



REGIONAL GUIDE

Durham

Chapter 3: Now What -
How to Help



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This Guide is For You

Welcome. We believe you. We believe them.

This guide is for you and anyone who needs it. You have a friend and you're worried about them. They might be in a bad situation. You're pretty sure things aren't good and they're getting worse.

What do you need? Information. Resources. Things to do right now.

This guide is a list of resources that you can share and take action on, if you or they choose to. It has been written and sourced specifically for the Durham region. We created this guide for survivors of sexual violence and for those who want to help them. Maybe your friend needs support. Maybe you are a survivor and you never want to see another go through what you've experienced.

Sexual violence is a prevalent, intersectional and multi-factor issue affecting all communities. Its complexity makes it impossible to tackle alone. It takes every person who has endured gender-based violence standing up and refusing to let it happen to another.

Thank you for taking the initiative.



Now What: How to Help

Here is a quick list of do's and don'ts:

DO

1. **Listen if they want to talk.** Don't judge and don't offer solutions. Just listen closely.

"I believe you."

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

2. **Tell them that you love and support them.** Whatever they want to do, you support their 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 they ask 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 them or have an 'intervention'.**

2. **Ask them why they don't just leave** or imply that they deserve violence if they stay.

3. **Put yourself in danger.**



Now What: How to Help

Listen to Them

If you're reading this guide, there's likely someone that you're worried about. The most important thing you can do is make sure that they know that you love and support them.

To the outsider looking in, it can be hard to understand why they don't just leave. It's important to remember that gender-based violence often includes emotional manipulation, threats, and violence that can get worse when they try 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 them. It's everyone's job to make sure they know you are all there, ready to listen, and without judgement.

If they want to talk, it's important that you listen, believe them, and above all, don't judge them or their decisions.



Now What: How to Help

Be There for Them

Sometimes the best thing you can do is show up when they need you. Simply being with them can help relieve the stress and anxiety produced by trauma. If you can't be physically in the same space, be ready to talk.

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

What You Can Do

Join them for the things that feel really scary, like walking to their car after work or reporting to the police. If they live in the same community as their abuser, going to the grocery store may be overwhelming. Offer to shop with them.

Make sure you let them drive the action. Don't try to fix things or overrule their decisions. Support what they decide to do, even if you disagree. Let them tell you how to help.

Check out Option B
for more ideas on
how to support
someone after they
have experienced
violence.



Now What: How to Help

Be an Example of Self-Care

Resist the urge to preach self-care. They're going to hear a lot of people telling them 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 taking a long walk, show them how you're actively taking care of yourself.

For more ideas around self-care, [check out RAINN.](#)



Now What: How to Help

Be Ready With Resources

The most dangerous time in an abusive situation is when the survivor stands up for themselves. 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 their part and it means the danger that they're in could get worse, and fast.

As their 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 and talk to them about who to call first. If you're afraid that they are in serious danger right now, call 911.



**Together we can
end gender-based
violence. Be ready
with resources.**



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