

**HANDOUT**  
**TIPS FOR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS**

Do listen.

Do be supportive.

Do say, "I'm glad you're alive."

Do say, "I'm sorry this happened."

Do say, "It's not your fault."

Do say, "You did the best you could to survive."

Do say, "You have feelings."

Do ask the survivor's permission when you want to provide physical comfort.

Do provide information and options about resources.

Do realize that sexual assault affects survivors in many ways and that almost any reaction is possible.

Don't project your own feelings onto the victim.

Don't say what he or she should have done differently.

Don't say what you would have done differently.

Don't ask, "Why didn't you run, scream, fight, leave?"

Don't ask for specifics about the assault. But do listen if he or she wants to reveal that information.

Don't ask blaming questions such as, "Why were you wearing that? Why were you there? Did you lead him on?"

Don't ask irrelevant questions such as, "Was he good looking?"

Don't take control away from survivors. Allow them to make their own decisions.

Don't forget that recovery from sexual assault is an ongoing process that takes months, years or a lifetime.

Don't forget to take care of yourself. You can't support anyone if you don't support yourself.

(Adapted from material developed by Seattle Rape Relief. Reprinted with permission from the manual, "Support for Survivors: Training for Sexual Assault Counselors," published by the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault.)