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

**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 ______.”

**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.