



## Someone I know may be acting abusive or violent

*As a neighbour, friend, family member or co-worker, what can I do to help?*

**Acting to prevent or address violence does not always look like one heroic act. There are actions we can choose that fit our own safety, our personal style, our relationship with the victim or abuser, and the situation we witness.**

**Taking action to help can save a life.**

### **STEP 1: Believe survivors.**

It can be hard to acknowledge that someone we know may be hurting others.

If someone tells you they are afraid for their safety or their life, BELIEVE THEM.

If someone tells you that they have been hurt or harmed by someone, BELIEVE THEM.

If you witness abusive or violent behaviour by someone you know, BELIEVE IT.

### **STEP 2: Take action.**

*Do not put your own safety at risk. If you or anyone else is in immediate danger, get help. Call 911.*

- **Talk to the person.** Choose a time when they are calm. Choose a place that is safe for you. Express your care and concern for them. Try not to be judgmental.
- **Be specific.** Name the behaviour you are concerned about. Try to avoid validating excuses or explanations.
- **Be clear** that abuse and violence are not acceptable and there are better choices.
- **Provide information** on resources to help them stop their behaviour. Remind them that it doesn't have to be this way, and there is help.

**There is help for abusers in Prince Edward Island. Call the Turning Point Program for help or advice: 902-368-6392 or 902-569-7613.**

*If you witness or suspect child abuse, it is mandatory to report it to Child Protection at 1-877-341-3101.*

*If you suspect abuse or neglect of an older person, contact Adult Protection at 902-892-4790.*

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention Prince Edward Island**  
[stopfamilyviolence.pe.ca](http://stopfamilyviolence.pe.ca)

### **STEP 3: Learn to recognize risk factors for future violence.**

You may be able to intervene to prevent future violence if you are aware of risk factors. Warning signs will vary depending on the situation, the abuser and past patterns of violence.

- The person has used violence in the past.
- Violence has recently become more frequent or more severe.
- There is a recent or pending separation.
- The person has a history of alcohol or substance use.
- The person has violated a court order in the past.
- The person is depressed.
- The person has threatened or attempted suicide recently or in the past.
- The person has access to or owns weapons.

**Trust your instincts. If you think someone is in danger, or if you are in danger, call 911.**

If you notice these risk factors, you or other people around the abusive person may need a safety plan. Community resources like those below can help.

### **NEED HELP?**

**PEI Victim Services**  
Charlottetown 902-368-4582  
Summerside 902-888-8218

**PEI Family Violence Prevention Services**  
[fvps.ca](http://fvps.ca) 1-800-240-9894

**Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's Shelter**  
[cmbmws.ca](http://cmbmws.ca) 1-855-287-2332

**PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre**  
[www.peirsac.org](http://www.peirsac.org) 1-866-566-1864

**IN IMMEDIATE DANGER**  
**911**



## I see signs of violence or abuse happening

*If I'm a bystander and care about preventing violence, what can I do to help?*

**Acting to prevent or address violence does not always look like one heroic act. There are actions we can choose that fit our own safety, our personal style, our relationship with the victim or abuser, and the situation we witness.**

**Taking action to help can save a life.**

### **STEP 1: Pay attention to your surroundings and the people around you.**

Look for attitudes and behaviours that put people down or that are aggressive, abusive or violent. Look for opportunities to intervene safely.

### **STEP 2: Take action.**

You can help prevent abuse and violence by addressing harmful attitudes and behaviours.

*Do not put your own safety at risk. If you or anyone else is in immediate danger, get help. Call 911.*

- **Show that you disapprove** of harmful attitudes or behaviours by removing yourself from the group (refusing to be an audience).
- **Refuse to join in** and discourage others from participating in abusive attitudes and behaviours. Point out the harmful, abusive, or violent behaviour you witness without passing judgment on the perpetrator.
- **Speak out.** "I don't think that's funny." "What you are saying or doing is wrong."
- **Get support.** Rally others nearby to join you. "I don't accept this attitude or behaviour. It's not okay with me. I hope it's not okay with you either."
- **Get help.** Know what resources are available nearby or in the community to help prevent and address abuse and violence.

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You may be able to stop, interrupt or prevent abuse or violence by using safe and smart tactics to intervene.

*Do not put your own safety at risk. If you or anyone else is in immediate danger, get help. Call 911.*

- **Be a good witness.** Using words or your body, let the abuser and the targeted person know you are paying attention. Make a point of noticing details of what is happening.
- **Use distraction.** If you witness someone being abused, ask the perpetrator for the time, clear your throat near them or do something else that distracts them from their behaviour.
- **Stand with** the targeted person. Stand physically near them so that they and the abuser both know they are not alone.
- **Give control** to the targeted person by speaking directly to them: "Are you okay?" "Are they bothering you?" Be ready to help if they ask for help, or to respect their choice if they don't want help.
- **Trust your instincts.** If you think someone is in danger, or if you are in danger, get help from police or security - or call 911.

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## Someone I know may be experiencing abuse or violence

*As a neighbour, friend, family member or co-worker, what can I do to help?*

**Acting to prevent or address violence does not always look like one heroic act. There are actions we can choose that fit our own safety, our personal style, our relationship with the victim or abuser, and the situation we witness.**

**Taking action to help can save a life.**

### **STEP 1: Learn to recognize signs of abuse and violence.**

You may witness signs of abuse yourself or hear about them from your friend, neighbour, family member, or co-worker. Does the possible abuser do any of the following to the other person?

- Look at them or act in ways that frighten them, or that frighten you when you see or hear about them.
- Use language that puts the person down or criticizes and belittles them.
- Act controlling about where they go, what they wear, or who they spend time with.
- Isolate them from seeing or talking to family or friends.
- Blame the other person for the hurtful things they say or do: "She pushes my buttons." "He started it."
- Call or text the other person excessively.
- Check up on them excessively.
- Threaten to hurt them, their loved ones or their pets.
- Touch them in unwanted ways or try to force them to have sex.
- Hit, slap, punch or kick them.

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### **Step 2: Take action.**

You recognize possible signs of abuse or violence. You are worried about someone. What to do?

- **Reach out.** Talk to the person and express your concern. Choose a location and time that respects the person's privacy and safety.
- **Speak up.** Tell the person that if they are experiencing abuse or violence, it is not their fault.
- **Listen.** Don't try to tell the person what to do, but do let them know you are willing to listen and help them think about options.
- **Provide information** on community resources. Having the right information may help the person seek protection or reach out to a community support agency.
- **Be patient.** Do not get discouraged if the person does not want to talk or is not ready to make a change. It is important to continue to be supportive and let the person know they can come to you.
- **Trust your instincts.** If you think someone you know is in danger, or if you are in danger, call 911.

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