



Parent Lesson + Resource Guide: *How to Help a Friend* (Start Strong Online)



This guide is intended to support parents in navigating conversations about consent and boundaries with their teens during the pandemic and beyond. Parents are encouraged to use this guide with our Start Strong video lesson, “How to help a Friend.” This lesson is intended to provide information and skills to support someone you know who has experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence and get them the help they need.

Lesson Review

How to Help a Friend

[Click here for
video lesson](#)



The most important thing to do when someone tells you they’ve experienced sexual violence is to listen to and believe them.

Listening sounds pretty simple, but here are some tips to make sure the person seeking support feels as heard as possible:

1. Let the other person lead the conversation: You don’t need to ask a lot of questions, you don’t need to interrupt them, and you don’t need to tell them what they should do about it, just listen -- and listen for what they need.
2. Be aware of your nonverbal communication: People tend to feel more listened to when you’re facing them, making eye contact, and doing little things like nodding to let them know you’re following.
3. Listen to understand, not respond: Remember it is not your job to get all the facts. It is just your job to be a friend and find out how you can help.



Lesson Review Continued

How to Help a Friend

When something bad happens to someone you care about, it can be hard to know what to say. Here are some things to say that are helpful:

1. Tell them you believe them
2. Tell them it's not their fault
3. Thank them for opening up
4. Offer to help them get in touch with other resources. Examples include:
 - a. Your school staff
 - b. Parents
 - c. Guardians
 - d. Mentors
 - e. Other adult family members
 - f. The Orange County Rape Crisis Center (Contact information below)

The most important thing is that you go to someone you can trust and that is in a position to help you. If one person doesn't or can't help, tell someone else. You and the people you care about deserve help and support.



Lesson Review Continued

How to get help:

At the end of the day, no one deserves to be sexually harassed. There are plenty of people who are in positions to help you if you, your family members, or your friends ever needed to talk about sexual harassment you've experienced or seen happen. You can talk to your parents, you can talk to your school staff, or you can talk to us. Feel free to use the numbers provided in this guide to get support.

Additional Resources for Parents + Caregivers

OCRCC 24/7 Helplines

Phone Helpline: (919) 967-7273

Text Helpline: (919) 504-5211

Online Chat Helpline: Click the button at the bottom of our website at ocrcc.org

To continue the conversation on sexual harassment, try some of these [conversation starters](#).

For more information specific to healthy online communication during COVID-19, view this 10-minute video entitled "[Youth and Online Relationships in the Time of COVID-19](#)".

CONTACT OCRCC



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What to Do if a Teen Discloses

If a young person discloses that they have experienced some form of sexual violence, abuse or bullying, online or in person, follow these steps to support them and help keep them safe:

1

Young people need to be supported and encouraged by your listening. Let them lead the way in talking about what happened- "I believe you and it's not your fault. Do you want to tell me more about how you're feeling?"

2

Respond calmly and with reassurance. "I am so glad you told me- it is not your fault. I am sorry this happened to you and I will do my best to help you and keep you safe."

3

Ensure their immediate safety. Depending on the nature of the incident, you may need to report it to your child's school, DSS, or law enforcement. You can contact OCRCC if you are unsure about your legal reporting requirements or if you need additional support. Our 24-Hour Phone Helpline is (919) 967-7273 or you can text us at (919) 504-5211.

4

Get help from people trained to support young people who have experienced sexual violence (school counselor, social worker, therapist). Respect their privacy around the details of the event and who is told.

5

Try to follow normal routines. This provides reassurance while they seek to reestablish a sense of control over their life.

6

Recognize your own feelings. It's ok to seek help for yourself while you are also helping others. Our trained advocates are just one phone call, text, or chat away to provide support to survivors and their loved ones.

If you would like support around talking to children in your life about consent and sexual violence, OCRCC's Phone, Text, and Online Chat Helplines are available in English and Spanish 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.