HOW TO SUPPORT A SURVIVOR
AND "HOLD SPACE"

Start by Believing

It can be very difficult for someone to come forward to share their story. Leave any probing questions to the experts. Your job is to show support. The best thing you can do is to believe them.

Remind the survivor that you are there for them and are willing to listen. Remind them there are others that care and services available to support them and help them recover.

"You are not alone."

"I'm sorry this happened."

Acknowledge that this experience has affected their life. Phrases like "I imagine this is so difficult" and "I am so glad you are sharing this with me" help to communicate empathy.

"Are you open to seeking medical attention?"

The survivor might need medical attention, or wish to have a nurse collect possible evidence. Offer to accompany them or give them information about the Survivor Advocacy Program who provides information about & accompaniment for medical services.

"Are you open to seeking medical attention?"

Walking alongside someone in whatever journey they are on without judging them, making them feel inadequate, or trying to impact the outcome.

HOLDING SPACE:

Being present & listening to someone is often the most helpful thing you can do:
- Use deep listening
- Don't try to fix it
- Provide unconditional positive regard
- Allow them to feel whatever they are feeling
- Practice non-judgement
- If you are a mandated reporter:
  - Listen and support first. Be present with the survivor and make the report after.
  - Making a report can be done online by visiting www.ohio.edu/equity-civil-rights/.
  - Remember: Support first, paperwork later.