



Sexual Assault: How Family & Friends Can Help

After a sexual assault, the survivor needs to:

- Be believed
- Feel safe
- Get medical attention
- Know it wasn't their fault
- Take control of their life

Things you can do to help:

- **Listen, don't judge.** Try to simply understand their feelings.
- **Offer shelter.** If possible, stay with them at their place or let them stay at yours.
- **Be there and give comfort.** At the beginning they may need to talk a lot or at odd hours. Be there for them as much as you can and encourage them to talk to others.
- **Encourage them to seek professional help.** Examples might include: your campus counseling center, local hospital, or local rape crisis center.
- **Be patient.** Don't try to rush the healing process or quickly "make it better".
- **Accept their choice regarding what to do about the sexual assault.** Ask them what they need, help them list their options, and then encourage them to make their own decisions, even if you disagree with those decisions. It is very important that they make their own decisions and that they are respected.
- **Put aside your feelings and get support for yourself.** If you have strong feelings of anger or blame toward the survivor, talk to a friend or call a hotline. It may be too overwhelming for them to deal with your anger on top of their own emotions.

For more information contact:
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