

WHAT TO SAY IF ...

... You suspect someone is experiencing domestic violence

Be open to disclosure by

- asking gentle questions
- making it clear that no action is required
- sharing information about domestic violence
- using tentifiers such as: "I'm wondering .."
- be careful how you talk about domestic violence
- being trustworthy and nonjudgmental
- making yourself available

... You are told someone is experiencing domestic violence

1. I believe you.

2. I'm sorry this happened to you.

3. No one deserves to be hurt.

4. You are not alone.

5. Help is available. I can give you the number to

Turning Point (586.463.6990) if you'd like to talk with someone about it.

- Make nonjudgmental, reflective statements that respond to the survivor's experience and emotions. Do say, "I hear that you were scared." Don't say, "Your husband was being a big jerk."
- Clarify what you are being told vs. asking questions. Survivor says, "He hit me." You say, "He hit you." Don't say, "What happened before he hit you?" Questions serve to satisfy our curiosity rather than to help
- Focus on the survivor's strengths and resiliency. Do say, "You sound like you know how to keep yourself safe." Don't say, "Why don't you just leave?"
- Listen! Let the survivor say everything she needs to before you formulate your response. Keep confidentiality.

See the lethality handout for more information...

Before you respond please consider...

- The survivor's safety: confronting the survivor may put her safety at risk

- Batterers are very manipulative, and potentially are manipulating you to batter

- Survivors are in crisis and are doing what they can to keep themselves and their children safe