

# CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINE TIP SHEET

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Supporting sexual assault survivors on our 24-hour crisis and support lines is an important part of our advocacy practice. On these calls we are able to provide survivors with many different resources. For sexual assault survivors possibly the most important resource we can provide is listening and believing. When a survivor doesn't need a tangible resource, like shelter, it can feel like we didn't do our job or that we weren't able to help that survivor. But that is not true- listening, providing emotional support, and helping them talk through options is an essential part of our job.

This guide was inspired by real rural programs around the country and is meant to be used while you answer the crisis and support line. One side provides helpful responses and reflective language. This side will help you remember that listening and believing is an important part of your advocacy practice. Resist the urge to fill all the gaps with talking. Allowing silence can be powerful and gives the survivor time to formulate what they want to say. Using reflective responses helps you clarify with the caller what they mean and what they need.

The other side is for after you have completed the call. We have provided grounding techniques for you to use if you have a difficult or triggering call. We have also included a reminder list of what you actually did on that call. Supporting sexual assault survivors is important work!



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## THINGS WE CAN SAY

- I believe you.
- It's not your fault.
- I'm sorry this happened.
- I'm here for you.
- I'm glad you're alive.
- You deserve support right now.
- You are being so strong.
- You're amazing for pick up the phone and calling.
- Take your time... I'm here when you're ready.
- No need to thank me, you're doing the real work. Honor yourself.
- There is no right or wrong way to feel.
- You don't deserve what happened to you.
- I am just going to be with you in this moment.

**Just listening is helpful.**

## IF A SURVIVOR ASKS "WHAT SHOULD I DO?"

How about we work together to come up with a plan for coping with these bad times?

Lets brainstorm together some things that you think may help. Does that sound good?

## BRAINSTORM HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES

First, listen to what they have been using as coping strategies.

Then, help the survivor decrease self-blame for less healthy coping strategies.

Frame coping strategies as survival skills which make the survivor adaptive and creative.

Discuss options for support.

Always encourage self-care.



# AFTER A CALL ON THE CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINE

## PHYSICAL GROUNDING

- Run cool or warm water over your hands.
- Grab onto your chair as hard as you can.
- Walk around slowly, noticing each footstep.

## SOOTHING GROUNDING

- Say kind statements, like "You are a wonderful person."
- Think of your favorites color, animal, or TV show.
- Picture people you care about.

## MENTAL GROUNDING

- Think of something funny to jolt yourself out of your mood.
- Describe your environment in detail.

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## Thank you for supporting survivors!

### SURVIVORS DON'T ALWAYS NEED TANGIBLE RESOURCES.

Often they just need someone to listen.  
You just did that, and much more:

- **You** helped them build emotional safety.
- **You** normalized and validated their feelings.
- **You** instilled hope for healing, pointed out strengths, and decreased their self blame.
- **You** helped debunk misconceptions and gave them the facts.
- **You** helped them brainstorm healthy coping skills and encouraged self-care.
- **You** helped them explore their options and validated their concerns.

For more information, resources, and tools check out [www.resource-sharingproject.org](http://www.resource-sharingproject.org)

