

How family & friends can help

After a sexual assault, the victim needs to:

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

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.**
 - They may need to talk a lot or at odd hours at the beginning. Be there as much as you can and encourage them to talk to others.
- **Encourage them to seek professional help.**
- **Be patient.**
 - Don't try to rush the healing process or quickly "make it better."
- **Accept their choice of what to do about the sexual assault - don't be overly protective.**
 - Ask them what they need, help them list their options, then encourage them to make their own decisions. Even if you disagree. It is very important that they make their own decisions and have them respected.
- **Put aside your feelings and get support for yourself.**
 - It may be too overwhelming for them to deal with your angry feelings on top of their own. If you have strong angry feelings or feelings of blame toward the survivor, talk to a friend or call a hotline.