



# KATIE BROWN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Promotes Respectful Relationships by  
Teaching Relationship Violence Prevention

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## What To Do if Your Friend is Being Abused

### **Be there:**

Believe your friend. Let your friend know you care and that you are there to listen and support them.

### **Acknowledge the abuse:**

Let your friend know that name-calling, put-downs, mind games, the silent treatment, telling someone what to wear or who to be with are forms of abuse just as much as pushing, shoving hitting and unwanted sexual touch.

### **Assess the danger:**

Ask if your friend's boyfriend or girlfriend has access to a weapon, uses alcohol or drugs, has ever been violent with another person, or has threatened to hurt themselves or others. If you are worried that your friend or their girl/boyfriend's life is in danger, contact an adult you trust immediately.

### **Remind your friend of her/his strengths:**

Talk to your friend about the things you like about them and the things they do well. Let your friend know you have confidence in their ability to make good decisions.

### **Identify options and resources:**

Let your friend know about agencies, adults, and friends who can help.

**Emphasize that the abuse is not your friend's fault:**

Tell your friend that no matter what s/he has done, s/he is not to blame for the abuse. The only person responsible for the abuse is the person who is abusive. Help your friend recognize the abuser's excuses, which may include:

- They may blame alcohol. Tell your friend that even though the abuser may use drugs or alcohol, it does not cause them to be violent.
- The abuser may say they just lose control. Explain that abuse is not being out of control, it is controlling behavior.
- The abuser may blame your friend for provoking the abuse. Help your friend see that their words or actions do not justify violence or abuse.
- The abuser may have told your friend that they wouldn't be violently possessive or jealous unless they loved him/her. Let your friend know that jealousy and possessiveness do not equal love.

**Respect your friend's decision:**

If your friend decides to stay in the relationship, say things like: "I am worried that you are not safe. I know that you have to do what you think is best. I just want to let you know the things that scare me about you staying in the relationship."

**Keep yourself safe:**

Supporting a friend who is being abused can be very draining. Take care of yourself and get the support you need to be a friend. Be sure to keep yourself physically safe from the person abusing your friend.