



How to Help a Survivor:

One of the most important things to remember when someone discloses an experience of sexual violence is that the person trusts you. Very rarely do survivors disclose to someone they don't trust. Even if you don't know them that well, they still trust you with very personal and sensitive information about their lives.

If you are a faculty or staff person, always make sure to adhere to your reporting duties. Practice what to say if you receive a disclosure, and always remind the survivor if you are a mandated reporter.

If you are a friend, family or acquaintance of a survivor, keep these tips in mind:

- Listen. Be there. Communicate without judgment.
- Believe them and take the situation seriously.
- Offer to support the survivor or be present if they choose to report to the police, get a medical exam, or seek out a resource.
- Inform the survivor of options such as the local rape crisis center or the CARE Campus Advocate
- Be patient. Remember, there is no timetable for recovering from trauma.
- Encourage them to practice good self-care during this difficult time.
- Be respectful of their decisions. Not everyone is ready to report what happened and some may choose to never make a report—it is their choice of how to respond and when.
- Respect the survivor's privacy—do not tell others without the survivor's permission.
- Let them know that it is not their fault—no one deserves violence.
- Do not try to investigate what happened—your job is to support your friend.
- Listening and supporting your friend can bring up emotions--Remember to seek consultation support from resources for yourself.

If a friend or family member is in an abusive relationship they may see things differently than you. Oftentimes, survivors of domestic/dating violence are made to believe that the abuse is their fault and feel some responsibility for it. Even after realizing there is abuse, they may choose to stay in the relationship. Many elements of abuse can make the survivor feel dependent on their abuser and can force a survivor to believe they are not able to leave. As a friend or family member, be there for them. Realize that they may get back with their abuser up to 7 times, even if you want them to stay apart.

Here are some tips for supporting your friend:

- Don't be afraid to reach out to a friend who you think needs help.
- Tell them you are concerned for their safety and want to help.
- Be supportive and listen patiently.
- Be respectful of their decisions.
- Focus on your friend/family member and not the abuser. Even if they stay, it is important they feel comfortable talking to you about it—insulting the abuser can prevent this.
- Connect your friend/ family member to resources such as the CARE Campus Advocate, KL 107 or Valley Crisis Center
- Help them develop a safety plan and any next steps they want to take.
- If they break up, continue to show support after the relationship is over. Leaving is one of the most dangerous times for a survivor.
- Don't contact their abuser, publicly post negative things about them online, or confront them. It may make the situation worse.

Whether you are supporting a survivor of sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or both, remember: Even when you feel like there's nothing you can do, by being supportive and caring, you're already doing A LOT.