

Information for Friends and Supports of the Victims/Survivors

If someone you care about is sexually assaulted, you may feel angry, confused, and helpless. There are several things you can do to help in the healing process and provide the support your loved one needs.

- Believe the victim/survivor unconditionally. Accept what you hear without judgment.
- Reinforce to the victim/survivor that it is not his or her fault. Sexual assault is NEVER the victim/survivor's fault. It is important not to ask "why" questions, such as "Why were you in that area at that time?" that suggest that he or she is to blame for the assault.
- Understand that you cannot control how the victim/survivor feels or "fix" the problem. Everyone reacts differently to sexual assault and heals at his or her own pace. It is important that you not assume you know how he or she is feeling—almost any reaction is possible and completely normal.
- Be a good listener and be patient. Let the victim/survivor know you are there for him or her when he or she is ready to talk. When and if the victim/survivor does want to talk about the assault, do not push for information. Let him or her tell you what he or she is comfortable sharing in his or her own time.
- Help the victim/survivor regain a sense of control over his or her life. During a sexual assault, power is taken away from the victim/survivor. Support decisions and choices the victim/survivor makes without passing judgment. Try not to tell the victim/survivor what to do; instead, assist by presenting options and resources for him or her to make the decision that is right for him or her.
- Respect the victim/survivor's need for privacy. If the victim/survivor needs to be alone, respect that decision.
- Do not suggest that the victim/survivor "move on" with his or her life and forget about the rape. The victim/survivor needs the opportunity to work through the trauma of the assault and begin the healing process.
- Respect the victim/survivor's right to decide whether or not to report the assault to the police.
- Remember to take care of yourself—seek support if you need it. You will be better able to support the victim/survivor.

Information taken from:

<https://www.nsopw.gov/en-US/Education/HelpSupport?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>