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.

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

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