

SUPPORTING A LOVED ONE

after sexual assault

LISTEN



Be available to listen if they want to talk. Offer an alternative time if you're not available. Remove distractions and be attentive.

EXPRESS CARE

Tell them you care about them and support them. Once the conversation is over, let them know they can come to you for support again. Check in with them later to see how they're doing.

STICK WITH FEELINGS

Expressing emotions is important for recovery. Help them do this by acknowledging their difficult feelings. Be a shoulder to cry on. Avoid changing the subject or trying to cheer them up or distract them.

"I love you"

"That's so hard"

"That seems so overwhelming"

"I totally get why you'd feel that way"

FOLLOW

(don't lead)

Let them lead the conversation and make their own decisions. Give them the kind of support they appreciate. Don't try to fix the situation. Keep the focus on them.

VALIDATE

(don't judge)

Trust that their perspective is valid. Try to see where they're coming from. Let them know their perspective makes sense. Avoid questioning their decisions, and never, ever blame.

If they want more help...

Harborview
Abuse and
Trauma Center
(206) 744-1600



King County Sexual
Assault Resource
Center
(425) 226-5062