



# **Vesta Resource Guide**

## **Durham Region**

---

Now What: How to Help



**V E S T A**

[www.VestaSIT.com](http://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

## Shelters and Resources for Durham Region:

- Bethesda House (Bowmanville): 905-623-6050 or 1-800-338-3397, <http://bethesdahouse.ca>
- Denise House (Oshawa): 905-728-7311 or 1-800-263-3725, <http://thedenisehouse.com>
- Herizon House (Ajax): 1-866-437-4966  
[www.herizonhouse.com](http://www.herizonhouse.com)
- Y's WISH (Oshawa)  
Crisis line: 905-576-2997 or 1-888-576-2997  
Transitional support: 905-576-0182
- Victim/Witness Assistance Program: 905-743-2790
- Family Law Information Centre: 905-579-1988 or 1-877-294-6524 (Walk-in services located at 150 Bond St. E, Oshawa, ON, on the first floor)
- Durham Community Legal Clinic: 905-728-7321 or 1-888-297-2202, [www.durhamcommunitylegalclinic.ca](http://www.durhamcommunitylegalclinic.ca)
- Luke's Place Support and Resource Centre: 905-728-0978
- Legal Aid Ontario Oshawa Office: 905-576-2334 or 1-866-595-0563, [www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca)
- The Law Society Referral Service, 1-855-947-5255 or 416-947-5255
- Legal Line: 416-929-8400, [www.legalline.ca](http://www.legalline.ca)

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.

### Durham Region Police Service Contact

- Regional Headquarters  
(905) 579-1520 ext. 3400  
Toll-Free: 1-888-579-1520
- Whitby: (905) 579-1520, ext. 1836
- Bowmanville: (905) 579-1520, Ext. 1687
- Port Perry: (905) 579-1520, Ext. 2672
- Pickering: (888) 579-1520, Ext. 2521

# Now What: How to Help

## Local Online & Phone Support:

- Women's Sexual Assault Help Line: 1-800-461-2929 (Daily 24 hours)
- Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1-866-863-0511 or 1-866-863-7868
- Durham Mental Health Services – Crisis Services: 1-800-742-1890 or 905-666-0483  
<http://dmhs.ca/cause/crisis-response/>
- 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
- Crisis Intervention Team Lakeridge Health Oshawa: 905-576-8711 ext. 4384
- Distress Centre Durham: Helpline: 1-800-452-0688 or 905-430-2522
- Durham Region Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Care Centre: 905-576-8711
- Durham Rape Crisis Centre: 905-668-9200, <http://drcc.ca/>
- 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](http://www.VestaSIT.com)