

If Someone You Know... HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

DOs and DON'Ts

DON'T blame the victim or yourself for what happened; the rapist is responsible, and he is the only one who could have prevented the rape.

DON'T ask "why" questions, such as "Why didn't you fight back?" or "Why were you in his room in the first place?" These questions convey a sense of being judgmental.

DO tell the victim that you believe her and that you know it was not her fault.

DON'T point out any errors in judgment which the victim may have made—e.g., walking home alone, becoming intoxicated—it is likely that she is **already** aware of any bad decisions which she may have made.

DO tell the victim that you know how hard it is for her to talk about what happened to her.

DON'T make threats against the rapist; expressing your anger in this way shifts the focus from the victim's needs to your own.

DON'T tell the victim that she "shouldn't" feel that way; this will cause her to feel guilty about expressing her emotions to you.

DO communicate understanding of the victim's feelings, including her anger and fear.

DON'T impose time limits on the victim's recovery. There is no specific time frame for healing from a rape; the amount of time required depends on many factors and varies greatly from person to person.

DON'T demand that the victim discuss the rape with you even if she is not ready to do so.

DO let the victim know that you are there for her if she needs you.

DON'T be overly protective.

DON'T make decisions for the victim, such as whether to report the rape, tell family and friends, seek counseling, etc.

DO encourage the victim to make her own decisions and accept whatever she decides to do.

DO offer the victim information about rape and resources for further help and encourage her to take positive action.

Resources

Health & Counseling

health.geneseo.edu (see also go.geneseo.edu/safe)

Counseling Services

585-245-5716

Health Services

585-245-5736

Rape Crisis Hotline, 24 hours

1-800-527-1757

Life Line Hotline, 24 hours

1-800-310-1160

Suggested Reading: Ledray, L. E. (1994). *Recovery From Rape (Second Edition)*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Provides both information for victims and separate sections for significant others.

And Finally...

DO seek help for yourself if necessary!