

HOW TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC or SEXUAL VIOLENCE

How you react to a client's disclosure of a sexual assault or domestic violence is very important.

1. BELIEVE the victim. Victims rarely lie about sexual or domestic violence.
2. Be PATIENT and NON-JUDGMENTAL. Remember: these are crimes about power and control. Allow the victim to regain control of her/his life and make decisions about what to do next.
 - ❖ There is no right or wrong way for a victim to respond to a sexual assault. Let the victim cry, scream, remain silent, talk or not talk.
3. Check for the Victim's IMMEDIATE SAFETY: Where is the perpetrator now? Can s/he go to a safe place?
4. Check for MEDICAL NEEDS: Is the victim injured? Does s/he need to call 911 or go to the hospital?
 - ❖ If the victim decides to seek medical care, offer to assist in obtaining an interpreter.
5. Provide the victim with resources and supports, such as the local domestic violence or sexual assault agency.
 - ❖ Those agencies can assist the victim with safety planning, shelter, counseling, medical and legal advocacy. ALL SERVICES ARE FREE and CONFIDENTIAL.
6. Let the victim know that you support her/him and are there to help.
 - ❖ REMEMBER: Domestic or sexual violence is NEVER the victim's fault!

HOW TO MAKE REFERRALS TO DOMESTIC/SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGENCIES

You may make the initial phone call to an agency's Hotline on behalf of your client. HOWEVER, once we talk with the client, we can no longer talk with you or provide you with any information about the client, due to our confidentiality policies. (The only exception is if we have prior *written* permission from the client to speak with you.) If you make the initial call, inform the Crisis Counselor of who you are, who you are calling for, and that your client is Deaf and will be using TTY or VRS to communicate. At that time, you may discuss any other accommodations that your client will need.

Your may also provide the Hotline phone number to your client, and s/he can place the initial call. Not all agencies have TTYs, but all should be accessible by VRS.