

RECOGNISE

IS IT ABUSE?

Abusive relationships don't all look the same. Ultimately it is about one person having control and power over another (though it can be more than one person as well).



Frequently abuse can be 'hidden from view' as it occurs out of sight/hearing of others. Abuse can take many forms. . One particular situation may undoubtedly be abusive, yet another situation may not be as clear: Someone may disclose to you directly, telling you that they are experiencing abuse. They might also talk more generally about being afraid in their relationship or feeling trapped or like they are always 'walking on eggshells'. They may recount experiences of being hurt or express concern for their safety. Or perhaps you have noticed something that is 'not quite right'? Your gut feeling says that something is wrong but you can't be certain that it is abuse or not.

Again a key indicator of an abusive relationship over an unhealthy relationship is the dynamics of power and control of one person over another and feeling fearful of the partner. If you are not sure then here are some signs that your friend/s may be in an abusive relationship:

THE ABUSED PERSON:

- Seems anxious when their partner is around
- Is isolated and isn't as social as they use to be
- No longer does the things they used to enjoy doing
- Is overly anxious about pleasing their partner
- Has lower self-esteem than they used to
- Mentions that their partner puts a lot of demands on them
- Has bruises or other injuries with no explanation or an explanation that doesn't seem correct

THE ABUSER:

- Regularly puts their partner down
- Tells their partner what they can and can't do
- Gets angry easily with their partner
- Is unreasonably jealous
- Continually texts them or closely monitors their social connections
- Doesn't take responsibility for their own actions or minimises their actions.

Some relationships may be unhealthy but not abusive. An abusive relationship is when one person has power and control over the other person. When one person is fearful of their partner then it is likely an abusive relationship.

For more information on types of abuse please go [here](#)

SHOULD YOU INTERVENE?

As a bystander, you could make a big difference to someone's life. By intervening you could help the abused person to not feel alone and to feel safe. You could also make an abuser stop and question their actions, or at least know that their actions are unacceptable and ultimately, hopefully get the help they need to stop being abusive to their previous, current or future partner/s.

WHY YOU MIGHT HESITATE...

- Fear of making the situation worse and the violence escalating
- Fear of the friends reaction and potentially losing the friendship
- Fear for your own safety
- Not knowing what to do/say
- Not wanting or feeling ready to carry the burden of responsibility
- Your own personal triggers, like perhaps if you have experienced abuse in the past
- Feeling like you don't have all the information
- Not feeling supported by the community & friends around you
- Not recognising it as abuse
- Believing it isn't any of your business
- Thinking someone else will do it help or is better placed to help

HOW CAN YOU GET PAST THESE HESITATIONS?

Read the next section of this toolkit 'Respond' which has a variety of ways to intervene, appropriately, safely and in a way that you feel comfortable with.

Even if you are not the right person to intervene, you may be in a position to find the right person who can.

WHY YOU MIGHT INTERVENE?

- Strong sense of right and wrong
- Wanting to help a friend you care about
- Feeling supported and encouraged by other friends to do so
- Having knowledge of what to do/say
- Believing it was the right thing to do
- Being able to identify that it was abuse
- Believing your actions would not further escalate the situation or isolate your friend
- Believing that your actions would have a positive impact on the situation
- Wanting a stronger, safer LGBTIQ community

TRY ASKING YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- Do I think that there is abuse happening, even if I don't know for certain?
- Do I think that someone needs help?
- Do I see others and myself as part of the solution?
- Am I currently safe?

IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES' TO THESE QUESTIONS, THEN GO TO OUR NEXT SECTION: RESPOND
