

# How can you support someone experiencing **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?**



**ONE THIRD OF ONTARIANS** don't know what to do if they suspect abuse.<sup>1</sup>

Women accessing domestic violence shelters in Ontario most commonly (31%) learn about these services through family, friends, or neighbours.<sup>2</sup>

It could be your support that makes all the difference for someone subjected to domestic violence.

**Do you know what to do?**

However strong the desire to help a friend, always keep yourself safe. Don't get in the middle of an assault.

**IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL THE POLICE AT 911.**

Here are some steps you can take to help someone you know who is in an abusive relationship:

**1**

## **TALK TO HER.**

Let her know that you're concerned. If she denies the abuse, don't force the issue, but let her know that you're there if she ever needs to talk.



**2**

## **REASSURE HER.**

Reassure her that the abuse is not her fault and that you're there to listen without judgment. Her safety is paramount, so be sure to reinforce that she shouldn't confront her partner.



**3**

## **BE THERE FOR HER.** You can:

- Offer her a safe place to stay by letting her, her children, and/or pets stay at your home. If her partner comes to your door, don't let him in.
- Watch her children while she's in the process of getting help.
- Let her leave a packed bag at your home if it's safe to do so.
- Offer to accompany her as she seeks information and resources.
- Be prepared with resources such as information on her local women's shelter. Be sure not to share paper pamphlets or other materials that could be discovered by her partner.



**4**

## **BE UNDERSTANDING.**

Your friend may not feel able or ready to leave her abusive partner. Leaving might put her or her children in danger. She might feel ashamed. Continue to support her, while understanding that she might not be ready to leave.



**5**

## **PREPARE YOUR FRIEND FOR AN EMERGENCY.**

If she's in immediate danger, let her know that she should call 911. She can leave the phone off the hook if she's unable to speak. If she's afraid to call the police, she can call her local women's shelter or crisis centre. Toronto residents can call the Assaulted Women's Helpline at 416-863-0511 or Interval House at 416-924-1491.



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As the first centre for abused women and children in Canada, we are leaders in the campaign for women's empowerment, providing innovative, specialized services that help abused women and their children transform their lives and break the cycle of violence.

<sup>1</sup> Interval House Angus Reid Omnibus Poll, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Community and Social Services, "Highlights from the 2014-15 Violence Against Women Satisfaction Survey", 2015