

# HELPING A FRIEND

## WHO IS EXPERIENCING ABUSE

Domestic and teen relationship abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a personal relationship. It includes emotional, physical, and digital abuse. You can learn more about what abuse looks like here.

If you're worried that your friend might be experiencing domestic abuse at home or in their own relationship, here are 5 ways you can help them:



### LISTEN

It's scary and difficult for a friend to tell you about abuse, and you might not know what to say—that's okay. The most important thing you can do is listen to your friend and believe what they are telling you. Be supportive and try not to judge them. Don't pressure them into ending the relationship, or tell them what to do – it's likely their partner is already doing this.



### TELL

Encourage them to tell an adult they trust, and offer to go with them. This might be a parent, a teacher, a neighbour, a sibling or other family member. It's up to your friend to decide whether they want to tell an adult or not. But **it's okay for YOU to tell someone if you're really worried that your friend might get hurt**. Be honest about this – tell them who you're going to talk to so they don't feel you're sneaking around behind their back.



### CALL

Encourage your friend to carry a helpline number, or to memorise one. You can suggest you call them together, or that you call for them. Childline is available 9am to midnight on 0800 11 11.



### LOOK

There are lots of websites with information and advice for people experiencing abuse. Have a look at Childline, LoveRespect, The Hideout and other sites.



### PLAN

Create a safety plan with your friend—see links below. They can call the police by dialling 999 any time, for free, and from any phone. You can agree a code word or emoji for them to text you if they are in trouble and agree what to do, for example, call the police or tell their parent.

## REMEMBER—abuse is not your friend's fault.

**Tell your friend that it's not their fault, and they're not to blame for the abuse.**  
**The responsibility always lies with the person causing harm, never with the person being harmed.**

## REMIND THEM—they are strong.

**Thank your friend for trusting you and let them know how strong they are – talking about violence and abuse takes a lot of strength and courage.**

#### CHILDLINE

0800 1111 [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)  
Confidential helpline (9am-Midnight) and 1:1 online support.

#### STREET GLOUCESTERSHIRE

01452 726570 [www.gdass.com](http://www.gdass.com)  
Support for young people with experiences of abuse.

#### THE MIX

[themix.org.uk](http://themix.org.uk) @themixuk  
Support with any challenge young people are facing.

#### TIC+

[ticplus.org.uk](http://ticplus.org.uk) @tic.plus  
Counselling and support with mental health for young people.

Guide to safety planning: [GSCB Teen Safety Planning](#)

For more information on staying safe, see [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org), or [thehideout.org.uk](http://thehideout.org.uk).