



When You Think Someone Needs Help

Are you concerned that someone you care about is in an abusive relationship? It can be difficult to know what to do or how to help, but it's important to reach out. There are many ways that you can help a person who is in an abusive or unhealthy relationship.

SHALVA recommends that you **do**:

- Talk with them privately and, if possible, in person.
- Tell them that you are concerned for their welfare, and why.
- Be specific—you may be the first person who has ever brought this up.
- Ask if they are concerned too. Consider asking them if they are afraid for themselves or their children.
- Let them make their own decisions and **respect their choices** even if you don't agree with them.
- Listen to them, believe them, and affirm their feelings. This may be the first time their feelings have ever been acknowledged.
- Offer moral support. Talk about their strengths and value as a person. Remind them they are not alone and that many good, caring, smart, and healthy people also suffer challenges and setbacks.
- Emphasize that they are not the only one responsible for *Shalom Bayit* (peace in the home).
- Plan for safety. Remind them that they must take care of themselves and their children and that violence is a crime.
- Offer the help that you can realistically deliver.
- Offer practical resources such as SHALVA, other community agencies, therapists, Rabbis, and school counselors.
- Reassure them that your discussions will remain confidential and live up to your promise.

We recommend that you **don't**:

- Force the issue. Remember that you do not have all the information. Now may not be the best time for action or more discussion.
- Blame the victim. Blame solves nothing and only reinforces the guilt and shame the victim already feels.
- Talk to others about this conversation without permission. This will destroy their trust and you may make the situation much worse.
- Think that you can solve their problem for them. Instead, offer choices and respect the ones they make.
- Turn away from real danger. We are all obligated to respond to someone who is in serious danger and should direct them to help immediately.

These conversations are never easy, but they are crucial to break the cycle of abuse. If someone you care about is suffering, let them know that SHALVA is here to help with our 24/7 Help/Crisis Line: 1-773-583-HOPE (4673).