



How can I
help?

Reach out.

The Office of Victim Assistance (OVA) is a free and confidential advocacy and counseling center for students, grad students, staff and faculty. Get support and guidance on how to help a friend, or for yourself.

colorado.edu/oiva | 303-492-8855



Office of Victim Assistance
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

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Know how to respond.

When someone expresses they have experienced a traumatic or disruptive experience, how we respond matters. It is important to be supportive.

In the moment:

- Take your friend seriously and believe them.
- Check in about safety.
- Listen and be open; do not minimize, blame or judge.
- Follow their lead; avoid taking control or escalating.
- Respect their need for privacy.
- Support your friend in doing what they decide is best.

After they've shared:

- Summarize what you hear without defining or labeling.
- Validate their feelings without claiming to “know how they feel;” ask what would feel supportive.
- Inform your friend that they have rights and options, and ask if they would like to know about resources.



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