



## **Title IX : Support a Friend**

### **HOW TO BE SUPPORTIVE**

Upon learning that a student has experienced sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, gender-based harassment or bullying, and stalking, it may be hard to know what to say. The following suggestions will not “fix” the pain or make the trauma disappear, but reacting or acting in a supportive way can help them feel less isolated and safer.

#### **DO**

Communicate these points:

I'm sorry that this situation has happened.

It's not your fault.

You're not alone.

- Be calm. If you are in crisis, the victim or survivor may feel the need to take care of you rather than themselves.
- Be aware of the importance of separating your own experiences and emotions from them.
- Be informed. Learn about the services available on campus and in the community and be able to assist them in connecting to resources.
- Listen. Being a good listener means being non-judgmental and non-blaming. Try not to be intrusive.
- If they choose to report to law enforcement or the university, support them in those choices.
- Understand that it is normal for the person to experience a wide range of emotions and reactions.

#### **DON'T**

- Don't question their role in the situation. This could make the person feel that they are being blamed and were somehow responsible for the situation. Don't tell them what you would have done.
- Don't tell them what to do, but rather inform them the resources available.
- Don't blame them.
- Don't tell them how to feel or how you think they should feel.