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## Tips for Supporting a LGBTQ+ Friend in an Unhealthy Relationship

If you think that a friend or someone you know is in an abusive or unhealthy relationship, it can be difficult to know what to do. You may want to help, but be scared to lose them as a friend or feel as though it is not your place to step in. All of these feelings are normal, but at One Love we believe the most important thing you can do as friend is start a conversation. Here are a few tips to help you talk to your friend.

### 1. Remind the person that their identity is valid

Often in unhealthy LGBTQ+ relationships a partner will invalidate their partner's identity as a mechanism of isolation and manipulation. Remind your friend that their identity is valid, and if possible, help them seek out gender or sexuality affirming resources. This may include helping them seek out LGBTQ+ friendly mental health support, binders, packers, hormone therapy, etc.

### 2. Identity or situation is never an excuse for abusive behavior

People may deflect responsibility by blaming unhealthy actions on their partner's or their own sexuality or gender identity. For example, someone may excuse their behavior by saying that they are the only person who accepts their partner so they can do whatever they want. Remind your friend that identity or situation is never an excuse for treating someone poorly.

### 3. Encourage them to seek out LGBTQ+ specific resources

Sometimes organizations do not have the knowledge or systems necessary to fully support LGBTQ+ people. There are many resources, including shelters, hotlines, mental health services, and youth groups, that are specifically geared towards LGBTQ+ people. There are many National Resources in this toolkit You can research online or through LGBTQ+ centers to look for local resources!

### 4. Remember that law enforcement may not be the best option

Unfortunately, sometimes law enforcement is not the best way to deal with an unhealthy situation. Moreover, LGBTQ+ people and people of color face disproportionate levels of police violence, and there are reports of LGBTQ+ people being wrongfully arrested after making domestic violence reports. Use your judgement, exercise caution, and call upon LGBTQ+-specific resources before involving law enforcement.

### 5. Try to be a consistent support system

Some LGBTQ+ people do not have consistent support systems from their immediate family. Moreover, their family may not even be aware that they are in an LGBTQ+ relationship. If possible, be a support system by checking in frequently and reminding them that you are there to listen without judgement.

### 6. Seek help and support for yourself from a confidential resource

Supporting a friend who is experiencing relationship violence is difficult. You are an awesome person for being there for your friend, but it can be draining and stressful. Make sure you set healthy boundaries and seek support for yourself. We recommend that you speak with a confidential resource so you receive the support you.