



What to Do When a Woman Confides in You

As a rabbi, you are uniquely positioned to change community attitudes about domestic abuse. Denial, refusal of responsibility, and blaming the victim help to perpetuate the myth that domestic abuse does not happen in “respectable” Jewish homes.

If you have reason to believe that a woman in your congregation or community is being abused, try to talk to her **alone**, without other family members or friends present. These situations require a lot of time and patience and often escalate and become extremely dangerous. Intervention by a certified domestic abuse specialist is the safest and most appropriate assistance you can offer a woman in a domestic abuse situation.

Domestic Abuse is not just a woman’s issue. **It is a community issue!**

- Listen without being judgmental and believe her.
- Let her know that she is not alone and that **SHALVA** is here to help.
- Be supportive, not directive.
- Assure her of confidentiality.
- Have resources and information where she/he can seek help.
- Reach out to the abuser only with her express permission and when she will be safe.
- Avoid working with them as a couple or suggesting marriage counseling.
- Respect her pace, as well as, her decision not to take action at this time.
- Continue to be available for support. You might be the first person to take her seriously.
- Recognize your limitations. You cannot “fix” the situation. You can’t be Rabbi, treatment specialist and police officer.
- These situations can be complicated, confusing and overwhelming.
- Don’t isolate yourself. Call **SHALVA, 773-583-HOPE (4673)**, for your own support.