

Helping Someone You Suspect is in a Crisis

Podcast Transcript

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According to the U.S. Department of Justice, domestic violence is one of the most chronically underreported crimes in our country today. If you suspect that a friend, relative, or fellow Service member may be a victim of domestic violence, today is the day to take action.

You can start by asking the person if anyone has been hurting or threatening them, letting them know you are concerned about their safety. Ensure they know that you are there for them and are willing to help them make the necessary calls to access the help they need. Remind them that nothing they do justifies violence against them, and that abusers rarely stop without intervention.

You may find that the person is not ready to leave the relationship right away – it can be frightening and difficult to leave an abusive relationship due to fear for one's safety or financial reasons. In this case, patiently listen to them and tell them that they can get safety planning help even if they are not ready to leave yet, and that help is available when they are ready to leave.

Educating yourself about the avenues of support and sharing this information with a victim may encourage them to seek help. If on or near a military installation, victim advocates are available to respond. Victim advocates work with victims to address their concerns, assess their safety and do safety planning, and give them the information they need to access services that can help keep themselves and their children safe. In most cases, victim advocates can provide confidential advocacy services under the military's restricted reporting policy. This enables the victim to receive medical care and assistance with safety planning without an abuse investigation or notification to the abuser's command. To find a victim advocate, call the installation operator or Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647 and ask for the number of the domestic abuse victim advocate. Immediate assistance is also available through the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.

Most importantly, do not ignore the situation. Reach out to those you suspect are in crisis. Let them know they are not alone and that help is available. You can help reduce the impact of domestic violence. Get involved - know the resources - offer help.

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For more information, visit Military OneSource at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>, an official Department of Defense website.