



How Can I Help a Friend Who Was Raped?

It can be difficult for a person to tell someone he/she was raped or sexually assaulted. Often, the victim's character and judgement are the first things to be questioned, even by friends and family members. Do your best to be supportive and nonjudgmental.

Believe your friend. People rarely lie about rape. Whatever the circumstances, no one asks to be raped. Tell your friend it is not his/her fault.

Be supportive and nonjudgmental. Don't question your friend, blame him/her, ask why the rape happened, or assume that ignoring it will make it go away. Rape is a crime and the only person responsible is the rapist.

Don't pressure your friend into making decisions or doing things he/she may not be ready to do. Respect whatever choices your friend makes. We don't want to take away their sense of control.

Encourage your friend to call 911 or contact a victim advocate at (504) 286-5289. This number connects directly to an advocate who can confidentially provide support, options, and resources. Advocates never force anyone to report to law enforcement if he/she doesn't want to.

Encourage your friend to seek medical attention immediately, even if he/she doesn't want to report to law enforcement. An advocate can help with medical care if your friend needs support or referrals.

Explain available resources and allow your friend to choose what to do. Your friend may or may not want to file a police report, tell his/her parents, go to Student Conduct, etc. Assure him/her that an advocate is always available to explain options, provide resources, and make referrals.

Respect confidentiality. Let your friend decide who and how much he/she will tell about the rape.

Don't expect your friend to get over it. Rape can affect every major aspect of a person's life. It is not something people just get over. They may learn to accommodate or adjust to a new normal, but the assault will always be a part of their lives.

Remember that recovery is a process, not an event. Allow your friend as much time as he/she needs to heal.

Encourage counseling. Talking with an impartial professional may help your friend and teach him/her some new coping skills and strategies to start healing. An advocate can help with counseling if your friend needs support or referrals.

Center for Prevention & Advocacy

Emergency: 911 ❤️ 24/7 Advocacy & Support: (504) 286-5289
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