



Helping a loved one who has been sexually assaulted

There are many ways that you can help a friend or family member who has been raped or sexually assaulted:

- Listen. Be there. Be patient. Don't be judgmental.
- Encourage them to call one of the domestic abuse hotlines. Fort Bend Women's Center takes calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 281-342-HELP (4357).
- Remember, it will take your loved one some time to deal with the crime and speak about the events.
- Help to empower your loved one. Rape and sexual assault are crimes that take away an individual's power. It is important not to compound this experience by putting pressure on your loved one to do things that he or she is not ready to do yet.
- If you are dealing with an issue involving your child, create a safe place by talking with him/her directly.
- If your loved one is considering suicide, follow-up with them on a regular basis.
- Encourage your loved one to report the rape or sexual assault to law enforcement.
- If the survivor is willing to accept support, assist them in contacting the right authorities. (i.e. local law enforcement, campus security, hospital)
- Encourage him or her to contact one of the hotlines. The Fort Bend County Women's Center takes calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If a client decides to seek medical attention at the hospital, an advocate is summoned and serves to support and provide informational supplements to both the survivor and their families.
- Typically, clients have ninety-six hours to have a S.A.N.E. (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners) examination performed after a sexual assault has occurred. Do not be fooled by the myths of bathing after a sexual assault as evidence can still be collected.

Source: Fort Bend Women's Center and RAINN – www.rainn.org