

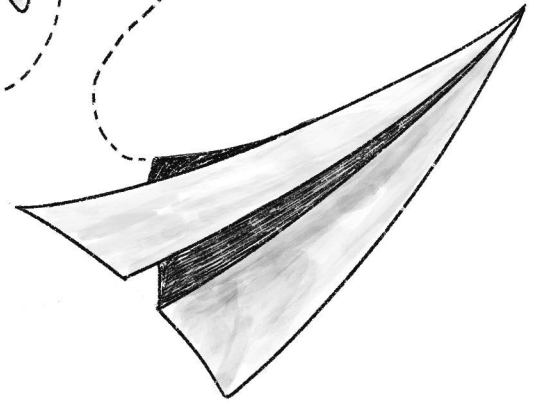
(Resource list)



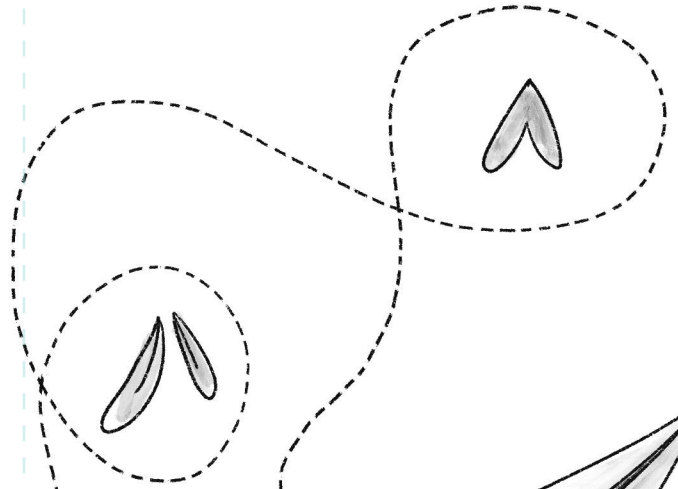
How do I tell someone that my partner is abusive to me?



What's most important is that the person you tell is someone you feel safe with.



If you're not sure who to trust or tell, that's okay. You can reach out to a helpline anonymously and ask for help. If you plan to tell a friend, family member or a colleague, be prepared for reactions that may be negative or positive. For example, some people may react with kindness while others may be uncomfortable or minimize what you share with them. They may need time to process what you share too. Remember, their reaction is not a reflection of your truth. It might also be helpful to think ahead about how you might want to respond if someone says something unhelpful, or if they don't understand right away.



## Before the conversation

Once you've chosen someone you trust and prepared yourself for both supportive and difficult reactions, take a moment to think about your safety. You may be isolated from friends or family, or your phone and messages might be monitored or restricted. Here are some options you can consider:



### If you plan to talk to someone on the phone

- Delete specific messages or your call history if your partner checks your phone
- Use private or 'Incognito' browser windows and clear your search history regularly
- Consider agreeing on a *code word* to use when you need urgent help with a trusted friend or family member. For example, sending a particular word or phrase in a message can signal them to call the police or come to your home



### If you don't have access to a phone

- Ask a trusted neighbour, friend, or family member to help you call or message when needed
- If safe, get a phone your partner doesn't know about and hide it with someone you trust or at work



### If you plan to speak to someone in person

- Try to find a private, quiet space where you can talk without interruptions
- Set aside enough time so you don't feel rushed or pressured

## During the conversation

- Start wherever you feel most comfortable, and share only what you're ready to.
- You can use "I" statements, such as: *"I feel unsafe when..."* or *"I'm experiencing..."*
- Be prepared for a range of reactions. The person you're speaking with may feel shocked, confused, or unsure how to respond, and that's okay.
- Set boundaries, if needed. You might say, *"I'm not ready to talk about that part yet"*, or *"I'm sharing this because I trust you, not because I need you to take action right now."*

If you're unsure how to begin, here are some phrases that might help:

- *"It's really important to me that what I share stays between us. If that's not possible, I understand, but please let me know."*
- *"There's something difficult happening in my relationship that I'd like to talk about."*
- *"I think I might be experiencing abuse."*
- *"I'd like to tell you something, but I don't need advice or action, just your support."*
- *"What would help me most right now is \_\_\_\_\_"* (e.g. listening, emotional support, practical help).

## After sharing

You might feel a mix of emotions including relief, fear, tiredness, sadness, or even lightness. Disclosing abuse takes courage and can be emotionally exhausting. Be gentle with yourself.

If you can, take time to rest or do something comforting. You might want to access support services such as:

- Talking to a counsellor or mental health professional
- Practicing self-care: sleeping, walking, journaling, reading, or listening to music



Remember, if the first person you tell doesn't help you, it's okay to feel hurt.

But, don't let it stop you from reaching out to someone else.

You are not alone and help is available.