

Let's Talk – How You Can Offer Support

Offer these Supportive Words

1. “I’m afraid for your safety.”
2. “I’m afraid for your children’s safety.”
3. “It will only get worse.”
4. “I’m here for you.”
5. “No one deserves to be abused.”

Approach, Acknowledge, Ask and Listen

1. **Approach** the subject in a non-blaming way. Tell her she is not alone and that she is courageous to talk about her experience.
2. **Acknowledge** that it is scary and difficult to talk about domestic violence.
3. **Ask** instead of telling and don’t tell her what to do.
 - ▶ “I have plenty of time, whatever you want to talk about I’m here for you.”
 - ▶ “What would you like to happen?”
 - ▶ “What is it like for you?”
 - ▶ “What do you need?”
4. **Listen** instead of talking.
 - ▶ “I won’t tell anybody what you tell me, unless you want me to or we decide it would be helpful.”
 - ▶ Be an active listener by responding to her – but avoid anger, disappointment or judgments.

Things to Keep in Mind When Talking with a Victim

1. **Believe** the victim.
2. **Respect** her choices.
3. **Empathize** with her emotional strain, stress and disappointment.
4. **Acknowledge** the difficulty of her situation.
5. **React** to what she tells you with compassion.
6. **Be prepared** for anything – a short, unrevealing answer or the flood gates opening. She could deny she needs help or recite a full-blown list of immediate needs.
7. **Take it slow** and break it down into manageable steps.
8. **Try again** if she's reluctant to or won't confide in you.

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