

Communicating with a Survivor of Domestic Violence



Do's

- ◆ Respect the survivor's feelings and thoughts even if you disagree or can't empathize
- ◆ Ask questions instead of giving answers.
- ◆ Assure confidentiality (when appropriate)
- ◆ Listen and support without passing judgment
- ◆ Assure the survivor that you are available to provide them with information/resources when they are ready
- ◆ Move at their pace
- ◆ Inform the survivor of resources -- **tell them about SafeHouse Denver's 24-hour crisis and information line, 303-318-9989**
- ◆ Suggest safety planning

Don'ts

- ◆ Acting skeptical or imposing your own judgments, values, and beliefs
- ◆ Telling her /him what she/he should do; Making decisions for her/him
- ◆ Making promises you can't keep
- ◆ Blaming/criticizing
- ◆ Hurrying the decision process
- ◆ Intervening beyond your capabilities

SafeHouse Denver's 24-Hour Crisis & Information Line is available to anyone - survivor, family or friend
- anytime: 303-318-9989

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What to say...

- ◆ I am afraid/concerned for you.
- ◆ Does it bother you/scare you when s/he does that?
- ◆ I think that would bother/scare me.
- ◆ Are you ever afraid of him/her?
- ◆ You shouldn't have to be afraid.
- ◆ It seems like s/he is controlling, overly jealous, etc.
- ◆ Have you thought about leaving?
- ◆ Have you thought about a safety plan?
- ◆ You deserve to be treated well.

What not to say...

- ◆ Why don't you just leave?
- ◆ Why do you let him/her treat you like that?
- ◆ S/He is a loser; s/he is no good.
- ◆ You should just dump him/her.
- ◆ You don't really know what love is yet.
- ◆ It's not real love.
- ◆ S/he doesn't love you or s/he wouldn't treat you like that.
- ◆ "You should...." or "If I were you..."

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