

FIVE STEPS TO HELP A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN CRISIS

1. Listen. Be there.

When someone is in distress, often they just need someone to listen to them without judgement, be there and provide emotional support until they are able to think more clearly or feel calmer.

2. Do not use blaming language.

Use language that will create a safe environment to talk.



DO

- Validate their feelings, i.e. "It is normal for you to feel scared right now."
- Explain different options available to them and allow the client to make a decision.



DON'T

- Downplay or undermine their feelings, i.e. "He is not really that dangerous."
- Question their choices, i.e. "Well why are you still there?"

3. Do not minimize abuse, attacks, or threats.

It is common for survivors of domestic violence to minimize the abuse they have suffered. It is important that we do not minimize abuse, and gently convey concern for their safety.

4. Remind them to trust their instincts.

If the client feels unsafe, encourage them to get help, call the police, or find a safe place. It is best to err on the side of caution. Reference our *Safety Planning Guide* for more information and resources.

5. Empower them to make choices.

Keep in mind that abusers try to take away their victims' agency, voice, and ability to choose. It is important that the information we provide enables the client to feel that they have options available to them and that THEY can make those choices.