

Why Do Victims Stay in These Relationships? Hope

It may sometimes be hard to understand why a victim stays in an abusive relationship.

Relationships initially develop as a result of physical attraction and shared interests, and the victim often forms an emotional bond with his/her partner.

Victims are often manipulated to believe that they are to blame and hold onto hope that it will eventually get better.

Why Do Victims Stay in These Relationships? Fear

Victims frequently stay in abusive relationships because of fear.

Fears can be based on many things including:

- Fear of losing the relationship and the 'couple status'
- Fear of losing friends
- Fear of being alone and/or feeling unloved
- Fear of stalking and physical safety
- Fear of rumors and gossip



How Can You Help a Victim?

It is important to offer support to victims, even if we don't understand or condone their choices.

Dating violence is never the victim's fault.

- Remind them about their strengths, talents and abilities
- Tell them it is not their fault and define behaviors/red flags you are concerned about
- Reinforce the qualities of a healthy relationship
- Share information about local resources (domestic violence/sexual assault centers, hotlines) for support and safety planning
- Assure them you are a non-judgmental support
- Ask them what they need

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How Can You Confront a Perpetrator?

If it is safe:

- Confront the behaviors that are of concern
- Point out red flags
- Reinforce the qualities of a healthy relationship
- Talk to them about potential consequences (losing the relationship, losing friendships, getting bad reputation as boyfriend/girlfriend)
- Share information about local resources for counseling/support

RESOURCES:

CDC's Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters

National Dating Abuse Helpline:
1-866-331-9474 or text 77054

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

National Sexual Violence Resource Center:
www.nsvrc.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline:
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)