



5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY

to support survivors of sexual violence

1 *Believe them.*

What you say to a survivor can make a huge impact on their healing.

2 *Encourage.*

Meet survivors where they are at rather than tell them what they should be doing. It may take time for them to seek professional help, so letting them be in control is key to their healing.

3 *Be patient.*

Don't interpret flashbacks, bad days, or silence as setbacks. Avoid phrases that suggest they're taking too long to recover.

4 *Understand.*

It's important to understand the barriers to a survivor disclosing their assault. They may feel guilt, shame, or fear of the perpetrator. They may be worried you won't believe them or that they'll be blamed for the abuse.

5 *Take care.*

It's crucial to pay attention to a survivor's needs, but it's also important to take care of yourself. Take some time to relax, read, journal, or talk to a therapist.

Useful Phrases:

How can I help?
There are people who can help you.
This doesn't change our relationship.
It's okay to feel angry or sad.
It's not your fault.
You aren't alone.

Not Useful:

Are you sure this really happened?
You shouldn't talk about this.
Why were you alone with them?
Why didn't you tell me before?
At least they didn't rape you.
Get over it and move on.



5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TODAY

*to prevent sexual violence
and create safer communities*

1 *Educate yourself.*

Sexual violence is any forced sexual act (harassment, abuse, or assault) without the other person's consent. Learn about definitions, statistics, and how to support victims.

2 *Talk to loved ones.*

Talk with your family about sexual violence openly and encourage similar conversations at your schools and religious spaces as well.

3 *Be mindful.*

The Centers for Disease and Control estimate that 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys are survivors of sexual violence before the age of 18. Be mindful how you speak about issues pertaining to sexual violence in public spaces. You don't know if there is a survivor within your circles.

4 *Don't blame.*

If you hear a conversation in the community blaming the victim, try shifting the conversation to focus on the wrongful behavior of the perpetrator and the harm they inflicted.

5 *Get help.*

Most communities have rape crisis centers, social services, and hotlines. Many religious institutions such as churches may also offer such services. Know your resources. You never know when you will have to use that information. to help someone get the support and services they need.

Additional Resources

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE
Rape Crisis Hotline: 1-888-293-2080

National Sexual Violence Resource Center:
nsvrc.org

Peaceful Families Project

Rape, Incest, & Abuse National Network (RAINN):
rainn.org

HEART Women & Girls: heartwomenandgirls.org