



HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHEN THEY DISCLOSE THEIR EXPERIENCE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Listen to her/him.

Give them your undivided attention.

Let them know that you have heard what they have said.

Believe her/him.

Believe what they are telling you.

Realize that disclosing to you takes a great deal of strength and courage.

Understand what they are saying.

Devote your efforts to understanding the thought, feelings and experiences they have chosen to share with you.

Validate their feelings and strength.

By disclosing to you, they have just taken a major step in dealing with the pain of relationship violence. It is extremely important for you to validate both the feelings they are expressing and the strength it took to share them with you. An example might be, "I'm so glad you told me."

Help them devise a safety plan.

It is essential to talk with them about their physical safety.

Help them understand that the violence is not their fault.

They may feel like they are to blame.

Support their right to control their own life.

Sometimes we think we know what is best for a friend. Don't expect them to follow your advice. Ultimately, they must make their own decisions.

Provide helpful resource information.

Give them the number of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter 24-Hour Family Violence Helpline:
403.234-7233 (SAFE)

Protect their right to confidentiality.

Respect their right to tell whomever they choose; it is not your place to inform others.