

# Neighbourhood Support

## New Zealand



Phone 0800 4NEIGHBOURS

Phone 0800 463 444

[www.ns.org.nz](http://www.ns.org.nz)

### Neighbourhood Support Fact Sheet

#### Family Violence: How friends and family can help

Many people are concerned about people they know who are in a relationship that is abusive. They wonder how they can help.

It may feel difficult to help someone who stays in a relationship that is abusive; however that person needs your continuing support. You are performing an important role by staying in touch and showing that you care.

Women in violent relationships often feel ashamed and isolated, especially if they stay in the relationship. There are many reasons why a woman might stay; emotional, financial, to keep the family together, or because she is too scared to leave. While outsiders might find it hard to understand, the reasons are very real and significant for the woman involved. It is important to let her know that the abuse is not her fault. Ending an abusive relationship is a process that often takes several years.

How can you help?

- Find a safe place and time to talk about it.
- Listen and be supportive without being judgemental.
- Acknowledge the potential danger of her situation.
- Confirm her experiences, feelings and fears.
- Provide practical assistance with child care and transport.
- Discuss options for her and help her plan for her safety.
- Help her to find out what help is available in the community.
- Respect her process, her timetable and her decisions.
- Affirm your friendship whether she stays with her partner or not.
- Remind her that no one deserves to be abused for any reason and that there is help available.
- Check that the children are physically safe.
- Ask about the children. She may not be aware that witnessing abuse is harmful to children.

What is helpful to say:

- No one deserves to be hit.
- There's no excuse for abuse.
- Everyone has the right to be safe.
- You are not responsible for his behaviour.
- You don't deserve to be treated like that.
- I'm here if you want anything.
- Thanks for telling me about this.
- How can I help?

What **not** to say:

- What keeps you with someone bad like that?
- What did you do to make him hurt you?
- How long are you going to put up with this?
- You should get your life together and leave.
- If it were me, I wouldn't stay with him.
- I can't help you anymore if you're not going to do something about this.

For further assistance:

- Family Violence: It's Not OK campaign [www.areyouok.org.nz](http://www.areyouok.org.nz) has an 0800 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.



- [Relationship Services www.relate.org.nz](http://www.relate.org.nz) Phone 0800 RELATE (0800 735 283) during business hours for further information or to make a booking for counselling.
- [Preventing Violence in the Home www.dvc.org.nz](http://www.dvc.org.nz) Phone 0508 DVHELP (0508 384 357) from anywhere in the country. People who need support and information in the Auckland region can call the helpline between 7:30am and midnight on (09) 303 3939.
- [Women's Refuge www.womensrefuge.org.nz](http://www.womensrefuge.org.nz) Phone the National Office (04) 802 5078 or look in the white pages of the phone book for your local refuge.
- [Community Law Centres www.communitylaw.org.nz](http://www.communitylaw.org.nz) are located throughout the country – look in the white pages of the phone book.
- YouthLaw [www.youthlaw.co.nz](http://www.youthlaw.co.nz) is located in Auckland. Phone (09) 309 6967 (they accept collect calls made in New Zealand from under 25 year olds).
- [Child, Youth and Family www.cyf.govt.nz](http://www.cyf.govt.nz) Phone 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) if you are concerned about a child or young person.
- National Network of Stopping Violence Services [www.nnsvs.org.nz](http://www.nnsvs.org.nz) Phone 0800 478 778.
- Jigsaw [www.jigsaw.org.nz](http://www.jigsaw.org.nz) is a network of groups that advocate against all form of child harm and neglect, and family violence. Phone the helpline 0800 228 737.

**In an emergency, if you are afraid for anyone's safety, telephone the police immediately.**

Family violence is regarded as a crime and the police take it seriously.

Remember that children who are not directly abused but who witness family violence are being hurt and damaged by the abuse.

Remember also that while it is more common for women and children to be the victims of violence in a relationship that is abusive, men and children may also be the victims and need help and support. Some of the agencies listed here can also assist men.

[Older people](http://www.ageconcern.org.nz) are also vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Age concern offers free and confidential support, advocacy and information for people facing elder abuse. Age Concern also provides education to assist people working with and caring for older people to identify and prevent elder abuse or neglect. See [www.ageconcern.org.nz](http://www.ageconcern.org.nz)

