

SISTERHOOD

WOMEN FOR
UNIONISM,
SOLIDARITY



DO YOU KNOW A WOMAN WHO IS BEING ABUSED?

ALLOW YOUR FRIEND TO MAKE HER OWN DECISIONS

Men who use violence do so as a way of controlling their partners. A woman who has been assaulted may come to believe that she can have no control over her life and that her ability to make decisions has been beaten out of her. To help her feel more confident and regain control over her life:

- Let her know that there are no simple solutions, but that change is possible. The first step is to look after her safety.
- Point out different options available to your friend, and help her evaluate each one. Your role as a friend is to support, not rescue.
- Allow her to decide which option is best for her. If you strongly disagree, remember that it's her life, not yours.
- Let her know that you'll stand by her no matter what she decides.

REMEMBER: You may be the only person that can see your friend through to a life without violence. Don't give up on her - just because the decisions she makes are different from the ones you might make, doesn't mean she doesn't want or need your support. If she is not really ready at this time, see the next column.

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HELP ME TO HELP MYSELF

IF YOU ARE GOING TO HELP ME

1. Please be patient while I decide if I can trust you.
2. Let me tell my story. The whole story in my own way.
3. Please accept that whatever I have done, whatever I may do is the best I have to offer and seemed right at the time.
4. I am not "a person". I am this person, unique and special.
5. Don't judge me as right or wrong. Bad or good. I am what I am, and that's all I've got.
6. Don't assume that your knowledge about me is more accurate than mine. You only know what I have told you. That's only part of me.
7. Don't ever think that you know what I should do. You don't. I may be confused, but I am still the expert about me.
8. Don't place me in a position of living up to your expectations. I have enough trouble with mine.
9. Please hear my feelings. Not just my words -- accept all of them. If you can't, how can I.
10. Don't save me or try to "fix" my situation. I can do it myself. I knew enough to ask for help, didn't I?

