

When a Friend is Raped....

Let the survivor know you are there.

Listening is an act of doing something.

Don't feel like you have to say just the right thing—just being with the survivor can help.

- Find a time to be alone with them.
- Let them talk at a rate that's comfortable for them—wanting to know details is natural, but hold back from interrupting or asking a lot of questions.
- Show interest by nodding your head and keeping eye contact.
- Don't feel nervous about gaps in conversation. They are OK—let them happen.
- Encourage your friend to get medical attention—no matter how long ago the assault occurred. Offer to go with the survivor if they want you to.
- Give the survivor the phone number of the local sexual assault program (586) 463-4430 or the statewide crisis line number (800) 656-HOPE.

Believe the survivor.

Even if the story is difficult to hear or if you know the other person(s) involved, believe what you hear.

Let the survivor know you care.

Some things you can say are:

- I'm sorry this happened to you.
- What happened wasn't your fault.
- That must have been tough/frightening/scary for you.



Some things you can do are:

- Cry with the survivor.
- Put your arm around the survivor.

Reinforce that the survivor is NOT to blame.

Let your friend know that they did not “choose” or “cause” the rape to happen. Help them re-frame blaming statements. If they say that they should have fought back, say, “It’s difficult to scream or fight back when you are scared.” If they feel like the rape is their fault because they were alone with the rapist, say, “You trusted that person. That person violated that trust. You didn’t ask to be raped.”

Let your friend be in control of who knows about the sexual assault.

Your friend confided in you for a reason—probably because they trust you not to tell anyone else. If you are worried that they are not getting the support and help they need, **ASK** your friend if you can together confide in an adult/counselor/loved one. If you think your friend may attempt suicide, talk to an adult/crisis line immediately.

Ask your friend if there is anything you can do—but you don’t have to solve everything.

Take care of yourself.

Hearing about any sexual assault can be difficult and upsetting. It can also be confusing if you know both people. It’s normal to feel angry, but confronting the other person is not going to make the situation better. Find someone to talk to about your feelings, like a crisis line or counselor.

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