How to Support a Sexual Assault Survivor


Sexual Assault Response Network
A Community Program of HelpLine
Co-Survivor

A Co-Survivor, or someone close to a survivor of sexual assault, can also be profoundly affected by the assault. Friends and family of survivors may experience the emotional effects of trauma firsthand, and become an important provider of emotional support.

How to Support a Survivor

Effective communication is important to a survivor’s wellbeing. Consider using these phrases to support a survivor in their healing process:

- I believe you and I’m here to listen
- You are not to blame
- The decisions you made helped you survive

Things to Avoid Saying:

- Don’t cry, just forget about it
- I’m so angry I could hurt them
- “Why” questions

Aftermath of Sexual Assault

Survivors and Co-Survivors of sexual assault can experience a wide range of normal reactions to this traumatic event. Making sure you take care of yourself in the process isn’t selfish, it’s recommended so you can be the support you want to be.

Call our support and information line at 1.800.684.2324 and 211 or text helpline to 898211. Suicide and crisis lifeline, 988. Deaf or hard of hearing: 711 or 1.800.750.0750.

Language Services Available

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