

TALKING TO SURVIVORS

For someone experiencing abuse, ordinary experiences and well-intended questions or statements can be triggering and retraumatizing. Abuse crushes the person's self-esteem and puts the person in a vulnerable state. Be mindful, empathetic, and nonjudgmental in your responses to someone undergoing or healing from domestic violence. Here are some suggestions on what not to say to a survivor or victim of abuse and what to say instead.

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

WHAT TO SAY:

Why don't you leave the abusive home?

Leaving is a complicated and difficult choice for various reasons. Be supportive regardless.

You didn't deserve what happened to you. There is no excuse for abuse.

Why did you wait so long to leave?

The decision to leave an abusive home isn't an easy one.

I'm glad you're safe now that you're out of that situation.

What did you do to provoke the abuse?

Abuse is the responsibility of the abuser only.

I believe you. I'm sorry this happened to you. I appreciate you trusting me.

Is it abuse if he didn't hit you?

Abuse is not only physical. It is also psychological, emotional, verbal, spiritual etc.

You are not alone. I care about you and am here to listen or help in any way I can.

Why is it so hard for you to report an assault?

Someone experiencing abuse might not know that this is abuse. They could also be scared to talk about it. Reporting can be difficult and complicated.

Whatever reaction you are having is normal. You are not going crazy.

Why would you let someone treat you this way?

Never blame someone being abused for the pain they are going through.

It is not your fault. You didn't do anything to deserve this.

There are two sides of every story.

No matter what the other side of the story is, no one deserves to be abused.

You are not responsible for your partner's violence.

You need to move on.

Healing is a journey and it can take a lifetime for someone to overcome their pain.

I'm here to listen and not judge. What can I do to support you?