



# Five Ways to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault on Their Path to Healing

Sexual assault can have long-lasting effects, but survivors don't have to go through their healing journey alone. Whether you're a friend, family member, or part of a survivor's support network, your understanding and compassion can make a difference. This guide offers essential steps for those unsure of how to support survivors. While it isn't exhaustive, it's a starting point for anyone looking to offer meaningful help. Let's come together to create a safe, supportive environment for survivors to heal.

Here are five key ways to offer meaningful support:

Here are key insights and steps to help you navigate this delicate situation:

## Become Educated on Resources

Before offering help, take the time to educate yourself on available resources for survivors. Familiarize yourself with support services like counseling, legal aid, and community programs. This knowledge equips you to provide informed guidance when needed.

## Listen Without Judgement

Sometimes, the most powerful thing you can do is simply listen. Avoid offering opinions or questioning their decisions. Survivors need a space free from judgment to process their feelings and emotions. Be that safe place for them.

## Respect Their Decisions

Healing is a deeply personal journey, and survivors may make decisions that seem unfamiliar or even confusing. Respect their autonomy. Whether they choose to seek professional help or take a different path, their choices should be supported.

## Maintain Their Privacy

Survivors may struggle with trust after an assault. Ensure their privacy is respected at all times. Do not disclose their story or any details without their consent. Their experience is theirs to share—when and if they feel ready.

## Offer Practical Support Without Push

Practical help, like driving them to appointments or assisting with day-to-day tasks, can be invaluable. However, it's essential to follow their lead. Offer help, but don't pressure them into accepting it. Allow them to have control over their recovery process.

## Remember

Being a part of someone's healing process from sexual assault means walking beside them, not in front of them. Support survivors with care, compassion, and respect.