



Is My Friend Being Abused?

- Does his/her partner keep track of all his/her time? Display jealousy? Discourage relationships with friends/family? Prevent him/her from going to work or school? Criticize him/her for little things? Humiliate him/her in front of others? Destroy personal property?
- Has your friend been hit, slapped, pushed, thrown, scratched, shoved, kicked, spit on, choked, and/or raped?
- Does your friend spend a lot of time trying not to make his/her partner angry?

What Can I Do to Help?

- **Believe your friend.** People rarely lie about being abused. It is often a big step for a person to admit they have been involved in an abusive situation. The way your friend decides to deal with the abuse may depend on your reaction.
- **Be supportive and nonjudgmental.** Allow your friend to talk without interjecting your experiences or opinions. Listen patiently. Provide options, not advice. Validate your friend's feelings (it is okay to feel angry, sad, etc.). Encourage them to speak with a professional.
- **Let your friend know it's not his/her fault.** Survivors are often blamed for staying in abusive relationships, and abusers make their victims feel like they are at fault. The abuser is the only person responsible for the abuse.
- **Don't pressure your friend to leave.** Leaving is the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship, as the abuser may escalate the violence. Don't pressure your friend into making decisions or doing things that he/she is not ready to do.
- **Tell your friend about available resources and allow him/her to choose what to do.** The abuser has probably taken control of many aspects of your friend's life. Allowing him/her to choose how to handle the situation is helpful for your friend to regain a sense of control.
- **Do not ask your friend to choose between your friendship and his/her partner.** Explain that you are not comfortable with your friend's current relationship and might not be visiting as much if the partner is around, while letting him/her know you value the friendship. Assure your friend that if he/she needs assistance to find resources and support to safely exit the relationship, you will be there.
- **Assure your friend he/she is not alone.** Help is available through your support, Victim Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, law enforcement, and other resources.
- **What can an advocate do?** Advocates are available to plan for safety, explain reporting and other options, and assist with referrals for counseling, support groups, and shelter. Call our anonymous 24/7 hotline at (407) 823-1200 for assistance.

UCF Victim Services

Emergency 911 ♦ 24/7 Advocacy & Support (407) 823-1200
victimservices.ucf.edu ♦ askanadvocate@ucf.edu