



A TOOLKIT: SUPPORTING A SURVIVOR



SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE OFFICE,
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

WEBSITE [UREGINA.CA/SEXUAL-VIOLENCE](https://uregina.ca/sexual-violence)
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PHONE 306-337-3149

You're not alone.

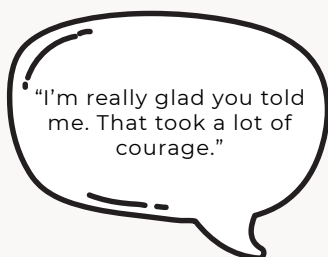
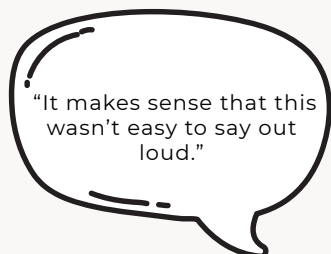


RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

When someone discloses an experience of sexual violence, respond with compassion, care, and support.

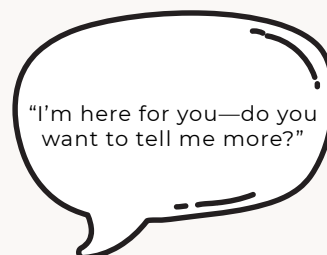
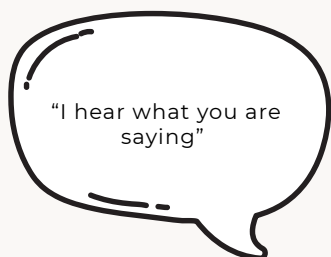
1. Acknowledge their courage.

Recognize how difficult it was for them to share. You might say:



2. Listen without interruption.

Give space, avoid rushing them, and show you are listening through minimal encouragers like:



3. Be mindful of your body language.

Avoid expressions of shock or anger, which may cause them to stop sharing.

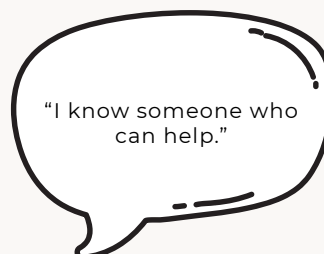
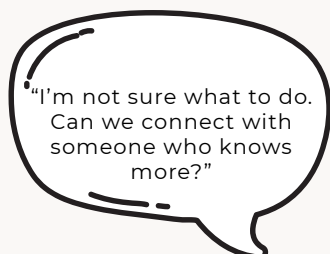


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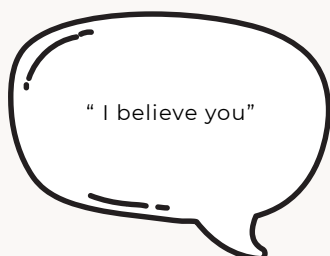
4. Know your limits.

If you feel triggered or unsure how to proceed, connect them with someone who can help:



5. Believe them.

Your role is to support, not to judge or investigate. Simply say:



6. Confidentiality

Remember that someone else's story is not yours to share. Keep what they share in confidence

7. Explore options together.

If they wish, connect them to resources and give them control over what happens next. Some potential options:

SEXUAL VIOLENCE
PREVENTION & RESPONSE
OFFICE (U OF R)

✉ sexual.violence.response@
uregina.ca
☎ 306-337-3149

PROTECTIVE SERVICES
(U OF R)

☎ 306-585-5999

REGINA SEXUAL ASSAULT
CENTRE

✉ rsac@sasktel.net
☎ 306-352-0434 (Crisis Line)
☎ 306-522-2777 (Office phone)

8. Respect their coping strategies.

Understand that survivors respond to harm in different ways. Be patient and non-judgmental.

TRAUMA RESPONSES

Trauma responses are normal ways our body tries to protect us. The response we have are involuntary. Judgement is often rooted in how someone respond to trauma- despite it not being a decision they made.

THERE IS NO WRONG WAY TO RESPOND TO TRAUMA.

FIGHT

The body mobilizes to defend itself through resistance, anger, or confrontation.

What this might look like:

- Physically pushing or hitting
- Yelling “no” or threatening the person causing harm.

FLEE

Trying to escape the threat.

What this might look like:

- Trying to run away or leave the situation.

FREEZE

The body is unable to escape or resist so it shuts down.

What this might look like:

- Unable to move, speak, or scream
- Feeling disconnected from your body- numb or detached

FAWN

When a threat is unavoidable, you try to please the threat to reduce the harm.

What this might look like:

- Trying to comfort the person causing harm
- Trying to keep the person causing harm calm

Example: A survivor might laugh nervously and agree to something to prevent further escalation.

Because these responses are automatic and not chosen, as a supporter, we want to respond with compassion. If someone feels judged, dismissed, or misunderstood, it can increase their sense of danger and shame. Compassion, on the other hand, increases the feeling of safety.



SUPPORTING OTHERS

Being a support to someone can be their life line in moments when they feel isolated and scared. If you feel uncertain on how to support someone is experiencing intimate partner violence, consider the following:

1

Physical safety: Ensuring someone is physically safe is the top priority. If your friend is willing, offer to make a safety plan with them (see following page), provide numbers to safe shelters, and encourage your friend to call police if ever in immediate danger.



- **Listen:** Be supportive and believe them. Often, the situation is worst than what they are letting on.
- **They did not cause the abuse:** Re-assure them that are not the reason why they are experiencing violence. It is never their fault.
- **Let them be the driving force:** Allow them to decide what is best for them. You may not agree with their approach but remember, it is their life, not yours.
- **Share resources:** Professional help is available. Share the resources with your friend so they can draw on these resources when needed.
- If they are not ready to make a big life change or continue to return after they leave, continue to support as you are able to. We know this can feel frustrating. Leaving a relationship is never simple and can pose a great deal of risk for individuals. Your support may be what makes it possible for them to leave in the future.

OTHER FACTORS TO SHARE:

Leave from work: individuals who are impacted by intimate partner violence or sexual violence are entitled to the following leaves from work:

- Leave up to 10 days, broken down to however they like (into days, or hours). 5 of the days are paid, followed by 5 unpaid.
- One unpaid leave for up to 16 weeks. Taken all at once.
- More information found [here](#).

Ending a Lease Early: Individuals are able to end a fixed- rental agreement early if they are unsafe in that residence.

- 28 day notice must be provided
- The tenant does need to receive a certificate from Victim Services confirming the violence.
- More information found [here](#).

Reminder: Supporting someone can impact you. Your well-being also matters. Don't forget to also take care of yourself.

SAFETY PLAN

A safety plan is a tool used to increase safety when experiencing abuse. Having a plan laid out can help someone protect themselves or others during moments of crisis. If the person you are supporting could potentially be in an unsafe situation, offer to lay out a safety plan with them.

SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE:

If I have to leave the home quickly, I can go to: _____

How will I get there? _____

If I can't go to the place above, I will: _____

Who can I stay with for a longer period of time: _____

If I need money, who can I depend on: _____

Emergency supports:

- Mobile Crisis (can provide emergency financial and housing support) : 306-757-0127
- Regina Police (can help you leave your home in an emergent situation): 9-1-1 or 306-777-6500 (non-emergency number)

ITEMS TO PREPARE:

Place all these items in one safe and secure place (e.g., a backpack) so that it can be easily grabbed in a hurry:

- ☐ **Identification** for yourself and children (if applicable). This would include Birth Certificates, drivers' license, health cards, social insurance numbers (SIN) and passports.
- ☐ **Money.** Have some cash on hand, especially if the harm-doer is connected to your bank account and/or credit cards.
- ☐ **Keys** for your house/car/work.
- ☐ **Legal documents** (if relevant) such as court orders, restraining orders, and custody documents.
- ☐ **Medication and prescriptions.**
- ☐ **Citizenship or immigration** documents (if relevant).

REMINDERS:

- ☐ This safety plan is stored in a location that the harm-doer does not have access to?
- ☐ My location is turned off on my social media accounts and I am not sharing my location with others?



SUPPORTING YOURSELF

Supporting someone who has experienced trauma can be deeply meaningful, but it can also be emotionally demanding. When you are present for survivors—listening to their story, offering reassurance, and providing compassionate care, you may absorb stress, compassion fatigue, or secondary trauma. This makes prioritizing your own well-being essential.

SET BOUNDARIES

- Setting boundaries can provide you with the time and space to care for yourself.

Examples of boundaries:

- Time limits for conversations
- Putting your phone on do not disturb when you need space.
- Redirecting someone to professional help when needed.

“I have 15 minutes to chat and then I will have to end the call”

“I care deeply, but I’m starting to feel overwhelmed and need to take some time for myself tonight.”

SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

- Emotional
 - Therapy
 - Journalling,
 - Having a trusted person to talk to
- Physical
 - Sleep, nutrition and movement
- Mental
 - limiting your exposure to distressing content
 - Mindfulness, grounding exercises
- Social
 - Maintain relationships that “fill your cup”

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS & AFFIRMATIONS

- What do you feel you need right now to take care of yourself?
- What boundaries would help you take care of yourself?
- Who can I draw on for support?

“Taking time for myself helps me show up better”

“I am doing my best”

“I can care and not carry the pain”

WHEN TO SEEK SUPPORT

Those who help also need help sometimes. Here are some signs that may show that it is time to take a step back and/or access support:

- **Emotional** signs: irritability, numbness, sadness.
- **Physical** signs: fatigue, headaches, sleep issues.
- **Cognitive** signs: struggling to concentrate, intrusive thoughts.
- **Behavioural** signs: withdrawal, overworking, avoidance.

Reminder: It is not your responsibility to fix everything.



RESOURCES

You don't need to support someone on your own. If the individual is open to it, offer resources or consider sharing this list.

ON-CAMPUS

Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office	306-337-3149
Protective Services	306-585-4999
Student Wellness	306-337-2200

EMERGENCY

Regina Police Service	306-777-6500 OR 911
Police & Crisis Team (PACT)	306-777-8604
Mobile Crisis Regina	306-757-0127
Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST)	306-766-7800
Regina Sexual Assault Centre Crisis Line	306-352-0434

HOUSING

Regina Transition House	306-569-2292
My Aunt's Place (YWCA)	306-545-2141 (EXT. 201)
Isabel Johnson Women's Shelter (YWCA)	306-545-2141 (EXT. 110)
Souls Harbour Rescue Mission	306-545-7786
Tuhk Sih Nowin Youth Emergency Shelter (Street Culture)	306-522-7122
Kikinaw Women's Only Residence (YWCA)	306-545-3445

HELPERS

Regina + Area Sexual Assault Centre <i>Counselling for those impacted by sexual violence and intimate partner violence</i>	306-522-2777
Caring Hearts <i>Grief counselling and support groups</i>	306-523-2780
Regina Child Abuse Line <i>24 hour line to report or discuss child related concern</i>	306-569-2724
Rooted Connections <i>Counselling, family services, childcare, and newcomer services</i>	306-525-0521
Family Service Regina <i>Counselling, family services, and gender based violence services</i>	306-757-6675



*GET IN
TOUCH
WITH THE
SVPR
OFFICE.*

HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT SUPPORTING SOMEONE?
FEELING OVERWHELMED AND NEEDING SUPPORT YOURSELF?

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