



How To Hold Those Who Harm Accountable

If you have a friend or loved one using abusive behaviors toward their partner or ex, it's likely important to talk to them about it, especially if your friend values your opinion.

But how do you do that? There's a lot to consider that comes before the actual conversation.

Try these 10 steps

Step 1: Learn

Before you act, make sure you understand the dynamics of abuse.

Understanding **Abusive Behaviors**: Learn what behaviors are present in an abusive relationship.

[Learn more >](#)

Understanding **Power & Control**: Learn about the role of power and control in relationship violence.

[Download PDF >](#)

Understanding **Warning Signs**: Learn what indicators can help you identify abuse in a relationship.

[Learn more >](#)

Step 2: Reflect

Before you talk to them, understand where you are by asking yourself:

Why am I getting involved?

What are my feelings towards abuse?

Do I have the emotional support that I need?

What do I expect to happen?

How do past experiences influence my feelings?

Am I putting my or someone else's safety at risk?

Step 3: Consider

Prepare yourself by keeping these important points in mind:

Be Supportive: Take a non-shaming, non-blaming approach that doesn't make the person feel like they are being attacked or judged.

Don't Try to Be A Hero: Instead of following your impulse to rescue them, provide support and resources.

Know your limits: It's not your job to fix the situation. Provide them with information, support, and details about the [Call for Change Helpline](#).

Don't take it personally: The person may not want to listen to what you have to say yet, so just focus on providing them with information that they may use later.

Step 4: What Not To Do

Almost as important as knowing what to do is knowing what to avoid:

Don't blame the person experiencing abuse

Don't argue with them

Don't tell them what they "have to" do

Don't criticize either person in the relationship

Don't accept excuses for the abuse

Don't put yourself in harm's way

Step 5: Start the Conversation

Find a quiet, private place to talk and begin by asking:

How are things between you and _____?

You know you can talk to me about anything, right?

Have you heard of the Call For Change Helpline?

I saw _____ upset the other day. Is everything OK?

Is everything going well in your relationship?

Did you know _____ about relationship violence?

Do you know how common relationship violence is?

I saw _____ upset the other day. Is everything OK?

Step 6: State your Concerns

Be sure to talk to them in a non-shaming, non-blaming manner:

I've seen things like...

I'm concerned by the way you talk to _____.

I don't think it's OK when you...

Do you notice how your behavior impacts _____?

I don't like how I've seen you treat _____.

I saw _____ upset the other day. Is everything OK?

Step 7: The Discussion

Remember to be supportive and continually remind them you are here to help:

You know how much I care about you, right?

I want you to have a healthy relationship.

There is no excuse, you are choosing this behavior.

Your abusive behavior won't be tolerated.

Do you know how much your abuse impacts others?

There are consequences for your actions.

Change is possible and help is available.

Step 8: Provide Resources

Don't try to do it alone. Tell them about the support and resources available:

Call the Helpline: If you need immediate help, call the [Call For Change Helpline](#) at [877-898-3411](tel:877-898-3411), or visit our [Find Help page](#) to see a directory of crisis lines by county for Colorado.

Contact a DV Treatment Provider: [Find a DVOMB-approved provider](#) in Colorado. These providers typically offer treatment for individuals with domestic violence convictions and a court mandate for classes; however, some providers do accept self-referrals.

Step 9: Follow-up

After the initial conversation, don't let the issue fall back behind closed doors:

It is ok to get involved

Call out abusive behavior, it could save a life

Hold the person using abusive behaviors accountable

Continue to encourage them to seek help

Remember you might be the only person to intervene

Let them know that you are there for them

Step 10: Never Give Up

Continue to voice your concerns, provide support, and remember:

Change takes time

You may not have an immediate impact

Changing abusive behaviors requires a serious decision

Every situation is different

They might not be ready to listen yet

Encouragement increases their chances of seeking help

People using abusive behaviors need support to change