

HELPING A FRIEND



Acknowledge your limits



Believe your friend & listen actively



Avoid victim-blaming questions & minimizing what happened



Guide & encourage your friend to seek help



Check in & take your friend's health and safety seriously

SOME DEFINITIONS

Sexual harassment is defined as repeated, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which either undermines personal dignity due to its degrading or humiliating nature, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive situation for a person. It is also defined as the exertion of serious pressure upon others, even if it is not repetitive, aimed at obtaining sexual favors.

Sexual assault is any sexual act committed with violence, duress, threat or surprise. It is punishable by 5 years in prison and a fine of 45,000 euros.

Rape is any act of sexual penetration, of any nature whatsoever, committed against another person using violence, coercion, threats or surprise. It is punishable by 15 years of imprisonment.

Rape and other forms of sexual assault are committed when they have been imposed upon the victim in the circumstances listed above, regardless of the nature of the relations existing between the aggressor and the victim.

Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. Sexual activity without consent is rape or sexual assault.

Sexual coercion is unwanted sexual activity that happens when people feel pressured, tricked, threatened, or forced in a nonphysical way.

THE AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY 55
of PARIS YEARS



Sexual Assault & Consent

HELPING A FRIEND

For more information, please visit
aup.edu/consent

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR LIMITS

You are not expected to be a counselor, a therapist, the police, etc.

- ✘ Don't think that it's your responsibility to make it right and take the pain away
- ✘ The job of a friend is to believe the survivor, not to blame the perpetrator
- ✘ Don't make promises that won't or can't be kept: "I will be there for you 24/7", "I promise you'll feel better soon"

You are expected to be a peer that your friend can trust and a guide to resources. Take good care of yourself. You will be able to help more effectively if you personally feel safe and strong.

- ✓ Take time-off from helping
- ✓ Practice good-self-care
- ✓ Seek counseling

BELIEVE YOUR FRIEND & LISTEN

For some survivors, the trauma of not being believed has more of an effect on them than the actual assault itself. You could say things like:

- ✓ "I believe you" (*if pertinent*)
- ✓ "I am sorry this happened to you"
- ✓ "This must be really tough for you right now"
- ✓ "It took a lot of courage to tell me this"

Listen actively:

- ✓ Remain neutral and non-judgmental
- ✓ Listen patiently without interrupting (*pauses and periods of silence are OK*)
- ✓ Allow the person to tell as much or little as he/she needs to
- ✓ Be mindful of your friend's personal process

Faculty, staff and students are not obligated to disclose incidents reported to them by students but are always encouraged to contact the Guidance Counseling Unit and AUP for Consent for support and advice.

reportsexualassault@aup.edu
consent@aup.edu

AVOID ASKING VICTIM-BLAMING QUESTIONS & MINIMIZING WHAT HAPPENED

These questions can send the wrong message and make it sound like we are implying that they did something to inflict this upon themselves:

- ✘ "How many drinks did you have?"
- ✘ "What were you wearing?"
- ✘ "Were you flirting with him/her?"
- ✘ "Why did you go up to his/her apartment?"
- ✘ "That's just how boys are"
- ✘ "It could've been worse"
- ✘ "It's not a big deal, it happens to a lot of people"

Say things that make them feel supported:

- ✓ "It's not your fault" (*if pertinent*)
- ✓ "You didn't do anything to deserve this"
- ✓ "I am here to help in any way I can"
- ✓ "You are not alone"

ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIEND TO SEEK HELP

Allow the person to be the one to decide on what actions to take and when.

Don't decide what's best for him/her:

- ✘ "You have/must/need to... get medical attention, tell the police, report it to the university, get therapy, talk to your parents..."

Replace "you have/must/need to..." with:

- ✓ "what do you think about..."
- ✓ "how do you feel about..."
- ✓ "it could help to..."

Assess your friends' needs:

- ✓ "Is there someone you feel like going to?"
- ✓ "Is there anyone I can call for you?"
- ✓ "Do you want me to come with you?"

CHECK IN & FOLLOW UP

There is **no timetable** for recovering from trauma. Avoid saying:

- ✘ "How much longer will you feel this way?"
- ✘ "Are you sure therapy is working?"
- ✘ "You've been acting like this for a while"

Be attentive to warning signs. Survivors may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, experience flashbacks, have trouble sleeping, concentrating or suicidal thoughts.

- ✓ Check in. Let them know you are there
- ✓ Offer support to find help together
- ✓ If needed, request their consent to disclose information to an AUP Student Counselor