

# How to: respond to a disclosure

It's not always easy to know what to say when someone tells you that they've experienced sexual assault. It's important to remember that it can be difficult for a survivor to share their experience. Overall, the best thing that you can do is simply be a supportive, non-judgmental listener. Here are some tips to help you respond to a disclosure of sexual assault:

- B**ELIEVE  
When a survivor is believed., they are much more likely to continue seeking the support they need to heal
- A**FFIRM  
It's important to counter any internalized self-doubt and let the survivor know that telling you was a good choice
- S**UPPORT  
Avoid questions or comments that may be perceived as victim blaming. Let the survivor share what they choose to, and offer non-judgmental support
- E**MPOWER  
Survivors often feel like they have no control over their situation. Depending on your role and relationship to the survivor, you should follow their lead on what, if any, actions they'd like to take. Note that even if you are a mandated reporter working with a minor, it can be empowering to provide age-appropriate choices, as possible
- R**EFER  
You are not expected to have all of the answers or solutions for the survivor. Point he survivor to resources such as KCSARC, or offer to find resources together

I believe you.

Thank you for telling me

I'm sorry this happened to you

There are resources available

How can I best support you?

It's my job to help keep you safe, so I need to talk to someone about this. Would you like to be here while I make this phone call?

Remember to take care of yourself: It's normal for feelings to come up after hearing a disclosure