

Reaching Out

What friends and family can do when a loved one is being abused ...

Knowing that someone you know and care about is being abused by her partner is frustrating and frightening. Family, friends, workmates and neighbours can often feel the same powerlessness to deal with the situation as the person being abused.

As members of families, friendship networks and the broader community, we have a responsibility to work towards the elimination of Domestic Violence. We do that by breaking the silence and speaking out against it, taking action, naming the violence and challenging existing beliefs and attitudes. It's about getting involved in community projects, or as support people, and NOT mind out own business when we suspect someone we know is being violated, abused and living in fear.

What you can do to help ...

- Believe her and don't judge or question why she stays
- Listen, validate and affirm her
- Express your concerns in a sensitive and thoughtful manner.
- Don't minimise the abuse
- Gather domestic violence information and share it with her.
- Offer to hold that information at your place, it may be too dangerous at hers.
- Be prepared for her to avoid you and reject your support at first
- Don't be disheartened if she leaves the relationship and goes back more than once, the next time she might leave for good.
- Offer your support without expectations, give her space and be available
- Don't pressure her to leave or tell her what to do
- Don't assume she hates her partner, and she may defend him if you verbalise judgement against him
- Stay with it, even when you think your support isn't being acknowledged or valued, chances are many people before you have backed away through frustration, don't join them.

Remember, Domestic Violence is a crime punishable by law ...

Credit: Domestic Violence Resource Service (Mackay & Region) Inc.

