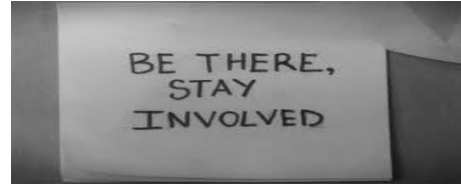


What's happening at Lewis County



Changing Lives ... One family at a time

How to Help a Friend that is in an Abusive Relationship



If someone you know and care about is undergoing the serious and painful effects of dating or intimate partner abuse, they may see things very differently than you. They may be told that the abuse is their fault and feel responsible. If they decide to leave, they may feel sad and lonely when it's over (even though the relationship was abusive). They may get back together with their ex many times, even though you want them to stay away. Remember that it may be difficult for your friend to even bring up a conversation about the abuse they're experiencing. It is very possible that your friend has been isolated and lost many friends and family due to their abusive relationship.

Make the time to talk. Try to make sure you have privacy and won't be distracted or interrupted.

Let your friend know you're concerned about their safety. Be honest. Tell them you're worried. Help them see that what they're going through is not right and not their fault. Let them know you want to help.

Be supportive. Listen to your friend. Keep in mind that it may be very hard for them to talk about the abuse. Let them know that they are not alone, and that people want to help.

Be there to help. You can help with childcare, by providing transportation, or just by listening.

Don't place shame, blame, or guilt on your friend. Don't say, "You just need to leave." you might say, "I get scared thinking about what might happen to you." Tell them they do not deserve to be abused.

Help them make a safety plan. A safety plan includes picking a place to go and packing important items.

Encourage your friend to talk to someone who can help. Lewis County Opportunities Domestic Violence program can help you and your friend. We can assist with an Orders of Protection, go with your friend to the police, hospital and court. Contact our 24 hour crisis hotline at **315-376-HELP (4357)**.

If your friend decides to stay, continue to be supportive. Your friend may decide to stay in the relationship, or may leave and then go back many times. It may be hard for you to understand, but people stay in abusive relationships for many reasons. Be supportive, no matter what your friend decides to do.

Encourage them to do things outside the relationship. It's important for your friend to see friends and family.

If your friend decides to leave, continue to offer support. Even though the relationship was abusive, they may feel sad and lonely once it is over. Encourage them to get services from agencies or community groups. Support them no matter what their decision.

Has Opportunities helped you? Send your story to "News" at the address below.

Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.
8265 State Rte 812, Lowville NY 13367
(315) 376-8202

Monday - Friday: 8 am - 4 pm
www.lewiscountyopportunities.com

Opportunity Knocks Thrift Store
376-2981

24-hour Crisis Hotline
376-HELP (4357)