

# What Now?

*How to support a friend who has experienced sexual assault*

## DO

- Listen to your friend and believe them
- Let them know that what happened is not their fault
- Be patient, people heal from sexual assault in different ways
- Ask them what kind of support would be helpful
- Offer resources such as the **KCSARC Resource Line: 1-888-99-VOICE (1-888-998-6423)**
- Help explain what they can expect from calling the Resource Line:
  - Calls are confidential; you do not have to give any identifying information such as name, phone number, or address
  - Resource Line staff are available to listen and to talk, they can also tell you what other resources are available
  - Resource Line staff are mandated reporters, which means that they are required by law to report any suspected abuse or self-harm to CPS or law enforcement if you are under 18 years old. Mandatory reporters are only able to report information **you** provide. Keep in mind that you do not have to give them information like your last name, your phone number, or your address

## Try saying things like:

“I am sorry that this happened to you, I believe you and want you to know that it is not your fault.”

“How can I help or be a support to you?”

## Remember:

Take care of yourself. Having someone confide in you can bring up all sorts of feelings; you might be angry, scared, or confused. It is important to check in with someone you trust – even the Resource Line staff – if it feels like too much. Taking care of yourself is a good thing, and will help you remain supportive of your friend.

## DON'T

- Make your friend feel like the assault was their fault or blame them for what happened
- Ignore what your friend has shared
- Compare their experience to anyone else's
- Approach the offender; this could make things unsafe for you and your friend
- Make jokes about what happened
- Spread rumors about your friend's experience
- Post about your friend's experience online
- Say things like “You shouldn't have \_\_\_\_\_.”