

# How to help a friend who has been sexually assaulted

The emotional impact of sexual assault can be both immediate and long-lasting. Although it may be difficult to know what to do or say when a friend is hurting, there are often ways to be helpful.

## Helping your friend

A friend may confide in you ten minutes or ten years after an assault. Sexual assault can be hard to talk about – you can help your friend by listening and offering support and also by encouraging them to call SHARE.

## How to Respond

- ▶ **Listen and demonstrate that you believe them** – It is important for your friend to know that they are believed, supported and not judged.
- ▶ **Let your friend lead the conversation** – Allow your friend to determine the pace and focus of the conversation. You can help them to understand the available options, but your friend should be the one to decide how to proceed.
- ▶ **Be reassuring** – People often blame themselves. Your friend is not at fault. No one asks to be sexually assaulted. They are not responsible for the harm they have experienced.

## Helping yourself

- ▶ **Be aware of your own feelings** – You may feel hurt, angry, guilty, anxious, or frightened or any number of difficult emotions. Your reaction may be surprising, confusing, or overwhelming to you. Be mindful of what is coming up for you as you help your friend.
- ▶ **Know and respect your own limits** – Provide support and compassion. Try not to offer more than you can give, and encourage your friend to seek additional support.
- ▶ **You are not responsible for your friend's experience** – You may think that you could have done something to prevent your friend's sexual assault. Remember, the offender is responsible for the assault.
- ▶ **Seek support for yourself** – Find someone other than the survivor to talk to about your feelings while respecting their privacy. SHARE is available for you, too.
- ▶ **Keep the rest of your life on track** – Do not forget to take care of yourself. This will help both you and your friend.

## What Resources are available?

- ▶ **Crisis Services** – The SHARE Center has a 24/7 confidential hotline (203.432.2000) to talk by phone as well as drop in hours weekdays 9am to 5pm. A counselor can help you and your friend with resources, services and support as your friend makes decisions on how to proceed.
- ▶ **Medical** – Medical attention is available 24/7 at Acute Care (55 Lock Street, 203.432.0123). Encourage your friend to seek medical attention as soon as possible following the sexual assault (emergency contraception, and prophylactic medications for STI's and HIV are also available).
- ▶ **Evidence Collection** – Forensic or physical evidence can be collected up to 5 days after a sexual assault, can be done anonymously, and is paid for by the state. Collection exams are conducted in the Emergency Department at Yale–New Haven Hospital only. SHARE counselors are available to accompany Yale community members to the Emergency Department.
- ▶ **Reporting** – Your friend has a right to report the assault. Detailed reporting information can be found at: <http://smr.yale.edu>. Options include Title IX, the UWC, and law enforcement.
- ▶ **Long-Term Support** – Both SHARE and the Mental Health & Counseling Center at Yale Health can assist with addressing the long-term needs of survivors of sexual assault and abuse.



## RESOURCES

### Campus

SHARE Center.....	203.432.2000 (24/7)
(Sexual Harassment & Assault Response & Education) at Yale Health, Lower Level. <i>Drop-in weekdays 9am-5pm.</i>	
Security Escort .....	203.432.WALK
Mini Bus .....	203.432.6330
University-Wide Committee on Sexual Misconduct (UWC) .....	203.432.4449
Walden Peer Counseling (undergrads) .....	203.432.TALK
Communication and Consent Educators (CCEs; undergrads) .....	203.432.0847

### Yale Mental Health & Counseling Center

8:30am-5pm, Mon-Fri .....	203.432.0290
After hours & weekends.....	203.432.0123

### Yale Medical Health Services

OB/Gyn .....	203.432.0222
Student Medicine .....	203.432.0312
Acute Care .....	203.432.0123

### Other Resources

Yale Chaplain's Office.....	203.432.8752
Yale LGBTQ Resource Office .....	203.432.0309

### Public Safety

Yale Police Department.....	203.432.4400
New Haven Police Department. ....	203.946.6316 or 911

### In the Community

CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services 24-hour Toll-Free (English).....	1.888.999.5545
(Spanish) .....	1.888.568.8332
Hope Family Justice Center .....	203.800.7204
Women and Families Center .....	203.389.5010
Planned Parenthood.....	203.387.3131
Yale-New Haven Hospital.....	203.688.2222

Check the SHARE website  
for more information:  
[www.sharecenter.yale.edu](http://www.sharecenter.yale.edu)