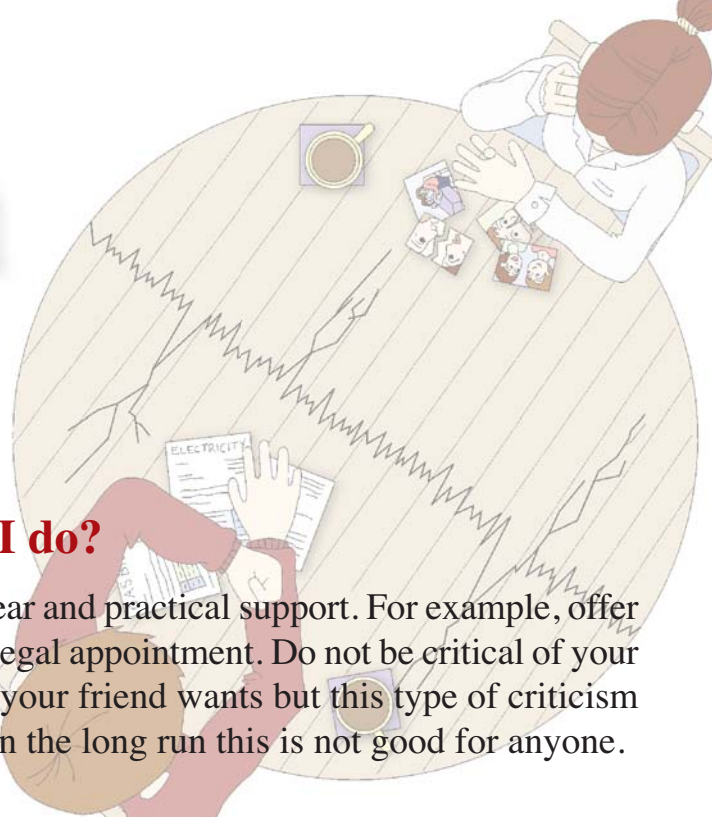


# *Living with* **Separation** & *Divorce*



## **My friend's marriage is over. What do I do?**

The only thing you can really do is to offer a listening ear and practical support. For example, offer to look after the children when there is a mediation or legal appointment. Do not be critical of your friend's spouse. It may seem that this is exactly what your friend wants but this type of criticism will only help to inflame the conflict between them. In the long run this is not good for anyone.

The best help you can be is to listen and support, impartially. Acknowledge how your friend feels but don't judge their spouse, even if they are behaving dreadfully. Concentrate on helping your friend work out how she/he feels and what THEY want to do. It might be different from what you would do but at the end of the day it is their life.

Good supportive phrases to use that do not involve criticism could include the following:

1. "It sounds like you haven't been happy for a while."
2. "This sounds like a complete shock to you."
3. "She/He has really hurt you hasn't she/he?"
4. "I can hear that what he/she is doing is really upsetting you."
5. "I don't know what I would do in your situation. Can I help you work out what you want to do?"
6. "I can hear how much you hate what he/she has done."
7. "I can hear how worried you are for the children. What can I do to help?"