



HELPING HANDS



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

(excerpts from "TheHotline.org")

How can you help someone experiencing Domestic Violence?

1. Educate Yourself and Others

Understanding domestic violence complexities is essential. Take the time to educate yourself about the different **types of abuse**—physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and digital. **Local resources** like local shelters and assistance providers in your community provide valuable information. Share what you learn with your social circles to foster awareness and empathy. The more we know, the better equipped we are to support those in need.

2. Listen Without Judgment

Leaving an abusive relationship is a highly personal decision but all survivors benefit from having trusted people during this time. Since those experiencing abuse are often isolated by their abusers, it's imperative to know how to support survivors on the path to safety. One of the most powerful things you can offer a domestic violence survivor is support. Here are some ways to **support** a survivor:

- **Create a safe space** for them to share their experiences without fear of judgment or blame.
- Let them **express their feelings** while validating their emotions.
- Many victims feel isolated and unheard; your willingness to **listen** can make a significant difference in their healing journey.
- Help them create a **safety plan**.



3. Encourage Professional Support

Domestic violence survivors are often left with emotional scars that outlast the physical effects. Some are at an increased risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or other stress-related mental health issues.

Counseling and support from family and friends can help survivors **break the isolation** of domestic violence. Healing from domestic violence often requires professional intervention. In **counseling** sessions, survivors can share their feelings, thoughts, and fears in a safe and confidential environment. Counselors are non-judgmental third-party advisors who listen and assist survivors in working through their traumas.

In addition to coping with their remaining anxiety, trauma specialists can also help survivors relieve stress and find ways to cope.

Encourage your friend or family experiencing domestic violence to seek help from counselors, therapists, or support groups that specialize in trauma and abuse. You can assist by researching **local resources**, offering to accompany them to appointments, or helping them find online support communities. Professional guidance can provide victims with the tools they need to rebuild their lives.



4. Raise Awareness and Advocate for Change

Remember, it is important to support survivors and victims of domestic violence not just during this awareness month, but every day. Together, we can help their healing journey. Here are some ways you can raise awareness about domestic violence and support survivors:

- Request **print materials** or download digital materials to share with your networks.
- Engage in social media campaigns and conversations using the hashtag #HealHopeCenter.
- Educate yourself and others on domestic violence statistics and issues to better support survivors. By speaking out and taking action we can help create a safer and more supportive society for all.

For more ideas to raise awareness in your community, visit our partners, the **Domestic Violence Awareness Project** (DVAP) for more ideas.

Your local EAP Representative is a good resource for information. Please refer to the placard below for their contact information.

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peers do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations; however, they are trained to get an idea of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peers will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you were experiencing.



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Recognize the warning signs of abuse

At the start of a new relationship, it's not always easy to tell if it will later become abusive. In fact, many abusive people appear like **ideal partners** in the early stages of a relationship. The warning signs of abuse don't always appear overnight and may emerge and intensify as the relationship grows. Yet, every relationship is certainly different, and domestic violence doesn't always look the same. However, one feature shared by most abusive relationships is that the abusive partner tries to establish or gain **power and control** through many different methods at different moments.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE