**Further suggestions:**

* **Refer the survivor to this website.**
* **Do offer to gather information about options and who may be able to help.**  Once you educate yourself and have information to share, encourage her/him to take a step.  It’s okay to offer your support in taking a step but be mindful of not taking over or pressuring the survivor to do what **you** think s/he should do.   Whatever step they take will reinforce that s/he can take another.
* **Be willing to say nothing**. If you don't know what to say, that's okay. The most powerful statement a friend can make is by simply being there, not trying to fix everything or pretending it's okay. Silence often says more than words.
* **Do not judge the survivor**. An individual is likely examining him or herself very critically during this time.  Asking questions regarding details of the assault/harassment, why the individual was at a specific place, doing a specific behavior, etc. only works to place blame on the survivor for the violence/harassment of the perpetrator.  No matter what his/her behavior was prior to the assault, s/he is NOT responsible - the perpetrator is. Following sexual violence/harassment, an individual may try to understand her/his role in what happened but it’s important to be clear that s/he is not responsible for the actions of others. Examine your own attitudes and feelings about sexual violence/harassment. Don't allow the myths to affect how you perceive the survivor.
* **Do not attempt to impose your explanation of why this has happened or try to “fix” the situation.**  It may come across to the survivor as victim-blaming.  The only real explanation is that the perpetrator chose to act as s/he did.  Additionally, you don’t have to fix the situation; you just have to be supportive.
* **Remind survivors that their feelings are understandable**.  There are many symptoms that the individual may experience; these are typical reactions to traumatic events.  If he/she experiencing feelings, emotions, or physical symptoms that are out of the ordinary, it is due to the fact that he/she just experienced a horrific and traumatic event.
* **Do not attempt to reassure the person that everything is “Okay” or tell him/her you know how s/he feels.**At this time, everything is not “okay”.  Making statements such as “Don’t worry about it. ”, “You’re going to be fine”, etc. may serve to minimize the victimized person’s feelings and downplay the seriousness of the event(s) which occurred. Also, chances are you don’t know exactly how s/he feels.  You may know what it feels like to be hurt, to be violated, or to be angry.  However, you probably don’t know quite how s/he feels at this moment.
* **Do offer to gather information about options and who may be able to help**.  Once you educate yourself and have information to share, encourage her/him to take a step.  It’s okay to offer your support in taking a step but be mindful of not taking over or pressuring the survivor to do what **you** think s/he should do.   Whatever step s/he takes will reinforce that s/he can take another.
* **Do not feel intimidated by the intense emotions of survivors.**Remember: you don’t have to fix the situation, just be supportive.   There are many people at our university and in the community who can help provide support.
* **Encourage the survivor to seek counseling and post-trauma services.**There are specially trained mental health professionals that can assist the survivor on many levels.  Counseling is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength and of taking control of the situation.
* **Find your own support.  You are also affected by this situation.**You can’t support someone else if you aren’t supported as well.  You cannot expect the survivor to provide support for you; find other friends, support people, or counseling to share your own feelings related to what happened to your friend.