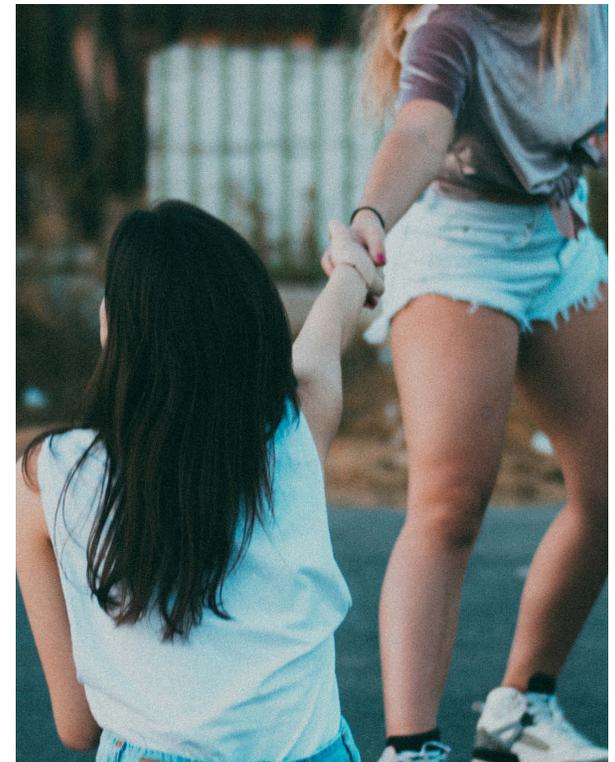
## What Do I Need to Know?

If your friend or family member is undergoing the serious and painful effects of abuse, they may have a very different point of view than you. They may have heard the abuse was their fault and feel responsible. If they do choose to leave, they may feel sad and lonely when it's over, even though the relationship was abusive. They may get back together with their ex many times, even though you want them to stay apart.

Remember that it may be difficult for your friend to even bring up a conversation about the abuse they're experiencing.

#KnowTheSignsBreakThePattern

# HELP A FRIEND



**Watching a friend go through an abusive relationship can be very scary and you may feel like you're not sure how to help them.**



**The decision to leave can only be made by the person experiencing the abuse, but there a lot of things you can do to help your friend stay safe.**

## **What Can I Do?**

- Don't be afraid to reach out to a friend who you think needs help. Tell them you're concerned for their safety and want to help.
- Be supportive and listen patiently. Acknowledge their feelings and be respectful of their decisions.
- Help your friend recognize that the abuse is not "normal" and is NOT their fault. Everyone deserves a healthy, non-violent relationship.
- Focus on your friend or family member, not the abusive partner. Even if your loved one stays with their partner, it's important they still feel comfortable talking to you about it.
- Connect your friend to resources in their community that can give them information and guidance.
- Help them develop a safety plan.
- If they break up with the abusive partner, continue to be supportive after the relationship is over.
- Even when you feel like there's nothing you can do, don't forget that by being supportive and caring, you're already doing a lot.

**Don't contact their abuser or publicly post negative things about them online. It'll only worsen the situation for your friend.**

## **Don't Neglect Your Personal Safety**

- Know your limits, and set appropriate boundaries. Not everyone has the emotional capacity to support a survivor, and there's no shame in that.
- Knowing our limits is an act of strength, because naming our vulnerabilities takes courage. Know the signs of vicarious trauma and pay attention to your own emotions.
- Your loved one deserves support, and if you are at your limit, it's okay to refer them to a local domestic violence program that could better assist them. Then, prioritize your emotional well-being and practice self-care to replenish your emotional resources.

**If you, or someone you know, is in danger, contact your local domestic violence shelter or national domestic violence hotline.**