

# MEN CAN STOP RAPE

CREATING CULTURES FREE FROM VIOLENCE

## Supporting Survivors

### INFORMATION SHEET

[www.MenCanStopRape.org](http://www.MenCanStopRape.org)



## When Someone Tells You, "I Was Raped"...

**Believe them.** It is **not your role to question** whether a rape has occurred.

**Help them explore.** Don't take charge of the situation and pressure the survivor to do what you think they should. Give them the freedom to choose a path of recovery comfortable for them, even if you would do things differently. **There is no "right way" for a survivor to respond after being assaulted.**

**Listen to them.** It is crucial to let the survivor know that they can talk **when they are ready**. When they finally decide to come to you for support, don't interrupt or inject your feelings. Just listen. Your caring but silent attention will be invaluable.

**Never blame them for being assaulted** No one ever deserves to be raped. Not even if they were drunk or high, wore revealing clothes, considered "promiscuous," initiated the sexual activity, or even married to the rapist. **Let them know, "It wasn't your fault."**

**Ask before you touch.** Don't assume that physical contact, even in the form of a gentle touch or hug, will be comforting. **Give them the space they need.** Try your best not to take it personally. Signal your openness by uncrossing your arms, leaning forward, and keeping hands apart and unclenched, palms face up.

**Recognize that you've been assaulted too.** When someone you love is hurting, it's hard not to feel hurt as well. Don't blame yourself for the many feelings you will have, which can include helplessness, guilt, shock, anxiety, and depression. Being aware of these emotions will help you better understand the survivor's experience and be more supportive.

**Get help for yourself.** Make sure you don't go through this alone. Reach out to a friend, family member, or counselor. Most rape crisis centers, realizing that the impact of rape extends far beyond the survivor, offer counseling for family and friends. Suppressing your own feelings will only make you less available to support the survivor. **Remember: Asking for help when you need it is a sign of strength, not weakness.**

To learn how men can stop rape, go to [www.MenCanStopRape.org](http://www.MenCanStopRape.org) Learn more about our youth development programs, public education materials, & trainings for professionals.

Go to our site for:  
"rape as a men's issue"  
"what young men can do"  
"alcohol & rape"  
"athletes, men of strength"  
"defining the rules"  
"male survivors"

1.800.656.HOPE  
or RAINN.org  
to find a local crisis center