



What to Say & Do

... how best to support a friend after sexual assault or abuse ...

When someone is sexually assaulted, they most often disclose their experience to a trusted friend. This handout is meant to offer useful information and resources available to both survivors of sexual assault and the people who support them.

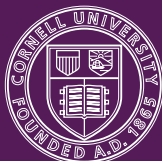
How to help:

- Be sure your friend knows you believe them.
- Reassure your friend that whatever happened is not their fault. Avoid blaming questions like *“Why did you wear that?” “Why did you drink so much?” “Why did you let them into your room?”*
- Use open-ended questions such as *“what do you need?”* and *“I want to help; what can I do?”*
- Allow your friend to make their own decisions about support options, counseling options, reporting and medical care. Support their decisions.
- If you know the person who caused the harm, avoid comments like *“they would never do that”* or *“they’re not that kind of person.”*
- Avoid telling your friend what to do; instead gently suggest resources: *“Would making an appointment at Cornell Health be helpful?” “Have you considered reporting what happened?” “Have you thought about who you might like to talk to about what you are feeling?”*
- Acknowledge something distressing happened and encourage your friend to take time for healing and recovery.

Cornell

Health

health.cornell.edu



Resources

There are many resources available to support survivors (and friends of survivors) at Cornell and in the Ithaca area.

Resources at Cornell

- **Cornell Health:** 607-255-5155 (24/7)
medical care & counseling services
health.cornell.edu
- **Victim Advocate Program:** 607-255-1212
victimadvocate@cornell.edu
- **Cornell Police:** 607-255-1111
or, in an emergency, **dial 911**
- **Sexual Harassment & Assault—
Response & Education:** share.cornell.edu
- **Office of Institutional Equity and Title IX:**
titleix.cornell.edu

Other support at Cornell:

- Asian & Asian American Resource Center:
607-255-5648; aaac@cornell.edu
- EARS peer counseling for students:
607-255-EARS (5-3277)
- “Let’s Talk” walk-in consultation with a Cornell
Health counselor: health.cornell.edu/LetsTalk
- LGBT Resource Center: 607-255-4406
lgbtrc@cornell.edu
- Women’s Resource Center: 607-255-0015
wrc@cornell.edu

Resources in Ithaca area:

- **Advocacy Center of Tompkins County:**
support, advocacy, and resources
607-277-5000 (24/7)
- **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)
Program:** at Cayuga Medical Center (CMC)’s
Emergency Department; 607-274-4411

State & national resources:

- **NY State Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline:**
800-942-6906 (English); 800-942-6908 (Spanish)
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline:**
 - o phone hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673)
 - o online hotline (live chat): online.rainn.org
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:**
800-799-SAFE (7233)

Additional resources for male survivors:

- **1in6.org:** (24/7) online support for men, and
childhood sexual assault/abuse
- **malesurvivor.org:** online chat room and 24/7
phone resources (for men & boys)