



*Giving voice to the unspeakable...  
responding to domestic abuse in Jewish homes.*

## **When You Think Someone Needs Help**

### **DO:**

- Talk with her privately and in person, if possible.
- Tell her that you are concerned for her welfare, and why.
- Be specific. You may be the first person who has ever hinted that these things may not be acceptable or healthy.
- Ask if she is concerned too. Consider asking her if she is afraid for herself or for her children.
- Listen to, believe and affirm her feelings. This may be the first time her feelings have ever been acknowledged.
- Offer moral support. Emphasize her strengths and intrinsic value as a person. Remind her that she is not alone, that all sorts of good, caring, healthy, intelligent people also suffer from challenges and setbacks.
- Remind her that *Shalom Bayit* (peace in the home) is not her sole responsibility.
- Offer practical resources: SHALVA, other community agencies, therapists, Rabbis, school counselors, and the like.
- Plan for safety. Remind her that she must take care of herself and her children and that violence is a crime.
- Offer the help that you realistically can deliver, and don't promise what you cannot do.
- Let her make her own decisions, and respect her choices even if you don't agree with them.
- Reassure her that your discussions will remain confidential. Live up to your promise.

### **DON'T:**

- Force the issue. You probably have only partial information, and may not understand why this is or is not the right time for action or more discussion.
- Blame her for the problem. Blame solves nothing.
- Talk to other people about this conversation without her permission, however safe that may seem. You will destroy her trust, and you might make the situation much worse.
- Turn your head away from real danger. We are all obligated to respond to someone in danger, and should direct her to resources for help immediately.
- Think that you can solve her problem yourself. Instead, give your friend choices and respect the ones she makes.

Call **SHALVA** if you have any questions on how to handle things, 773-583-HOPE (4673).