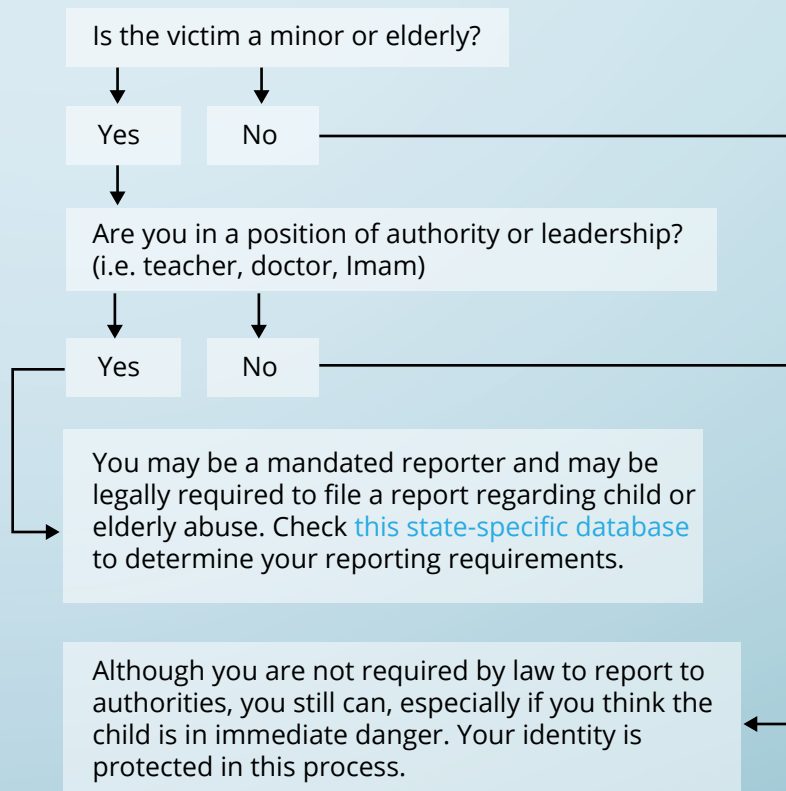


AVENUES OF SUPPORT

An individual just disclosed to you that they were sexually assaulted. How you respond in that moment of disclosure is crucial, and can have a profound impact on the survivor's healing journey. The [RAHMA Principles](#) offer an easy framework to help you respond with compassion by Reflectively listening, Affirming their feelings and reminding them this is not their fault, Honoring cultural and religious values, Maintaining privacy, and Always offering resources. This guide will help you support the individual by offering them resources for additional support. Many survivors feel like they have lost control, so it's important to meet them where they are at rather than telling them what they should do or what they need. It may take time to seek help or decide what to do, but giving them control is crucial for their healing.



Offer the victim space and agency over their options gently remind them that they have many avenues to healing and justice such as:

Call a sexual assault hotline, such as 1-800-656-HOPE (4673). This hotline is for both victim and their support systems, is free, confidential, and open 24 hours a day.

Engage in restorative justice mediation process. This [emerging field](#) works to repair harm caused by crime by bringing victims, offenders, & community members together.

File a police report. If there is reasonable evidence for a case to be made, the city attorney or district attorney will then pick the case up. [Learn more.](#)

Get a rape kit. If it has been 72-120 hours since the assault, the victim has the option to visit a healthcare facility to get a [rape kit](#). The victim can test it either now or later.

File a Title IX Report. If the abuse occurred by someone on campus, a victim can file a [Title IX complaint](#) through their campus.

Engage in self-care. Sometimes even a scent or simple sentence can trigger feelings of anguish. Identifying these triggers and taking good care of the mind and body can be helpful.

Seek trauma-informed counseling. Mental health professionals are trained in helping victims process their trauma. [Psychology Today](#) is a great resource to find local therapists.

File a civil lawsuit against the perpetrator or institution. The victim may sue the perpetrator or institution for financial damages.

Talk with a trusted friend, relative, community, or faith leader about additional sources of social support.

If the victim decides not to leave their abusive situation or relationship, they can **create a safety plan** - a practical plan preparing them to seek refuge if it happens again

File a report with human resources if it is a case of workplace sexual assault.

Take no immediate action. Victims always have the option of not doing anything about their assault.

Being supportive of sexual assault survivors can be emotionally intensive. Remember that it is equally important to take care of your needs to prevent burnout. Consider taking time to yourself to relax, to journal, talk to a counselor, or call a hotline.