

#IAMASUPPORTER

HOW TO RESPOND TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

During this World Cup, over 5 billion people will come together to share their support for the game. Whilst this may be a time of joy and to watch football legends and support your own country, it could be a time of stress, anger and, unfortunately, violence. Someone, you know experiences abuse and violence every day at the hands of their partner, join the #iamasupporter campaign to take a stand and **recognise, respond, refer and reach out**.

Domestic and sexual violence can impact anyone, at any point in their life, regardless of their background, age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, relation or sexuality.

To end domestic and sexual violence, we all need to be part of the solution. Use the toolkit to increase your understanding of domestic violence, gather information and access resources which will all prepare you to help someone get the support that they may need and deserve.

Knowing what to say to someone who is experiencing domestic violence, at times can be overwhelming at times. The most important thing to remember is that you don't need to be an expert - you need to be a friend, listen without judgment and support them to access specialist domestic violence services.

Talking about these issues openly will help end the shame and stigma that domestic violence survivors are burdened with.

- Recognize** Be confident in your understanding of domestic violence,
- Respond** Be empowered to respond to disclosures of domestic violence, and listen without judgement
- Refer** Enable and encourage engagement with local specialist support services.
- Reach Out** Show your support by using social media to share resources, and information to improve understanding of domestic violence. Share to your social media profiles that you are a supporter by using the #IAMASUPPORTER social media image and copy.

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HOW TO SUPPORT SOMEONE IN THE MOMENT

Listen without judgement

Remember, if someone you know discloses that they are currently experiencing abuse or have been abused or sexually assaulted in the past, this could be the first time they're telling anyone. Listening without judgment or blame and letting them know they're not alone can make a huge difference.

Let them know that you believe them. By letting a victim/survivor know that you believe them, you can change that person's life. A victim/survivor may feel like what happened to them is their fault

Ask what more you can do to help

Ask what more you can do to help and know where to point someone for more help. You can also reach out to national hotlines for free, confidential help and/or referrals to local advocacy centres that offer additional counselling or assistance.

Support their decisions

It is critical for a victim/survivor to regain their sense of control and agency. Support their decisions instead of pushing them to take actions that they may not feel comfortable with (such as reporting to the police, or seeking counselling).

Take care of yourself too.

Make sure you seek support and help if you are feeling overwhelmed. Domestic violence and sexual assault can be extremely difficult and painful experiences for the families and friends of victims/survivors. Common feelings of those supporting victims/survivors include helplessness, frustration, anger and guilt. It can be helpful to talk with someone. Confidential support is available

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