

## Helping a Friend Who Has Been Sexually Violated

**Believe your friend.** Most people don't make up stories about sexual violence.

**Listen.** Let her/him talk without interruption.

**Show that you care and are concerned.** Tell your friend that you care, touch her or him, show your sympathy in whatever way feels comfortable. Try not to say, "I know how you feel." The response to sexual violence varies from person to person, so even if you have been in a similar situation, you may not know how your friend feels.

**Let your friend make her/his own decisions.** Refrain from judging her or his decisions about what to do. Don't insist that (s)he make the same decisions you think you might make in that situation.

**Offer reassurance that s(he) is not to blame for the violence.** Let her or him know that it is not her/his fault.

**Offer information.** Suggest the names of adults and community organizations that can help.

**Be patient.** Your friend may need to go over and over what happened and how (s)he feels. (S)he needs you to be there and continue to listen and provide support. Remember that, although someone may be talking about the violation, it may be a long time before (s)he does anything about it.

**Take care of yourself.** Talk to a trusted adult if you feel overwhelmed or worried about your friend.

**For additional information and services:**

**Allen Women's Health**

(319) 235-5090  
1-800-435-2640

**Riverview**

1-888-557-0310 - 24 hrs

**Together for Youth**

(319) 274-6768,  
ext. 2 or 4