

How You Can Help

When witnessing an abusive situation, it's easy to think, "What can I do? I'm only one person," or "It's not my business," or simply pretend it's not happening. The attitude of "there's nothing I can do" is one reason why relationship violence continues to grow.

These are places to start. They are some small, yet effective ways to help:

1. Call the behavior what it is.

There's a difference between being abusive and having a bad day.

2. Don't put up with language that promotes abusive behavior and attitudes.

This is language like "wife beaters" or "bitch-slap." If you are not comfortable calling other people on it, lead by example and remove it from your own vocabulary.

3. Approach this as a shared issue.

Either a man or a woman can be the victim. Either can be the abuser. Both can serve as good role models for each other.

4. Analyze your own actions and beliefs.

Try to understand how your own attitudes and actions might allow violence.

5. Support others working to end violence.

Attends events and/or volunteer.

6. Be an example for those younger than you.

Show that you care about the issues, and they will care too. If they learn about the issues early, they will be better-prepared in the future.

7. Become an activist.

If you are being abused...

- Think of a safe place to go if an argument occurs - avoid rooms with no exits (bathroom), or rooms with weapons such as the kitchen.
- Think about and make a list of safe people to contact.
- Keep change with you at all times.
- Memorize all important numbers such as police, attorney, or counselor.
- Establish a code word or sign so that family, friends, teachers or co-workers know when to call for help.
- Press charges for physical violence or threats of violence and follow through with a court order to ensure safety- keep court order on your person at all times
- Have a set of clothes for yourself and for your children stored at a friend's house or at work in the event you need to flee your house.
- Keep sets of important documents such as bank accounts, check books, documentation of past abuse, birth certificates or deeds away from your house in a safe place that only you can access.
- Emergency shelter is available 24 hrs/day 365 days/yr

If you are worried about your own behavior...

- If your actions match those we have spoken of, know that people want to help you. If you truly care for someone, you will not allow him or her to be abused, by you or anyone else.
- Talk to someone you trust. Ask his/her honest opinion about your behavior. This could be a close friend, family member, or someone you respect, like a teacher or counselor at school.
- There are people and organizations that are equipped to help address your issues of power and control. It won't be easy, but it will ultimately allow you to be part of a healthy relationship.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic violence please contact the Family Violence Prevention of Greene County Center.

24-Hour Crisis Hotline
(937) 372-4552 or (937) 426-2334

