



*"Why did/didn't you...?!"*

Don't search for things your friend could have done differently. Avoid why or what questions, they only feed the self-blame a survivor is already putting on themselves and struggling to deal with.

*"Tell me what happened!"*

Expect a friend in crisis to be confused, so let them share as much or as little as they feel comfortable with. Try to be concerned instead of shocked and don't probe for details or express skepticism.

*"Everything will be ok" or "I know how you feel."*

Comments like this can make it seem as though you're dismissing the survivor's feelings and minimizing what happened to them. Remember no trauma is as painful as our own.

*"You should/You need to..."*

Don't try to rush someone else's healing process or make it better. Everyone has to go at their own pace. Don't push solutions onto your friend either, just accept their choices and decisions about what to do.



NOT THAT

*"It wasn't your fault."*

No one deserves to be assaulted and it is never the fault of the survivor. Listen to your friend calmly without interrupting and set your judgments aside.

*"I believe you."*

Thank your friend for feeling like they could talk to you and validate what they've been through. One of the main reasons survivors don't tell anyone is a fear the listener won't believe them.

*"I'm here."*

Provide your friend with the opportunity to be heard and support them with open listening and body language. Validate their feelings, they are all natural responses to what happened.

*"I will support you in whatever you decide to do."*

Let your friend know there are people who can help and they don't have to go through this alone, then stand by them. Making decisions is a part of reclaiming themselves.