**Domestic Violence**

**Your Response Matters**

**What NOT to do:**

Bash the abuser.

Blame the victim.

Underestimate the danger.

Promise anything you can’t follow through with.

Give conditional support.

Give “tough love.”

Do anything to provoke the abuser.

Pressure the victim.

Give up.

Do anything to make it more difficult for the victim.

**What TO do:**

Believe them.

Listen without judgment.

Validate their emotions.

Make time for them.

Learn the warning signs.

Be willing to start a conversation.

Learn about agencies and resources so you can share this information.

See if you can help make a safety plan.

**Things to remember**

Respect the person’s autonomy. Avoid pushing them to act before they are ready.

You are not the rescuer. Focus on providing emotional support and information on local services and resources. Encourage the person to seek professional help.

If you are triggered, seek support elsewhere. Avoid making them process your own anger or fear.

NEVER force the conversation. If they don’t want to talk about it or aren’t receptive, respect their choices but leave the door open to talk in the future.

**How to start a If they tell you their**

**conversation: story:**

“Are you okay?” Listen very carefully.

Don’t press for details or question their experiences.

“Is everything all right?” Reassure them that it’s not

their fault.

“I’m concerned about you.” Respond immediately with concern and compassion.

“I’m worried about you because…” Validate their emotions and evaluate safety.

**What if someone discloses abuse?**

Your response can make a real difference.

Be clear that you believe them: Your body language, facial expressions, and tones should be accepting and non-judgmental.

Communicate clearly that violence is wrong; no one ever deserves abuse.

Victims are more likely to seek help if they feel believed.

**What should you know?**

1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men experience domestic violence. It can happen to anyone. Domestic violence is not just physical. It is about power and control. The most dangerous time is when the victim attempts to leave the abuser.