



How to Support a Survivor for friends, families, and loved ones



1057 W. Fireweed Lane
Suite 230
Anchorage, AK 99503
www.staralaska.com

Business Line
(907) 276-7279

Crisis Line
(907) 276-7273
(800) 478-8999

@staralaska



SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE


STAR focuses on education and crisis response in the Anchorage community as well as throughout the state. Information about STAR can be obtained 24 hours a day.

If you or someone you know has recently been hurt or if the assault occurred years ago, STAR Advocates can help by providing information and support over the phone or in person.

Please call (907) 276-7279 for more information or to make an appointment.

***Any suspected abuse of a minor (under age 16) should be immediately reported by professionals under Mandated Reporting requirements. Call STAR if you have questions or if you are unsure, or you can find more information from the Office of Children's Services at 1-800-478-4444 or by email at ReportChildAbuse@alaska.gov**

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 24-hour crisis line providing immediate crisis intervention and options for reporting
 - Advocacy through the reporting process
 - Legal advocacy
 - Individual support sessions
 - Safety planning
 - Emergency assistance
 - Trauma Counseling
- 

STAR'S PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICES

- Sexual assault is crime of power and control. It is not about sex.
- Sexual assault is an unwanted sexual contact.
- Sexual assault is when a minor who due to age and status may not be able to consent to sexual contact.
- Sexual assault does not discriminate; it crosses all gender, race, age, and social-economic barriers.
- Sexual assault is not "caused by" or "brought on by" the victim; it is the sole responsibility of the perpetrator.



STAR advocacy services are free, confidential* and optional.

HOW TO SUPPORT A SURVIVOR

★ BELIEVE

There may be some confusion about details, but that doesn't mean the person isn't telling the truth. Abuse and assault are traumatic experiences and it is normal for the information to be out of order or unclear.

★ SAY "IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT"

No one asks or deserves to be assaulted. Regardless of a person's behaviors, rape is never a punishment.

★ LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Don't let your feelings get in the way of listening to the survivor's feelings.

★ VALIDATE FEELINGS

Survivors respond in many different ways after being assaulted and all these responses should be accepted as normal. Survivors need to hear that they are not crazy or "losing it." Encourage them to call STAR to speak with trained crisis responders.

★ RESPECT THE SURVIVOR'S CONFIDENTIALITY

The story of the sexual assault belongs to the survivor and no one else. The survivor may choose to tell others, but you never should. The only exception would be if the survivor is a child or vulnerable adult.

★ DON'T PRY OR ASK INVASIVE QUESTIONS

Allow time and space for the survivor to share information with you. Respect this boundary and don't take it personally if they stop talking.

★ RESPECT THE SURVIVOR'S DECISIONS


Surviving sexual trauma means reclaiming power over their physical and mental wellbeing. By making choices for them or taking away options from a survivor, you are continuing the abuse. Respect their choices and discuss alternative options if decisions seem unhealthy.

It is okay to not know what to say.

Your presence and willingness to help will do the talking.

COMMON REACTIONS TO SEXUAL TRAUMA

- Continuing anxiety
- Severe mood swings
- Sense of helplessness
- Persistent fears
- Depression
- Rage
- Sleeping difficulties
- Eating difficulties
- Denial
- Social isolation
- Hyper vigilance
- Reluctance to leave house
- Sexual problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Numbing behaviors



These reactions can be normal and everyone experiences them to some extent. If they begin to interfere with day-to-day life, STAR can offer strategies to encourage the healing process.

Everyone responds differently to stress and trauma. Recovery is not a linear process. Some days will be better than others. Many survivors experience heightened reactions several weeks after the assault has occurred.

*Thank you for
telling me.*

I believe you.

*This is not
your fault.*

HELP CREATE A SAFETY PLAN

For many people who have been affected by sexual assault, current and long-term safety can be an ongoing concern. Safety planning is about brainstorming ways to stay safe that may also help reduce the risk of future harm.

It can include planning for a future crisis, considering all the options, and making decisions about next steps. Finding ways to stay and feel safer can be an important step towards healing, and these plans and actions should not increase the risk of being hurt.



- Empower them to be in charge of their safety plan.
- Identify safe places where they can go in moments of crisis. Plan routes to these places if necessary.
- Help them create a list of people they can call when they need help, and include their contact information.
- Encourage them to pack an escape bag with important legal documents, ID, cash, keys, a change of clothes, medication and credit cards.

How can I help?

You are worthy.

You are not alone.



STAR 24/7 Crisis Line
(907) 276-7273
(800) 478-8999
www.staralaska.com



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

It's important to know that there is no "normal" or one way to react when you find out someone you care about has survived an act of sexual violence. Regardless of what you're feeling, these emotions can be intense and difficult to deal with. Learning how to manage these feelings can help you support the survivor in your life and can help you feel less overwhelmed.



FIND A CREATIVE OUTLET

Journal, write poetry, compose a song, paint a picture, design a tattoo, find a way to express your feelings in a non-violent way. Create it, destroy it, keep it to look back on later.

Whatever you decide to do will be helpful if you can get those feelings out.

BREATHE



PLAN SOMETHING FUN EVERY DAY

Even if it is something small, like painting your toenails or checking out a funny website. Plan it and make it happen.



REPLACE IMAGES

Stress from healing, working, or life in general can cause reoccurring images to constantly appear in our minds. Take a moment every day to replace those images with something beautiful, inspiring, or relaxing.

MAKE A SELF CARE BOX

Find a box, big or small, and fill it with things that give you joy. Things you can taste, smell, touch, see, hear and feel that soothe your senses.