



FAMILY HARM: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Many of us, over the course of our lives, will face concerns about someone we know who is in an abusive situation and wonder how we can help.

It may feel difficult to help someone experiencing abuse, however that person needs our continuing support. By reaching out and checking-in, you are performing an important role by keeping communication open and showing that you care.

Victims in violent or harmful households often feel ashamed and isolated, especially if the abuse is occurring at the hands of a family member or partner. There are many reasons why they might stay: emotional, financial, to keep the family together, their age, or because they are too scared to leave or don't know how. While outsiders might find it hard to understand, the reasons are very real and significant for the individual involved. It is important to let them know that the abuse is not their fault and that there are resources and organisations out there willing to assist them to report the abuse, leave the situation or even seek help for the abuser so they stop.

How can you help?

- Find a safe place and time to talk about it.
- Listen and be supportive without being judgmental.
- Acknowledge the potential danger of their situation.
- Confirm their experiences, feelings and fears.
- Provide practical assistance such as transport or childcare.
- Discuss options for them and help them plan for their safety.
- Help them to find out what help is available in the community.
- Respect their process, their timetable, and their decisions.
- Affirm your support whether they stay in the situation or not.
- Remind them that no one deserves to be abused for any reason and that there is help available when they are ready.

What is helpful to say?

- No one deserves to be treated like that.
- Everyone has the right to be safe.
- You are not responsible for your abuser's behaviour.
- I'm here if you want anything.
- Thanks for telling me about this.
- How can I help?



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For further assistance:

In an emergency, if you are afraid for anyone's safety including yourself, notify **New Zealand Police** immediately on **111**. Family violence is regarded as a crime and Police take it seriously. Remember, children who are not directly abused but who witness family violence are still being affected by the abuse.

- **Family Violence: It's Not OK** has a Family Violence Information Line, **0800 456 450**, which provides self-help information and connects people to services where appropriate. It is available seven days a week, from 9am to 11pm, with an after-hours message redirecting callers in the case of an emergency.
- **Women's Refuge** - Phone **0800 REFUGE (0800 733 843)** or [look up your local refuge](#).
- **YouthLaw** - Phone 0800 884 529 for legal advice for young people and children. They are available Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm or you can email nzyouthlaw@gmail.com.
- **Oranga Tamariki - Ministry For Children** - Phone **0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)** if you are concerned about a child or young person. You can also report by email contact@ot.govt.nz.
- **Safe To Talk** - Phone **0800 044 334** or text **4334** for a free and confidential 24/7 sexual harm helpline. You can also reach them by email at support@safetotalk.nz.
- **Rainbow Rights - Relationships** - Free advice covering questions related to intimate partner violence, being outed and more within the rainbow community.
- **Community Law Centres** are located throughout the country and provide free legal help.

Remember – people of all genders, ages and circumstances can be victims of family or household harm. [Unfortunately, disabled people report significantly higher rates of intimate partner violence than those without disabilities, among both genders.](#) There are organisations out there that are dedicated to helping in many situations.

Older people are also vulnerable to abuse and neglect. **Age Concern** offers free and confidential support, advocacy and information for people facing elder abuse. They also provide education to assist people working with and caring for older people to identify and prevent harm.