

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

The Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault (SACASA) has a 24-hour Sexual Assault Crisis Line at 327-7273. Calls can be anonymous. Counselors provide emotional support and information. Visit www.sacasa.org.

Q. How can you get someone to open up about a possibly abusive boyfriend?

A. Abusive relationships not only affect the victim, but also impact family and friends. The decision to approach a friend can be very difficult and stressful. Before you attempt to speak to your friend, you may want to ask yourself some questions: Does your friend think their boyfriend is abusive? Do they make excuses for their boyfriend's behavior? Do they attempt to minimize the seriousness of being belittled, slapped, or shoved? If your friend is not ready to look at the relationship objectively, the topic will be more difficult to address. If your friend thinks the relationship is unhealthy, it might be easier for you to approach them.

It can be difficult to accept that a relationship may be harmful. Be prepared for some of the following reactions: anger, disbelief, denial, sadness, or even accusations of jealousy. These are normal reactions from someone who is not ready to face the topic. Individuals can get caught in a cycle in abusive relationships where they are happy with how things are going, then an abusive act (verbal or physical) takes place, followed by apologies and affection, and the victim forgives their partner. This cycle can happen over and over again and can be very upsetting and frustrating for bystanders.

Tell your friend that you want to talk about something very difficult, but you feel it is important. Tell them you love and want the best for them. Tell them that when you see or hear certain things, you interpret them as possibly abusive and you want to make sure that they are safe and happy. It is also important to support your friend no matter what in whatever his or her decision is.

The Oasis Program for Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence is an excellent on-campus resource not only for victims of abuse, but also friends and family members who are concerned about someone's safety or well-being. The Oasis Program offers free, confidential counseling and support and serves as an excellent resource here on campus.



Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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