



Sexual Assault Support Services

To Support Survivors of Sexual Assault

- **Listen.** Do your best to help the survivor feel comfortable when expressing feelings. Allow the survivor control over who learns of their story/ don't share it without survivor's permission.
- Validate the survivor's feelings. Let them know they make sense & have a right to feel that way.
- **"I believe you."** Believe what the survivor tells you, and let the survivor know they are believed.
- **"It wasn't your fault."** The survivor may be experiencing self blame. Let them know that nobody deserves to be sexually assaulted. There is no "rapeable offense."
- Counter-act all self-blaming statements the survivor might make.
- Never ask "why" or otherwise judgmental questions that may imply you are blaming the survivor.
- Do not ask questions or interrogate the survivor.
- Offer options and resources for support, but **let the survivor make their own decisions.** Ask **"What do you want to see happen?"**
- Support the decisions the survivor makes around reporting and not reporting.
- Talk about the importance of getting medical attention around possible pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and physical trauma or injuries. Be supportive about these decisions.
- Remind the survivor that it does not matter if they did not specifically say "no." What matters is that they did not give consent.
- Reassure the survivor that what they did at the time to survive was right for them.
- Recognize the survivor's right to talk about the assault whenever needed.
- Understand that the survivor may not feel comfortable talking about the assault.
- Be patient. Recovery from Rape Trauma can take a long time.
- Take care of yourself by getting support for yourself when you need it.
- Help the survivor build a strong support network, including sharing information on community resources.

Sexual Assault Support Services - www.sass-lane.org
24 hr. Crisis/Support Line: 541-343-7277 or 1-800-788-4727