

## Your Role

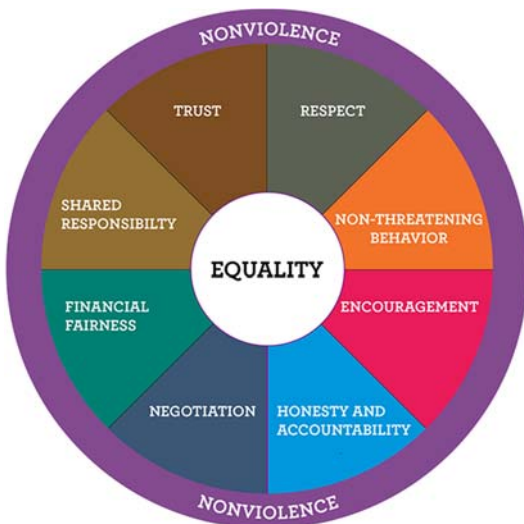
Leaving an abusive relationship is a process and can be a dangerous time. In order for your support to be sustained, it is important that you not only look after yourself emotionally, but also physically and mentally. It is important for you to set your own boundaries and to have your own safety plan.

If all this seems overwhelming, remember these words:

“No matter what you decide to do, I will support you and I will be here for you whenever you need me.”

Or, if you can't or don't want to say that, how about, “There are free and confidential services that can help you any time of the day or night. You are not alone.”

## SUPPORT = SUCCESS



## Resources

### **Crystal Judson Family Justice Center**

718 Court E  
Tacoma, WA 98402  
Crisis Helpline (253) 798-4166  
1-800-764-2420  
TDD # 253-798-4620  
Monday through Friday 8:30am-4:30pm  
aplacofhelp.com

### **YWCA Shelter and Crisis Line**

405 Broadway  
Tacoma, WA 98402  
Crisis line - 253-383-2593  
24 hour Crisis Email:  
crisis@ywcapiercecounty.org  
Office - 253-272-4181

### **WA State Domestic Violence Hotline**

1-800-562-6025

### **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

1-800-799-7233 / TTY # 1-800-787-3224

### **JBLM Family Advocacy Program**

253-966-7233

### **Rebuilding Hope**

#### **(Pierce County Sexual Assault Center)**

1-800-756-7273  
253-474-7273

## Crystal Judson Family Justice Center



HOW TO SUPPORT A VICTIM  
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SUPPORT = SUCCESS

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## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior that is used by one partner to manipulate and gain power and control over the other partner. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Physical harm.
- Threats and/or coercion to force the victim to do something they don't want to do.
- Emotional, mental and verbal abuse including threatening to cause physical harm, name calling, putdowns, blaming, destroying victim's self-esteem or creating a situation that makes the victim dependent on the abuser.
- Isolation from family or friends.
- Intimidation through gestures or looks.
- Economic abuse by controlling access to finances.
- Stalking by following, monitoring phone, computer and/or social media.
- Sexual abuse, which can include sexual coercion (this can happen even in relationships where sex has been consensual in the past).

- Abuse or threats towards pets.
- Threats regarding the children—threats to withhold access to the children, threats to call CPS or using the children to monitor the victim.

## Barriers to Leaving

There are many reasons why a victim might feel as though they cannot leave. It is important to realize that each and every reason is real and true to the victim's own sense of survival.

- A feeling that they have nowhere to go.
- No access to finances.
- Lack of reliable transportation.
- Threats of violence towards the victim or the victim's loved ones.
- The abuser threatening to harm themselves if the victim leaves or tells others about the abuse.
- The victim might not believe that they have the physical, mental or emotional strength in themselves to be able to leave and be successful away from their abuser, because the abuser may have told them repeatedly that they can't survive without them.
- Abuse often starts slowly and subtly, and gradually becomes worse over time making it difficult for the victim to remember what safe and healthy looks like.
- The abuser has made promise after promise that they will change, if only the victim stays. The victim may still love the abuser and want to believe these promises.

## How to Support a Victim/Survivor of Domestic Violence

Being a family member or a friend of someone you suspect is a victim of domestic violence can be a very difficult position to be in. Family and friends can play an integral role by believing their loved one.

- If they express they want to leave, help them connect to an advocate to create a safety plan.
- Reinforce the abusive behavior is not deserved.
- Ask the victim what type of support would be helpful.
- Provide a safe time and place to LISTEN to them.
- Do NOT pressure the victim to leave or try to make decisions for them.
- Do NOT tell the victim what to do or what you would do if you were in their place. Even if you are a survivor of domestic violence yourself or know of others that have been in similar situations, everyone's situation and safety plan is unique.
- Do NOT criticize their choices or what they have to say or tell them that they need to "share" the blame for what is happening to them.
- Do NOT criticize the abuser or focus on why the abuser is abusive. Instead, reinforce that the victim deserves to be safe and feel respected in their relationship.