

HELPING A RAPE VICTIM

Steps to follow if someone you know has been raped...

1. Believe them and be sympathetic. It is speculated that the most important factor in the recovery of a rape victim is whether or not someone believes their story. Empathize with them by saying, "That must have been awful," or "I'm sorry that happened to you."
2. Help them seek medical attention. A person who has been raped might have medical needs to which they need attended. Ask the individual if they would like to go to the hospital; remember, though, that it is their decision. Remind the victim that physical evidence can be collected at the hospital, and one should not shower or clean up before going.
3. Comfort them. The rape victim needs support and someone to listen to them. Listen to whatever they may have to say, and provide them the support that they need. It is important to not take control of the situation for them, but instead, help facilitate whatever measures they wish to take.
4. Let them know it isn't their fault. A rape victim commonly will second guess decisions they made leading up to the rape, and feel guilty or responsible for supposedly poor decisions or giving more resistance. Let the victim know that no one deserves to be raped, or asks to be raped.
5. Control your own emotions. Commonly, a person who learns about the rape of another will become angry, and attempt to approach the rapist. More violence will not solve the problem. The victim should not have to worry about how you might react; respect the way they choose to handle the situation, telling you has shown they respect and trust you.
6. Recommend they see a counselor. This is not an immediate step, but rather, something you should encourage after some time has elapsed. If the victim chooses to go to the hospital, there will be someone there who can set up counseling sessions. It is often difficult to recover from rape, and talking to a counselor can often provide the best opportunity to relieve the damage done by rape.

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