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DV resources
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How to help victims of domestic violence manage the situation during the mass closure, moment of social panic and economic crisis

When we are just contacting people...



Listen, just listen.

At first, we shouldn't offer advice, just listen and empathize. We still don't know what the victim's circumstances are. This is the time to build trust.



Validate the victim's feelings, emotions, and beliefs, even when they don't make sense.

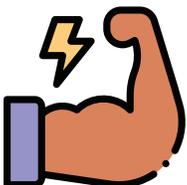
Let's be present with them through our indirect empathy, actively listening and being compassionate. Our empathy is indirect because it requires an emotional effort to connect with someone's anguish and suffering.

After the person trusts us a little more...



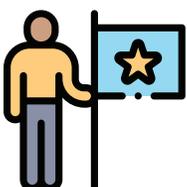
Present mindfulness exercises.

Introduce the benefits of mindfulness exercises as a way to reduce stress, concentrate, as well as enhance memory, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility. For example: if you can do it with them or invite them to 1 minute of a breathing exercise or stretching, these can help the person to get a body and emotional awareness that they need to function well. Also encourage them to listen to meditations, to pray, or to do yoga.



Remind them of their strengths and qualities.

Let's help by helping them identify what they have forgotten about themselves: their own power, qualities and strengths. A first way to help the victim is to open up conversations where the listener can raise certain possibilities based on the qualities or strengths of the victim and at the same time the victim can see solutions that they may not have seen or believe they can do.



Inspire them to pursue self-esteem and gain self-confidence.

If possible, encourage victims to be self-sufficient, even in the confinement they are in. This will help them have a little more bargaining power and create a little more capacity to influence the relationship.

Help them think of alternatives...



Help them start a project.

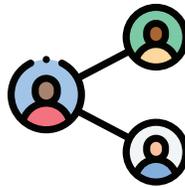
Ask the victim about the space where she lives. Propose activities that help the person be distracted in a way that can't be used by the victimizer as a tool for more abuse or that generates more tension. Propose activities that are not going to challenge the victimizer, because in confinement there is a higher degree of vulnerability.

When you have a better idea of what is happening where the victim lives...



It is time to involve others.

Abusers can be discouraged from causing harm to their partners and children when there is a presence of parents, siblings, children, neighbors, friends (even just by phone) because it generates a greater degree of responsibility than if no one is around them.



Encourage victims to contact loved ones, friends, and neighbors.

Encourage victims to communicate with their loved ones and friends. A simple exchange of courtesy greetings and an occasional phone call can empower a victim to comment on their situation and even help deter the abuser from creating further violence while knowing that the victim is in contact with people outside the home.



Help them build a support network.

Connections are the easiest way to beat domestic violence. Trying to connect with other survivors of domestic violence is crucial. This helps them begin a path of healing from the trauma caused by domestic violence.

When you are certain that the situation is very serious and it is not safe for the victim...



Help them make a safety plan.

The easiest way to do this is to help victims of domestic violence become aware of their circumstances (and call the problem what it is: domestic violence). Help them avoid conflicts and arguments during confinement and encourage them to communicate with their trusted family and friends (when possible). If possible, help the victim to contact their relatives because they may not yet know what is happening. But very important: Help the victim prepare in case they have to leave in a hurry. Suggest that you get money, documents, car keys, children's backpacks full of clothes and snacks ready.



Insist that they take action when they see that there is no more solution (take into account the situation each person is experiencing when giving advice)

Ask them to talk to the trusted family and/ or friends for help. If they have a therapist with whom they have spoken and who know the case, seek to speak to them to let them know what is happening and seek advice. If it does not work or the victim does not have one, call a social worker from the nearest or trusted clinic. But if none of this worked or there is no time and if the situation is very dangerous, ask them not to wait any longer. When the victim feels that they and/ or their children are in danger, it is time to take drastic measures. The victims have to call 911. Even in a blockade like the current one, the police will issue an emergency protection order to separate the abuser from his victims.