How Can I Help Someone?

What should I do if I see or hear abuse/violence?

If you see someone being physically hurt or threatened with a weapon, call a law enforcement emergency line such as 911.

What can I do if I suspect an adult I know is being abused?

If you see someone being physically hurt or threatened with a weapon, call a law enforcement emergency line such as 911.

Talk to them. Tell them you are concerned for their safety and that you are there to help. Let them know that domestic violence and elder abuse do not stop without some sort of outside intervention.

Offer to accompany them to speak with an advocate at a domestic violence program or a social worker at an elder abuse agency.

Be part of their "safety plan". A safety plan is created by the victim with the help of a professional. The intent is to plan for a victim's safety needs before another violent episode erupts. If you believe they are in immediate danger, call 911.

Should I talk to the abuser?

Be careful. The abuser may feel like he or she is losing control and therefore try to harm the victim. Consider your own safety as well. Ask the victim what could happen if you talk to the abuser.

Should I talk to the victim's friends or family?

Be careful. Well-intended family members may tell the abuser that the victim has told you about the abuse. Others may confront the abuser. Either way, the victim could be at greater risk of harm. Ask the victim what could happen if you talk to family members or friends.

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