

# IS YOUR FRIEND THE ABUSER?

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK THAT YOUR FRIEND IS ABUSING THEIR PARTNER

It is difficult to see a friend hurt others. You may not even want to admit that your friend is abusive. However, by remaining silent or making excuses for your friend, you are choosing to be a passive bystander. Be an **active bystander** by encouraging your friend to engage in healthier behaviors and by not supporting the abuse. Here are some other ways to be an active bystander:



### 1. Learn the warning signs of abuse.

Learning the warning signs of abuse can help you and your friend identify their abusive and unhealthy behaviors. If you witness behaviors that you feel are abusive or unhealthy, you have the power to intervene and address that behavior with them.



### 2. Avoid blaming the victim or excusing abusive behavior.

If you witness abuse happening or your friend tells you about a time where they behaved abusively, try to avoid placing blame on their partner or making excuses for the abuse. There is no excuse for abuse. It is a choice, one that no one has to make.



### 3. Realize that you can't make them change.

Remember that you cannot "save" or "fix" another person. It is up to your friend to decide if they want to change. Acknowledging that their behavior is abusive is the first step, and change can be a long and difficult process. Encourage your friend to seek professional help. Remind them that change will create a better, healthier relationship for both partners.



### 4. Practice self-care.

It can be hard knowing someone that you care about is an abusive partner. You might feel stressed or emotionally drained, and that is normal. You have the right to seek support and resources, take a step back from the situation when you need to, and practice lots of self-care!

**It is not easy for abusive people to admit that their violent behavior is a choice and accept responsibility for it. By being an active bystander, you're not turning against your friend, you are helping them have a healthy relationship.**

# SEXUAL ASSAULT & VIOLENCE PREVENTION OFFICE RESOURCES

All services are available for individuals of any race, ethnicity, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, class, ability, citizenship and immigration status, and age.

## ADVOCACY & SUPPORT

- Vassar Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) 24/7: (845) 437-7333
- Vassar SAVP Director & Victim/Survivor Advocate: (845) 437-7863
- Center for Victim Safety and Support
  - Rape Crisis/Crime Victims: (845) 452-7272
  - Domestic Violence: (845) 485-5550

## REPORT ON/OFF CAMPUS

- Town of Poughkeepsie Police: 911 or (845) 485-3666
- NYS Police CSAVU: (844) 845-7269
- Vassar Safety & Security: (845) 437-7333
- Vassar Title IX Coordinator: (845) 437-7924

## FREE CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL CARE

- SAFE Exam at Vassar Brothers Medical Center: (845) 454-8500
- SAFE Exam at Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital: (845) 483-5000
- Vassar Health Services: (845) 437-5800

## FREE CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELING

- Vassar Counseling Services: (845) 437-5700
- Center for Victim Safety and Support: (845) 452-7272
- Poughkeepsie Grace Smith House: (845) 452-7155

## VASSAR ACCOMMODATIONS (INCLUDING NO CONTACT ORDERS)

- Vassar Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) 24/7: (845) 437-7333
- Vassar SAVP Director & Victim/Survivor Advocate: (845) 437-7863
- Vassar Title IX Coordinator: (845) 437-7924

For more information,  
visit [savp.vassar.edu](http://savp.vassar.edu) or [eoaa.vassar.edu](http://eoaa.vassar.edu)