

DO

- Listen carefully and genuinely to what they are saying
- Reassure them that you believe them and that they are not alone
- Reassure them that they do not deserve what has happened and that it is not, nor will it ever be, their fault
- Acknowledge that their situation is difficult and scary
- Encourage them to express their feelings if they want to
- Allow them to make their own decisions about reporting incidents or crimes to the Police as well as seeking medical help (unless they need urgent medical care)
- Offer them the use of your phone/homes address if they decide to contact support services, as well as offering to look after an emergency bag for them at your home
- Suggest contacting a support service such as Women's Aid for confidential advice

DON'T

- Blame them for what has happened or make them feel guilty for not telling you sooner
- Pressure them to talk about things they don't want to
- Play 'devil's advocate' or try to justify or downplay the perpetrator's behaviour
- Make any decisions or take actions on their behalf, such as phoning the police or a solicitor
- Contact the perpetrator – you could make things difficult if they are still together
- Urge them to leave their partner – they may not be ready or able to do this

It is so vital to react in a way that makes your friend, family member or colleague feel as safe as possible. It is also very important that you look after yourself whilst supporting them through such a difficult time. Make sure that you seek help too if you need it, from other friends, family members or professional services.