

## **THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP A FRIEND** *If she/he has been harmed by rape or child abuse*

**Keep telling your friend, “It’s not your fault.”** Never blame your friend and do not let them blame themselves. Rape or is never the survivor’s fault, even if they were drinking, did not yell for help, or fight back. Rape is never the survivors fault

**If your friend has been harmed by child abuse.** Child abuse is never the child’s fault. No matter what happened, some one else made the choice to abuse them. Tell your friend no matter how long ago it happened it was not their fault.

**Tell your friend that her/his survival is the most important thing.** Reassure your friend that the most important thing is that she/he is alive and have gotten through the experience the best they could. Questions like, “Why did you go there alone?” are blaming, and not reassuring.

**Tell your friend that you believe them.** One of a survivor’s greatest fears in telling and not being believed. If you communicate that you believe them, you will be helping them. If they say they were raped or abused, that is enough, even if there was no “evidence” of harm. Many rapes do not result in any visible injuries, and the child abuse might have happened years ago so there might not be any evidence. Telling your friend that you believe them will help them.

**Tell them you will support them by listening to them.** Be supportive by not judging them, and not prying for more information. Let them take their own time to share the details. Let them share only what they are able to. Never ask for more information then they are willing give.



Monterey County Rape Crisis Center  
Office lines: (831) 373-3955 or (831) 771- 0411  
Crisis Line (831) 375 – HELP or (831) 424 - HELP  
[www.mtryrapecrisis.org](http://www.mtryrapecrisis.org)

**Tell your friend it's okay to talk to you about their feelings as long as they need.** It is normal to feel angry, afraid, anxious, guilty, and depressed about abuse or assault. If their feelings intensify, and seem to continue to overwhelm them, and they are not getting help, support them in getting it. Talk to the school counselor about possible resources, or call MCRCC at 373-3955 and talk to some one there, they will be able help your friend start the healing process. The 24- hour hot line is (831) 375-HELP (4357) or (831) 424-HELP

**Ask your friend what she/he needs from you.** Do not tell them how to handle themselves or what decisions to make. It is their life so they need to make decisions about how they manage it. This will help them to feel they are regaining the control they lost by being victimized. Let them be in control of who knows about the assault or abuse.

**Tell your friend she/he does not have to keep secrets about sexual abuse.** Abusers may try to trick a child into keeping a secret about the abuse. Tell your friend that they do not have to keep secrets about things that are troubling them. Help your friend select a trusted adult, like a counselor, teacher, or parent; they can talk to about the abuse. Offer to go with them to talk to the adult.

**Offer your friend resources where she/he can get further support.** Refer them to the Monterey County Rape Crisis Center. MCRCC can help them find organizations and hotline numbers where they can get support and information on how they may deal with their experience physically, emotionally, and legally, if they choose. MCRCC office line is 373-3955. The 24 hour hot line is (831) 375-HELP (4357) or (831) 424 – HELP



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