

Suggestions for Partners of Survivors of Rape

1. Don't feel you need to retaliate against our attacker.

We know the perpetrator is capable of violence. Please don't make us worry about you being hurt. We'll feel more secure knowing you'll remain in one piece.

2. Don't blame us for what happened.

It's not our fault.

3. Don't tell us to "get over it".

We would if we could and we are trying our best. Support us as we struggle to find our way again.

4. Don't tell us to put what happened out of our minds.

It's not that simple.

5. Don't tell us "it's no big deal".

Rape is an enormous challenge to heal from. It haunts even our dreams.

6. Try to understand our need to feel safe.

If we disagree about safety issues in the future please realize that what sounds strange to you may help us feel safe.

7. Don't say something like, "Well, it's been six months (a year, 5 years etc.) and ask if we're "over it" yet.

Chances are that we may not be ready to go back to life as it was. We may never be ready and may have to create a new life for ourselves as we learn to be safe again.

8. Don't tell us we are weak because it impacts our life.

We are stronger than words can describe.

9. Don't ask us what you are supposed to do to get past what happened to us.

We aren't sure what we're going to do.

10. Don't ask us if we did anything on purpose that led to the rape.

We didn't do anything except survive.

11. Don't ask us to talk about things we could have done something differently during the attack.

We made the best choices we could to survive. We got away without being killed didn't we? That's proof our instincts were right. Please help us learn to realize that ourselves.

12. Don't tell us that it's not rape because we knew the attacker.

Numerous studies tell us that our perpetrators are more likely to be known to us than unknown.

13. If you give us a hug and we pull away please know that chances are we're not rejecting you, we're just uncomfortable.

We may have a hard time being able to respond right now.

14. If we do pull away from you please don't get mad. Tell us you care.

Chances are you'll get that hug after all!

15. If you're together and the survivor has a flashback try not to be mad at the survivor.

We hate the darned things too! Flashbacks are always rough. It's difficult to know what to do. It's got to be difficult to watch. Any anger should go to the one who caused the rape and not the survivor who has to put her life together.

16. Don't be afraid to talk to us if we're upset.

Knowing you are there may be just what we need.

17. If we become suicidal please don't take that as a sign of weakness.

Take that as a sign we're overwhelmed, trying to cope, and need help.

18. Don't pretend rape doesn't happen to people you know.

It does. Thank you for reading this to learn about it.

19. Don't get the idea rape just happens to "those" kinds of people.

This crime happens to as many as 1 woman in 4. It crosses ethnic, racial, economic and social boundaries.

20. Don't be afraid of a person who was raped.

I promise as a survivor, the rape will affect you but won't rub off on you. The person you love is still the same person as before.

21. Don't deny your feelings after finding out a friend was raped.

Call a rape crisis center's hotline and find out what support is available for you.

22. Do not tell us we should take it as a compliment.

Rape isn't about lust or attractiveness; it's an act of power and force.

23. Do not tell us "Oh yeah, I know a bunch of girls who've been raped".

We realize we aren't the only ones but by saying that it belittles how it hurts by making it just another number.

24. Do not tell us "It's no big deal."

We know otherwise.

25. Please don't say, "Oh well, you'll have other dates that will go better."

What happened to us wasn't a bad date, it was a crime committed by a perpetrator.

For more information:

<http://www.k-state.edu/womenscenter/>

Courtesy of Hope for Healing

<http://www.hopeforhealing.org>