

Vesta Resource Guide

Muskoka

Now What: How to Help



V E S T A

www.VestaSIT.com

Now What: How to Help

1. Listen to her.

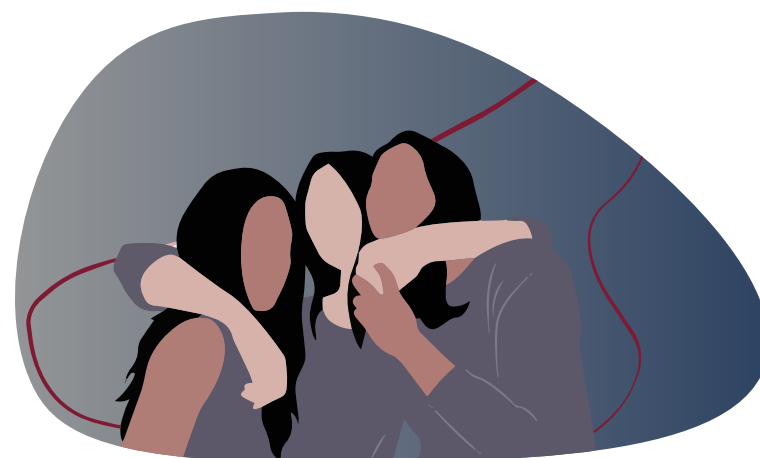
If you're reading this guide there's likely someone you're worried about. The most important thing you can do is make sure she knows that you love and support her.

To the outsider looking in, it can be hard to understand why she doesn't just leave. It's important to remember that gender-based violence often includes emotional manipulation, threats, and violence that can get worse when she tries to leave. Don't forget that it's hard to leave someone you love, even if they treat you badly.

What You Can Do

With your friends, form a circle of support around her. It's everyone's job to make sure she knows you are all there for her, ready to listen, and without judgement.

If she wants to talk, it's important that you listen to her, believe her, and above all, don't judge her or her decisions.



Now What: How to Help

Here is a quick list of Do's and Don'ts:

DO

1. Listen if she wants to talk. Don't judge and don't offer solutions. Just listen closely and BELIEVE HER.

"I believe you."

"Thank you for telling me. I know this is hard to talk about."

2. Tell her that you love and support her. Whatever she wants to do (or not do), you support her decision.

"There's nothing you did (or didn't do) that makes this your fault."

"I hear you and I totally support you."

3. If she asks for help, offer resources.

"I'm here for you. What can I do to help?"

"You're not alone in this. I'm here to listen and help."

DON'T

1. Confront her or have an 'intervention'.

2. Ask her why she doesn't just leave or imply that she deserves violence if she stays.

3. Put yourself in danger.

Now What: How to Help

2. If she asks you for help, be ready with resources.

The most dangerous time in an abusive situation is when the survivor stands up for herself. This might mean leaving, telling a friend or boss, or reporting to police. Whatever the situation, asking for help takes a massive amount of courage on her part and it means the danger she's in could get worse, fast

As her friend, it's important that you don't put yourself in danger. Don't commit to doing things that could put you at risk of violence.

What You Can Do

Be ready with resources, like the following list we've put together in this guide, and talk to her about who to call first. If you're afraid she's in serious danger right now, call 911.



Now What: How to Help

Services and Resources for Muskoka-Perry Sound:

- An interactive map where you can find shelters near you: <https://www.sheltersafe.ca/ontario/>
- Muskoka Parry Sound Sexual Assault Services <https://www.mpssas.org/>
- Muskoka Interval House <https://www.mwag.ca/> 1-800-461-1740
- Women and Children's Shelters and Transitional Home (Muskoka and Parry Sound)
- * Chrysalis (Huntsville) 1-866-789-8488 or (705) 789-8488
- * Esprit Place Family Resource Centre (Parry Sound) 1-800-461-1707 or (705) 746-4800
- * Green Haven Shelter for Women (Orillia) 1-888-285-6958 or (705) 327-7319
- * La Maison Rosewood Shelter (Midland) 1-800-461-1750 or (705) 526-4211
- * Muskoka Interval House (Bracebridge) 1-800-461-1740 or (705) 645-4461
- * Nipissing Transition House (North Bay) (705) 476-2429
- * Ojibway Family Resource Centre (North Bay) 1-800-387-2465 or (705) 472-3321

Vesta is working with local community services and police to create an anonymous and informal way to report to police. Until then, please contact the police for help or to report.

Local OPP Community Police Officer

- MacTier - (705) 645-2211
10 Front St, MacTier, ON

Local OPP Detachment

- Bracebridge - 705 645-2211
- Huntsville - 705 789-5551
- Southern Georgian Bay (Midland) - 705 526-3761

Now What: How to Help

Local Online & Phone Support:

- Women's Sexual Assault Help Line
1-800-461-2929 (Daily 24 hours)
- Muskoka Parry Sound Coordinated Sexual Assault Services
 - Bracebridge: 705-646-2122/1-877-406-1268
 - Parry Sound: 705-774-9083/1-877-851-6662
 - Huntsville: 705-783-8882
- Assaulted Women's Help Line (24/7 crisis counselling, emotional support, information, and referrals to women in 154 languages)
1-866-863-0511 or 1-866-863-7868
- Centre Passerelle Pour Femmes du Nord de l'Ontario (Gateway Centre for Women in Northern Ontario) 705-360-5657 or 1-877-858-8452
- Drug and Alcohol Helpline 1-800-565-8603
- Fem'aide (24/7 crisis line for French-speaking women across the province of Ontario)
1-877-336-2433
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans Youth Line
1-800-268-9688
- Mental Health Helpline 1-866-531-2600
- Talk4Healing (Help Line for Aboriginal Women)
1-855-554-HEAL (4325)



Now What: How to Help

3. Be there for her.

Sometimes the best thing you can do is show up when she needs you. Simply being with her can help relieve the stress and anxiety produced by trauma. If you can't be physically in the same space as her (because COVID sucks), be ready to talk.

Gender-based violence robs women of their sense of control over their own lives. Showing up and supporting her decisions, even simple ones, can help her reclaim her power.

What You Can Do

Join her for the things that feel really scary, like walking to her car after work or reporting to the police.

If she lives in the same community as her abuser, going to the grocery store may be overwhelming. Offer to shop with her.

Make sure you let her drive the action. Don't try to fix things or overrule her decisions. Support what she decides to do, even if you disagree. Let her tell you how to help."

Check out Option B for more ideas on how to support a friend after they've experienced violence.

<https://optionb.org/build-resilience/advice/how-to-support-a-friend-after-sexual-assault>

Now What: How to Help

4. Be an example of self-care.

Resist the urge to preach self-care. She's going to hear a lot people tell her to practice self-care like that's a cure-all for trauma. The pressure to do self-care 'right' can create more stress on top of trauma.

What You Can Do

Be an example of self-care. Know your own limits and take time to recharge. Whether it's bingeing on your favourite Netflix series or getting a pedicure, show her how you're actively taking care of yourself.



For more ideas around self-care, for both you and her, check out RAINN.

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/-/self-care-after-trauma>

**BE READY WHEN SHE
NEEDS YOU.**

#AskingForAFriend



V E S T A

www.VestaSIT.com