

What to do if your friend is experiencing violence or abuse:

Rainbow communities have the power to help one another be safe, by supporting each other.

If you're worried about a friend who you think is experiencing partner violence, there are lots of things you can do, while still making sure to keep yourself safe. To out violence, we need to talk to each other when we have worries.

You might like to consider:

- Telling them you feel worried in a safe and caring way “I’ve been feeling worried about how you’re doing, things don’t seem to be going well”
- Listening to what they say, and trying not to judge – you don’t need to have all the answers. Sometimes just reflecting back what someone has said can be very helpful.
- Affirming that you believe them, and that any kind of violence or abuse is not ok, not their fault, and not normal in rainbow relationships.
- Gently challenging any excuses for abuse. Abuse is never ok, but often people experiencing abuse will blame themselves or make excuses. Say things like “I don’t think that behaviour is ok, even if someone is drinking/under pressure at work/insecure/a survivor.”
- Getting informed. Call a helpline and ask questions about what support is available for your friend. Tell them or show them what you find out, but let them make up their own mind.
- Giving support not advice. People need to be able to make their own decisions, and that might feel frustrating if you’re worried about your friend’s safety. Talk about your frustrations with a specialist agency, or another trusted person – not your friend experiencing violence or abuse.
- Giving practical help – a place to stay, babysitting, going with them to the police, doctors, WINZ, letting them know they can call you if they need to. Ask them what kind of help they most need, and work out together how they can get that from you and other friends.

