

SUPPORTING A FAMILY MEMBER

TIPS ON HOW TO HELP A FAMILY MEMBER

Learning that a family member has been assaulted or abused can be incredibly difficult. Here are some ways to support your family member if they disclose that they have been assaulted or abused:



LISTEN AND BELIEVE

It takes a lot of courage for someone to come forward and speak about their experiences. Be supportive, empathetic, and non-judgmental. Thank them for trusting you and reiterate that you are there for them. Telling family members about assault or abuse can be especially difficult because it often involves an acknowledgement of sexual relationships with others. Remember that some students may have been victimized before coming to college, but may only feel comfortable sharing this after they are on campus.

SUPPORT

Sexual violence and assault are completely unacceptable. Do not minimize the experience of your family member or make excuses for the perpetrator. No matter what they were wearing, drinking, or doing, it is not their fault. Survivors of sexual violence often experience a loss of power and control. Taking a *survivor-centered approach* and listening to the needs of your family member can help them regain a sense of control over their body and self.

Support them in whatever they decide to do. They know their situation, perpetrator, and feelings best. Trust your family member's judgment and decisions.

OFFER RESOURCES

Educate yourself about the resources and options your family member has available to them at Vassar and in the community. Neutrally explain all available options and support them in making their own decisions. Offer to advocate for them, or connect or accompany them to counseling and reporting services. It is common for survivors to experience trauma symptoms for months or years after an incident. Do not avoid talking with them and continually follow up with your family member to offer support and resources.

SEEK SUPPORT FOR YOURSELF

Supporting a family member who has been assaulted or abused can be very difficult and emotionally taxing. Seek support, counseling, or consultation for yourself if you need to. Victim services programs may offer counseling or support groups and Employee Assistance Programs may offer counseling options in your local area. Remember that you will be of more help to your family member if you also take care of yourself.

Material adapted from Know Your IX.

SEXUAL ASSAULT & VIOLENCE PREVENTION OFFICE RESOURCES

All services are available for individuals of any race, ethnicity, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, class, ability, citizenship and immigration status, and age.

ADVOCACY & SUPPORT

- Vassar Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) 24/7: (845) 437-7333
- Vassar SAVP Director & Victim/Survivor Advocate: (845) 437-7863
- Center for Victim Safety and Support
 - Rape Crisis/Crime Victims: (845) 452-7272
 - Domestic Violence: (845) 485-5550

REPORT ON/OFF CAMPUS

- Town of Poughkeepsie Police: 911 or (845) 485-3666
- NYS Police CSAVU: (844) 845-7269
- Vassar Safety & Security: (845) 437-7333
- Vassar Title IX Coordinator: (845) 437-7924

FREE CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL CARE

- SAFE Exam at Vassar Brothers Medical Center: (845) 454-8500
- SAFE Exam at Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital: (845) 483-5000
- Vassar Health Services: (845) 437-5800

FREE CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELING

- Vassar Counseling Services: (845) 437-5700
- Center for Victim Safety and Support: (845) 452-7272
- Poughkeepsie Grace Smith House: (845) 452-7155

VASSAR ACCOMMODATIONS (INCLUDING NO CONTACT ORDERS)

- Vassar Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) 24/7: (845) 437-7333
- Vassar SAVP Director & Victim/Survivor Advocate: (845) 437-7863
- Vassar Title IX Coordinator: (845) 437-7924

For more information,
visit savp.vassar.edu or eoaa.vassar.edu