How to support someone experiencing domestic violence

DO

- DO let them know that you believe them, and take them seriously.
- DO make sure that they understand it's not their fault, and their behaviour hasn't caused the violence.
- DO listen without judging the person.
- DO validate the things that they tell you and their decision to disclose the violence.
- DO enquire about their safety
- DO be there for the person. Keep communication open and non-judgemental so that they know that you care and that they can ask for support.
- DO ask if they need help from a support service.
- DO help them to get advice and support by calling a helpline or accessing a website
- DO offer to go with them to a support service
- DO keep in touch to see how they are going.

DON'T

- DON'T judge the person or assume they did something to provoke the violence – No one deserves to be abused.
- DON'T ask questions such as "Why don't you just leave?" or "Why do you put up with this?"

  These types of questions shift the blame to the person experiencing the violence. The reasons that people remain in abusive relationships are complex.
- DON'T contact the person that is using violence without the consent of the person who has disclosed the violence to you – you can put them at greater risk if their partner finds out they have told someone.
- DON'T provide advice, or push the person to make the decision that you think they should make.

  It is up to them to seek help and support when they are ready, and feeling judged or under pressure may cause them to shut down.

  Just be there so they can ask you for support when they are ready.

Jenny's Place
Women's Domestic Violence & Homelessness Support