**SUPPORT A SURVIVOR: DO’S AND DON’TS**

**IF A SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE COMES TO YOU, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

**Do:**

1. Accept survivors as they are and treat them with respect.
2. Show them love, care and understanding by being an empathetic listener.
3. Believe their story.
4. Remind them that what happened was not their fault.
5. Ensure confidentiality of your conversation.
6. Create a safe, supportive and distraction-free environment for your conversation.
7. Where appropriate, share that they can prevent HIV and unintended pregnancy if they take post-exposure prophylaxis within 72 hours and emergency contraception within 120 hours of the incident (though sooner is always better). Remind them that this can also be an opportunity to collect evidence - and that they can decide on legal action later.
8. Help them access services when they are ready. Offer to accompany them if helpful.
9. Offer to support them if they choose to document and follow up on their case with legal authorities.
10. Reach out periodically after they disclose to you and remind them that you are here for them.

**Don’t:**

1. Doubt their story.
2. Pass judgment.
3. Pressure them to talk or press them for details.
4. Tell them how to feel about the situation.
5. Lecture them about what to do, or force them to go to the police or prosecute.
6. Ask why they did (or did not) say no or fight back.
7. Tell the survivor to “forget about it” or “keep quiet” and move on.
8. Make light of the situation or compare their story to other issues or situations.
9. Criticize them or blame them for the situation, by saying things such as, “You shouldn’t have been out alone at night.”
10. Avoid them.

For more information, visit: togetherforgirls.org