

If your friend/loved one is the abusive partner...

- **Be aware of your thoughts and feelings.** Acknowledge your perceptions of the issues and your reactions both prior to and during conversations with your friend. Your perspectives and feelings impact how you convey thoughts and are perceived by your friend.
- **Consider sharing information with your friend/loved one's partner.** Being confronted for acting abusive threatens an individual's power and control. If your loved one feels threatened, he/she might lash out at his/her partner following your conversation. Depending on the circumstances, it might be beneficial to speak with your loved one's partner prior to having this difficult conversation.
- **Don't let the conversation turn into a discussion of his/her partner's faults.** Your friend/loved one may provide excuses for his/her behavior based upon how his/her partner behaves. In fact, your friend/loved one will most likely try to turn the conversation away from himself/herself.

...or offender

- **Remain firm.** Abuse is about the manipulation of power and control. Your friend/loved one is an expert in this area. He/she may use a variety of techniques to convince you that you are mistaken. While this is possible, if you are willing to address your concerns with him/her, chances are that what you suspect is true.
- **Expect a reaction.** Your friend/loved one will most likely not accept your conversation well. He/she will be angry, hurt, sad, etc. Be prepared to protect your physical safety (i.e. locating yourself closest to the door) and consider contacting a friend or family member in advance to share your location.
- **Tell your friend it is never acceptable to hurt someone (physically, emotionally, or sexually).** Your friend/loved one may share reasons why he/she reacted in an abusive way. However, reiterating that there is no excuse for abuse is essential.
- **Give specific examples of behaviors.** It is more difficult to ignore or deny specific examples of behavior, particularly if there are multiple examples.
- **Tell person to take responsibility for behavior.** Abuse is a choice and he/she can make the choice to change. Acknowledge that change is difficult, but you'll support him/her in the process. However, first he/she needs to acknowledge that a problem exists.
- **If you witness incident of violence, call 911 or local police.** Safety should be a priority.
- **Become informed.** It is incredibly difficult to have these conversations. Research abuse and violence. Contact a local service provider, such as Belles Against Violence Office, to speak with a professional regarding how to best approach and proceed. It may also be helpful to debrief following the conversation.