



# SOS-INFO

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English

## 8 Tips for family and friends of intimate partner violence victims



Finding out that someone you love is a victim of intimate partner violence (IPV) can make a person feel intensely powerless and fearful for the victim's safety. Loved ones often aren't sure of how to help the victim through the situation without making it worse. Here are some tips on how to be supportive in a situation of IPV.

### 1 Remain present in the person's life.

Preventing a victim from becoming isolated in her relationship increases her safety and that of her children.

### 2 Be alert not to be "used" by the abuser.

Abusers often try to lie to and manipulate loved ones against the victim, in order to bias their opinion of the victim or the situation and to create conflict and isolation.

### 3 Be aware of the potential for danger.

It is crucial to respect the victim's decisions concerning her relationship and her partner, because the risk of violence escalating and becoming worse, is very real. She is right to be scared.

### 4 Help the victim come to her own conclusion about the situation.

A victim of IPV is forced by her abusive partner to perceive the situation in a certain way, which may result in her not recognizing that his behaviour is violent and abusive. For example, she might blame her own "shortcomings" for the violence or justify her partner's behaviours.

### 5 Help the victim to regain control over her life.

Victims of IPV are gradually deprived of the right to exercise their free will and make their own choices. It is thus very important to respect the decisions she makes for herself and her children.

### 6 Act in a way that counters the impact of violence on the victim.

Demonstrating your respect and mirroring back to the victim a positive self-image will help her to resist psychological violence and increase her resilience.

### 7 Offer your help and access to IPV resources.

Offering help, information and resources helps the victim regain control over her life, as long as the choices she makes afterward are respected. A victim may choose not to access a resource, but knowing that the resource exists and is available to her is beneficial in itself.

### 8 Avoid feelings of helplessness

Ask the victim if she wants you to do something for her. If she says yes, help her find a way to answer that need. If she says no, take comfort in knowing that what you are already doing is meeting her current needs.

SOS VIOLENCE CONJUGALE IS AVAILABLE 24/7 ACROSS QUEBEC, AND PROVIDES ACCESS TO ALL THE APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) AND ANYONE WHO IS CONCERNED ABOUT A SITUATION OF IPV.

\* Although most victims of intimate partner violence are female, some men can also be victimized.