



To Support Survivors of Sexual Assault

- **LISTEN** to the survivor. 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.
- **BELIEVE** what the survivor tells you, and let the survivor know they are believed. Say "I believe you."
- **DO NOT BLAME** the survivor. Say "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 INTERROGATE** or ask questions of the survivor.
- **OFFER OP**tions 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.
- **REMINDE** 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.