



# I Know Someone Being Abused, What Should I Do?

How to Recognize Abuse & Help  
Someone Experiencing It

# When you think a friend is being abused or they confide in you that abuse is occurring, what should you do? How can you best help?

Helping isn't as straightforward as many think, but never underestimate how essential your support can be. There are several things to keep in mind when helping someone who is being abused. What are they experiencing? What's likely going through their mind? What do they want from you? And what might they view as unhelpful?

This toolkit will provide you with these insights and more. Inside you'll find:

- Helpful Articles
- Recommended Books
- Lists
- Danger Assessments
- In-Depth Videos
- Survey Results
- Support Communities
- How to Find Help

Remember the best thing you can do is to listen, judgment free.



There are hundreds of articles on DomesticShelters.org covering the many facets of domestic violence. Here are links to those that help you identify abuse and offer advice on what you can do to help someone who may be experiencing it:

### *Identifying Abuse*

#### [Abusive Red Flags](#)

10 indicators of an abusive partner to be aware of.

#### [This is What Abuse Looks Like](#)

Sometimes signs of control are not always obvious.

#### [Profile of an Abuser](#)

Warning signs to help you spot an abusive partner.

#### [10 Patterns of Verbal Abuse](#)

This form of abuse may be difficult to recognize.

### [Signs of Gaslighting](#)

Learn the signs of this subtle form of psychological abuse.

### [Recognizing Emotional Abuse](#)

These 19 signs will help you identify this type of abuse.

### [What is Coercive Control](#)

This difficult to recognize form of abuse is often disguised as love.

### [Recognizing Religious Abuse](#)

Is your abuser using your spiritual beliefs to control you?

### [Identifying Financial Abuse](#)

Questions to ask to help you identify this type of abuse.

### [Sexual Abuse to Control](#)

Sexual abuse can take many forms beyond rape.

### [5 Signs of Elder Abuse](#)

Domestic violence can happen later in life, too.

### [How Abusers Speak](#)

Listen for these words that could spell control, or much worse.

## *How to Help*

### [This Is Why I Didn't Tell You](#)

A survivor shares why she withheld her abuse from friends.

### [When No One Believes You](#)

When survivors are accused of lying.

### [Why Some Minimize Their Abuse](#)

The effects of this coping mechanism.

### [Survivors Denying Their Abuse](#)

Some abusers may trick survivors into denying their abuse.

### [Why Doesn't She Just Leave?](#)

Why some survivors may feel trapped in their relationship.

### [When Survivors Return to Abusers](#)

How you can offer support in this situation.

### [The Biggest Barrier to Leaving](#)

There are many, but this ranks the highest amongst survivors.

### [Survivors & Stockholm Syndrome](#)

Domestic violence survivors may empathize with their abusers.

### [My Friend Is Being Abused](#)

What to say when a friend confides in you.

### [When a Friend Is In Trouble](#)

How teens can help a friend experiencing dating violence.

### [My Friend Is In Denial](#)

How to help a friend who won't admit they're being abused.

### [Avoid Telling Survivors to 'Find God'](#)

Suggesting religion as a way to heal is right for some, not all.

### [When They're Not Ready for Help](#)

Why survivors may be reluctant to take advice.

### [Be a Better Advice-Giver](#)

Sometimes listening is better than instructing when offering advice.

### [How Our Site Can Help You](#)

Our website may help you when it comes to assisting a friend.

### [Should You Do an Intervention?](#)

If you're desperate to help, ambushing is not the best way.

### [How to Ask About Abuse](#)

There's a right and a wrong way to inquire if you're concerned.

### [10 Ways to Validate a Survivor](#)

3 phrases to reassure survivors that you believe and support them.

### [How to Intervene](#)

Safe ways to speak up for those who can't.

### [Is My Friend in Danger After She Leaves?](#)

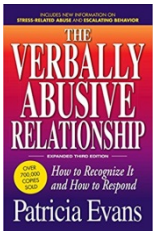
Tips for safety after leaving an abuser.



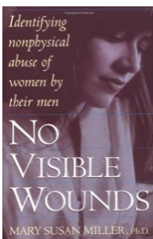
Reading books can be a helpful way to understand if you're a victim of abuse and understand the abuser's behavior.

Here are our recommended reads:

### *Identifying Abuse*

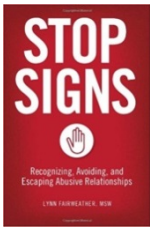


[\*The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize It and How to Respond\*](#). Learn why verbal abuse is more widespread than ever, how to recognize and deal with it safely, and most important, how to lead a happier, healthier life.

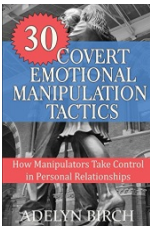


[\*No Visible Wounds: Identifying Non-Physical Abuse of Women by Their Men\*](#). Does your partner become jealous, prevent you from seeing friends, deny you access to bank accounts, credit cards or the car, call you derogatory names, humiliate you in front of the kids or turn minor incidents into major arguments? If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, chances are you are suffering from non-physical battering, controlling, tyrannical behavior that is domestic violence.

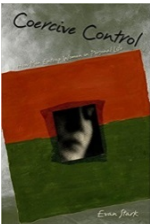




[\*Stop Signs: Recognizing, Avoiding, and Escaping Abusive Relationships\*](#). This book familiarizes readers with intimate partner violence and explains how to develop self-esteem, preparation and assertive awareness that can protect them from involvement with abusive individuals. It explores the minds of abusers, explains visible signs of danger in their attitudes and actions, and provides effective strategies for safe extraction when involved with an abuser.

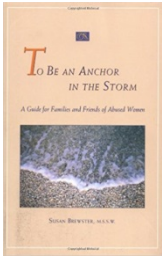


[\*30 Covert Manipulation Tactics: How Manipulators Take Control in Personal Relationships\*](#). Learn the manipulator's game so they can't play it with you. Identifying covert manipulation is tricky. This short, but powerful, 33-page book will teach you how to identify the 30 tactics manipulators use to get what they want. You'll also learn to spot the warning signs within yourself that expose covert manipulation is taking place, even if you can't identify the specific tactics being used.

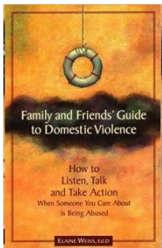


[\*Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women In Personal Life\*](#). Studies show that most abused women seek help because their rights and liberties have been jeopardized, not because they have been injured. The coercive control model resolves three perplexing challenges posed by abuse: why these relationships endure, why abused women develop a profile of problems seen among no other group of assault victims and why the legal system has failed to win them justice.

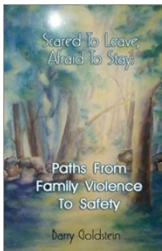
# How to Help



[To Be an Anchor In the Storm: A Guide for Friends and Family of Abused Women](#). The author, herself a survivor, teaches how to recognize the signs of abuse, handle negative feelings, become an effective advocate, deal with the batterer, and distinguish between being an anchor and a rescuer.



[Family and Friends' Guide to Domestic Violence: How to Listen, Talk and Take Action When Someone You Care About is Being Abused](#): People have many feelings about domestic abuse, especially if it is happening to someone they care about. They feel shock, anger, sadness, frustration. This book helps transform those feelings into compassion, allowing you to experience the emotion and suffering of another. Included are tips on how to listen, talk, and take action.



[Scared to Leave, Afraid to Stay: Paths from Family Violence to Safety](#): This book presents stories of ten women as they fought the courts and their abusers to gain safety for themselves and their children. The author demonstrates how courts handle divorce, custody, visitation, support, child abuse, marital property, orders of protection and crimes when domestic violence erupts. Tactics abusers use to maintain control over their partners are also discussed. Familiarize yourself with this information to better help someone experiencing abuse.



**Sometimes lists are easier on the mind because they are uncluttered and to-the-point. If you'd rather read a few items vs. articles or books, these lists are for you.**

To view all list items at once, click the SEE ALL button located below the list text.

### *Identifying Abuse*

- [25 Relationship Red Flags](#)
- [20 Things Abusers Say](#)
- [24 Teen Dating Abuse Warning Signs](#)
- [16 Signs of Financial Abuse](#)
- [35 Ways to Recognize Emotional Abuse](#)
- [27 Characteristics of Unsafe People](#)

### *How to Help*

- [24 Things You Shouldn't Say to Someone With an Abusive Partner](#)
- [25 Ways to Help Those Experiencing Abuse](#)



There are two well-known, free online assessment tools available that can help you understand the level of danger that may be present, but not always obvious.

### [The Danger Assessment](#)

The free tool helps determine the level of danger an abused person has of being killed by an intimate partner. There are two parts to the tool 1) a calendar and 2) a 20-item scoring instrument that uses a weighted system to score yes/no responses to risk factors associated with intimate partner homicide.

### [MOSAIC](#)

Using a series of questions, this tool assesses how similar a situation is to other situations that have gotten worse. After creating a confidential account and answering the questions, a detailed report is compiled immediately and tells you how a situation compares to others like it, rating it on a scale of 1 to 10.

Click video thumbnail to watch



I KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS BEING ABUSED  
WHAT SHOULD I DO?



WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?



14 Misconceptions  
About Domestic  
Violence



Profile of an  
Abuser



A lot of lessons can be taken away from people who have been through it before. Check out the following survey results to learn from the experiences of others.

- [When you were experiencing abuse, what did someone do that you found most helpful?](#)
- [Where did you find the most support while going through abuse?](#)
- [As an immigrant survivor of domestic abuse, what challenge did you face in getting help?](#)
- [As a teen, did you feel like you had someone you could talk to about dating violence?](#)



**Online forums and chats can help you connect with others who are in or have faced similar situations and find support and ideas from the survivor community.**

[AfterSilence.org](https://www.AfterSilence.org) aims to help victims become survivors and to communicate in the recovery of domestic and sexual violence. It offers an active message board and chat room for rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, incest and molestation survivors. There are over 31,000 members and about 1,000,000 posts, including recent posts and many useful posts from days and months past.

[Pathways to Safety International](https://www.PathwaysToSafety.org) If you're an American overseas, your situation is different than 99% of your fellow countryman, and this site will be a wonderful resource for you. Among the services is a 24-hour response to emails, as well as international phone options.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Page](#) offers one of the most active places where domestic violence survivors. You'll find conversation, past experiences and unvarnished stories, and occasionally advice from professionals who have joined in on a topic.

[DomesticShelters.org Facebook Group](#) is a private group designed to be a safe space for domestic abuse victims, survivors, advocates and others affected by abuse to support one another through meaningful dialogue and helpful insight.

[Fort Refuge](#) is a clever, grassroots site run by survivors for fellow survivors as a safe place to come together and discuss their struggles and victories in healing from various types of abuse. Though the forum and chat do not boast the same numbers as some of the larger organizations, they are one of the more active conversation places on the internet currently. They also add new content to their site regularly.



[Love is Respect - National Teen Dating Helpline](#) focuses on teen relationships and can be accessed by phone, text or live chat. It offers real-time, one-on-one support by trained peer advocates who offer information and advocacy to those involved in dating abuse. They also offer support to parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers.

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) offers confidential, private, one-on-one chats with advocates every day 24/7.

[OnYourMind.net](#) is a safe and anonymous place for teens to get information and support from other teens in an online chat room, covering topics such as relationships, school, depression, stress, suicide, parents, cutting, identity and health.

[Pandora's Aquarium](#) is an online forum with around 2 million posts and over 70,000 members, and is run by Pandora's Project, which provides information, support and resources to rape and sexual abuse survivors and their friends and family.

When accessing hotlines, chats or forums from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, please remember to take the necessary precautions to keep your activities confidential from your abuser. Learn more about how to stay safe online [here](#).

Also, keep in mind that local shelters may offer in-person or virtual support groups. You can find shelters in your area at [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org).



## Another way to determine if you're experiencing abuse is to contact a trained domestic violence advocate near you or through a national service.

To search for domestic violence program staffed with trained advocates, visit [DomesticShelters.org](https://www.DomesticShelters.org) and type either your city and state, or ZIP code, into the search bar at the top of the page. A list of organizations and contact numbers near you will be displayed. To reach an advocate, reach out directly by calling the phone number listed. Most are open 24/7.

To speak to an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, also 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or visit [thehotline.org](https://www.thehotline.org) to chat online.

It's important to know that your call is confidential and you can choose to remain anonymous when speaking with an advocate. To know what to expect when calling, read [this article](#).