

KNOW What to Do: How to Be an Active Bystander

Are you a bystander? Yes—you are.

We all are. **1 in 4 Rhode Islanders** will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes. **1 in 10 Rhode Island high schoolers** has already experienced physical dating violence.

As a **friend, family member, coworker, classmate, or neighbor**, you may be the first to learn about or witness abuse. Use this card to learn about specific ways you can help.

For more resources and tips, visit ricadv.org/bystanderaction.



KNOW MORE: What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence and dating violence consist of a pattern of abusive behaviors that one person uses to establish and maintain power and control over another person in a relationship.

Abuse can be **physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial, or digital**. It can include threats, intimidation, fear, isolation, manipulation, disrespect, and humiliation.

Domestic violence and dating violence can happen to anyone—regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socioeconomic status.

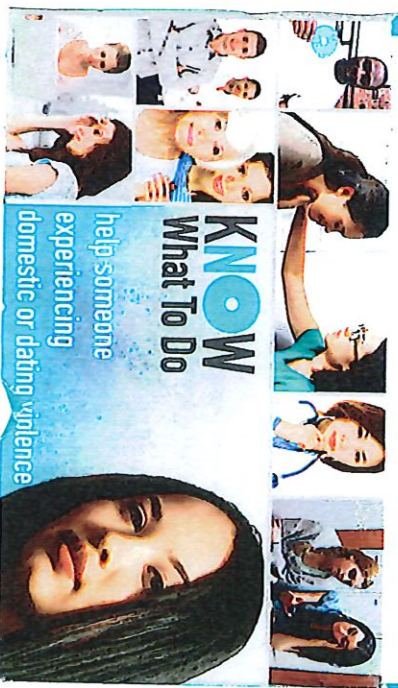


For resources in your area, visit ricadv.org or nomore1.org.

If you need immediate help or know someone who does, call:



1-800-494-8100



What can you do if you see or hear abuse happening?

- Always assess your safety before you intervene.
- Call the police and alert security, even if you must do so anonymously. Offer to make a statement or be a witness when authorities arrive.
- If you know the person, offer them a place to stay, or connect them with organizations that can help. Rhode Island's statewide Helpline (1.800.494.8100) offers 24-hour support.
- Assist the person in creating a plan that will help keep them safe. Examples can be found at ricadv.org/bystanderaction.

What can you do if someone tells you that their partner is abusive?

- Listen without judging. Do not make the person feel ashamed.
- Empower the person by asking them what kind of help they need from you and letting them make their own decisions.
- Offer to assist the person in developing a plan that will help them stay safe when abuse occurs.
- Find organizations that can provide help and services, and connect the person with a domestic violence advocate. Call the Helpline, or visit ricadv.org for information on local domestic violence agencies.

What can you do if you suspect someone is being abused?

- Gently and respectfully explain your concerns without judgment.
- Offer support, even if the person doesn't tell you about the abuse. Let the person know you're there if they want to talk, and don't force them to "confess" that abuse is happening.
- Give the person the Helpline number (1.800.494.8100) and other resources.
- Get informed—learn more about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Visit nomoreti.org and call the Helpline, an important resource not only for those experiencing abuse but also for those who want to help.

What can you do if someone isn't ready to end an abusive relationship?

- As a bystander, it can be hard to understand, but it is very difficult to end an abusive relationship. A person experiencing abuse may stay in the relationship for many reasons, including children, finances, love, hope for change, or fear of harm to themselves and loved ones.
- A person may try several times to end an abusive relationship, so it is important to remain patient and supportive. Check in consistently, help the person stay safe, and assure them that they can count on you. Don't cut off support, and do not give up!