

SUPPORTING A PERSON IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP



The best support that people being victimized by domestic violence can receive is others who are willing to listen without judgment, believe them, and are willing to be supportive without being intrusive. Ways you can do this include:

- Let the victim know that they are in no way to blame for the abuse they are experiencing regardless of what is going on. Violence is a choice and it is never an appropriate response. Avoid any kind of reaction that blames the victim, verbal or non-verbal.
- Avoid putting down their abuser. Keep discussion about the abuser specific to their behavior and do not attack their character.
- Allow the victim to create the language for the situation. Do not use words like “abuse” or “domestic violence” unless they have first. Take direction from them and use the language that they do.
- Understand that it is not as simple as “just leaving.” Do not make suggestions about what the victim should do. They know their abuser better than anyone else and they will know what is safe and what is unsafe. The most dangerous time for a victim of domestic violence is when they leave their abuser.
- Give the victim information on women’s crisis lines and programs in their area discretely and allow them to choose what they would like to do with it. Understand that it may be unsafe for them to have those resources where their abuser may find them. Call Cascade EAP for a list of current resources 800-433-2320.

In the workplace ask what can be done at work to help the victim feel safer both physically and emotionally, but keep it in the professional realm.

- Be sensitive to the fact that the victim may be feeling shame about their situation and allow them privacy.
- Understand that the victim may miss work or be distracted at work, if their performance is suffering the EAP is a great resource to refer them to and also functions as a 24/7 crisis line: Cascade Centers, EAP: 800-433-2320

