**What Can I Do About Relationship Violence?**

**You can help someone who is experiencing relationship violence:**

- **Listen to them and believe them.**  
Recognize that disclosing to you took great strength and courage.

- **Understand what they are saying and validate their feelings and strength.**  
Devote your effort to understanding the thoughts, feelings, and experiences they have chosen to share with you.

- **Talk with them about their physical/emotional safety.**  
One way to open the dialogue is to say, “I am concerned about your safety.”

- **Help the person understand that the abuse is not their fault.**  
The person may feel guilty about being abused. You can help by saying, “It is not your fault” or “You have done nothing to deserve this type of treatment.”

- **Support the person’s right to control their own life.**  
Don’t expect the survivor to follow your advice. Remember that ultimately they must be making the decisions regarding their own life.

- **Provide helpful resource information.**  
Give the person numbers to local shelters and/or crisis lines. Encourage them to call.

- **Protect the survivor’s right to confidentiality.**  
Recognize the person’s choice to disclose to you. Respect their right to tell whomever they choose.

- **Contact MSU Safe Place at (517) 355-1100.**  
Even if you aren’t experiencing relationship violence personally, MSU Safe Place can be a resource for you too. Safe Place staff can provide support, options and resources and help you to figure out how you can best help.

**You can help someone who is abusive:**

- **Call the police if you witness an assault.**

- **Be a role model for healthy relationships**  
Treat your friends and partners with respect.

- **If you feel safe to do so, tell the person that controlling and violent behavior is not OK.**  
This behavior is a sign that the person has a problem and needs help.

- **Take a stand against abusive behavior.**  
Confront jokes about physical, sexual or emotional violence. Don’t reinforce abusive behavior by laughing, minimizing, or ignoring an act of violence or a threat.

- **Contact MSU Safe Place at (517) 355-1100 for information and referrals**