



When Violence Hits Home:

How Can I Help My Friend? She's Being Hurt at Home

Her soul is bruised from his hate-filled words. Her arms are sometimes black from his fists. You think she is in danger, but can you do anything?

Yes! Think "safety first." Ask her directly, "Are you in danger?" If a violent episode seems likely soon, help her get out of there. Call or urge her to call the local domestic violence program right away for advice on how to seek temporary shelter and transportation. If she (or he, if the victim is male) is not in danger now, she will probably be in danger again soon. She needs your moral support and some sound information.

- Listen. Accept her and her feelings; reassure her that she is not alone in this trouble. Battering happens to many women (and some men) in all income and education levels, in all social classes, and in all religious and ethnic groups.

- Tell her that she is not to blame. He learned to use violence as a way of expressing anger or frustration long before he met her.

- Explain that battering is not a sickness; it's a crime. Violence will happen *again* in spite of his promises of "never again." Violence increases. In almost every case, the next beating is worse, and her children may become targets for his anger.

- Help her understand she has a choice; she can choose to

stop being a victim. If she is not ready at this point to make changes in her life, do not remove your friendship. She may need time to develop the courage and

the confidence to take steps toward freedom. Remember, he has been working for a long time to wear down her self-esteem and her soul.

- Continue to be a friend. Accept her as she is and tell her she is valuable. Don't blame her when he is violent again. She *never deserves* to be beaten. Just be ready with assistance, and encourage her in every small step she is willing to take. Your support and advice may be what will make it possible for her (and perhaps her family) to find safety and healing at a later date.

Note: The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence recommends that a local law enforcement officer be

present when a battered woman leaves the home to seek temporary shelter. This is a dangerous situation! DO NOT tell the batterer she is leaving or thinking about leaving.

The domestic violence program serving this area is:



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

GT 337a

October 1994

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