

## **If You Know Someone Who is Being Abused**

*You may have a friend, relative, or neighbor who is being abused. You may have witnessed the violence, heard it, seen physical signs of it, or merely suspect it for various reasons. What should you do?*

**Ask** direct questions, gently. Give her ample opportunity to talk. Don't rush into providing solutions.

**Listen** – without judging. Abused women often believe their abusers' negative messages. They feel responsible, ashamed, inadequate, and are afraid they will be judged.

**Let her know** you support and care about her, that she's not responsible for the violence, that only the abuser can stop the violence.

**Explain** that physical violence in a relationship is never acceptable, at any time. There's no excuse for it- not alcohol or drugs, not financial pressures, not depression, not jealousy.

**Make sure** she knows that she's not alone – that millions of American women from every ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic group suffer from abuse, and many women find it difficult to leave.

**Also explain** that domestic violence is a crime – as much of a crime as robbery or rape – and she can seek protection from the justice system.

**Let her know** it is likely, in spite of promises, the violence will continue and probably escalate.

**Emphasize** that when she is ready, she can make a choice to leave the relationship, and there is help available.

**Provide** her with information about local resources – the phone number of the local domestic violence hotlines, support groups, counseling, shelter programs, and legal advocacy services.

**Contact** your local domestic violence program yourself for advice and guidance.

**THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**  
**Serving Kershaw and Lee Counties**  
**Telephone: (803)425-4357 • 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-585-4455**

**She may need financial assistance**, or help funding a place to live, or a place to store her belongings, or help caring for her pets. She may need assistance to escape. Decide if you feel comfortable helping out in these ways.

**If she has children**, reinforce her concern for them, letting her know domestic violence is damaging to her children. In fact, you may want to reach out to support her children and let them know you're there for them, too.

**If she is planning to leave**, remind her to take important papers with her, such as birth certificates, passports, health insurance documents, etc.

**If she remains in the relationship**, continue to be her friend while at the same time firmly communicating to her that she and her children do not deserve to be in this violent situation

**If you see or hear an assault in progress**, call the police. Because these assaults are often dangerous, do not intervene yourself.