

# 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](http://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.



# NO MORE

TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT

For resources in your area, visit [ricadv.org](http://ricadv.org) or [nomoreri.org](http://nomoreri.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](tel:18004948100)) 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](http://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](http://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](tel:18004948100))** and other resources.
- Get informed—learn more about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Visit [nomoreri.org](http://nomoreri.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!**