

HELPING SURVIVORS HANDOUT

<p>It's all my fault</p>	<p><i>It's not your fault. The person who assaulted you is the one who made the choice to act this way. There is nothing you did that <b>made</b> them choose to hurt you.</i></p>
<p>No-one will believe me</p>	<p><i>I believe you, and others will, too. I'm going to be right here by your side, no matter what. I promise you won't be alone.</i></p>
<p>I'm so embarrassed and ashamed</p>	<p><i>The <b>rapist/abuser</b> is the one who should be ashamed. What I see in you is strength and courage. You survived something that no-one should have to endure. Surviving is something to be proud of.</i></p>
<p>Maybe I'm making too big of a deal out of this</p>	<p><i>What you've described sounds like rape/abuse to me, and that <b>is</b> a big deal. It's OK to feel upset, angry, and afraid. Feeling upset and angry is a normal reaction to a very abnormal situation.</i></p>
<p>What if they try to hurt me again?</p>	<p><i>There are things that you can do to stay safe. Let's look online for some ideas about how to stay safe. We can also call a Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Advocate who can talk to us about things we can do. Their job is to help people like us, and all calls are completely confidential and free of charge.</i></p>
<p>What should I do?</p>	<p><i>It's not my place to tell you what to do, but I am happy to talk things out and support your decisions in any way I can. What would be most helpful right now?</i></p>
<p>What if I am pregnant or have an STD?</p>	<p><i>There are specially trained nurses at the hospital who can conduct a thorough examination and provide emergency contraceptives. Would you like me to go with you to the hospital? The choice is completely yours, but I'm happy to stay with you if you want me to.</i></p>
<p>How will I support myself if I leave the abuser?</p>	<p><i>Domestic violence shelters provide emergency shelter for up to 30 days and transitional shelter for up to 6 months. They also help you apply for financial assistance, apply for jobs, and find affordable housing. Would you like the phone number for their crisis line? The advocate who answers the call can tell you all about the help they can provide.</i></p>
<p>I'll never be able to find anyone else who will love me. I should just stay with the devil I know.</p>	<p><i>Domestic violence survivors go on to live happy and healthy lives, free from fear and abuse. I see so many special qualities in you, and I know there is someone else out there who will treat you with the love and respect you deserve. In the meantime, I am here to help you. You don't have to do this alone. I will always be here for you.</i></p>