

'NOT IN OUR CLUB' FACTSHEETS

HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE YOU KNOW WHO IS IN A CONTROLLING RELATIONSHIP



Only try to start a conversation if the person is alone in a place where it is safe to speak with you and there is enough time to talk about the issue. The person may be willing to talk if they feel safe and trust you to keep their situation to yourself. Questions such as “I am worried about you because I don't get to see you often anymore” or “You look unhappy lately” may help get the conversation started.



Don't force the person to talk if they are not wanting to.



It is important to believe what they tell you. They are more likely to downplay the abuse rather than exaggerate it. Many abusers are charming to others. What you see of their behaviour may be very different to their behaviour towards their partner.



It is important that you listen and are not judgemental or critical. Do not tell them what to do but help them to explore options that are available.

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When they finish talking let them know you care and ask them how you can help. Make it clear that it is the person using violent or abusive behaviour who is responsible for their behaviour and not them. The person experiencing the violence or abuse cannot make a person stop being abusive, no matter how hard they try.



Make sure the person understands that it is not their fault they are not the reason why the abuse is happening



Be supportive, encouraging, open and honest with the person



You should let them know there are organisations that can help, including services to help them escape the violence if that's what they want to do. If you think it's important to seek professional assistance, encourage the person to do this on their own behalf.



If you think you might need to seek professional advice to help you better assist your friend or family member, it is important to let them know that you might do this. Reassure them that you can discuss the situation with the professional organisation without revealing their name or any identifying details.



Remain their friend even if they continue to stay in the relationship. At the same time remind them that everyone has the right to live free from violence. If they want to go to a refuge or safe place, support them to do so. If they are in immediate danger, call the police on 000 (Triple Zero).

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