

Supporting & Checking In

1 Listen

Always listen to and believe the victim-survivor. Remain calm and quiet, allowing them to steer the conversation. Listen to how they are feeling and how they want to be supported. Always keep their information and story confidential.

2 Establish safety

Safety is an immediate and ongoing concern. Check whether the victim-survivor feels free from the threat of harm and whether they may need medical attention. Ensure that you always respect their physical boundaries, such as no longer wanting hugs or other physical contact.

3 Be encouraging

Encourage and support the victim-survivor in the choices they make. This may be in their personal life, or in response to a specific experience. However, always respect their boundaries and do not push them or lead them to make any decisions.

4 Be inclusive

Try not to treat the victim-survivor differently in the context of events and plans. Continue to invite them to different activities, as this encourages the feeling of normality, but don't be discouraged if they decline.

5 Be understanding

In order to support the victim-survivor, you have to understand that it is a difficult journey. Try not to get frustrated at them if you notice changes in behaviour - these may be due to the long-lasting effects of trauma.

6 Be patient

The effects of sexual violence are never truly over. The healing process takes time, and everyone responds differently to these experiences.

7 Empower and provide ongoing support

Empower the victim-survivor to make the choices best suited to them. When and if you are able to, check in and offer support. Being consistent and genuine is recommended.

8 Take care of yourself

It is not selfish to make sure your mental and physical capacities are not drained. Vicarious trauma is real and you cannot effectively help others if you are not safe and supported.