

# TITLE IX

## Addressing Sexual Harassment/Sexual Violence

### How to Help a Friend

Interested in helping a friend who is struggling, yet not quite sure how to do so most effectively? Here are some tips that can help:

- Be compassionate and make sure your friend knows that you're talking with him because you really care.
- Assume a non-blaming tone – you don't want to put anyone on the defensive in order for this to go well!
- Steer clear of ultimatums, threats or other pressure-filled tactics.
- Use "I" statements to express your concern, such as "I've noticed that you're spending a lot of time alone and I'm just really worried about you."
- Listen well by tuning in, keeping an open posture and not interrupting your friend.
- Also, listen actively by reflecting what she said back to her – that shows that you're listening and really *getting* what she's saying.
- Use prompts like "Why don't you tell me more about..." or "What do you think about..."
- Don't jump to conclusions or offer speedy solutions – if it was that easy, your friend likely would have done something about it already! It's not up to you to solve the issue; it's more about listening and letting the person know that he is cared for so he can attack the problem using his own knowledge and strength.
- Include your friend's opinion by asking her what she thinks could help in this situation.
- Don't promise confidentiality because you may need to go to a trusted counselor, advisor or other support person in order to get your friend the best help you can. Being stuck in a promise of confidentiality doesn't allow you to help your friend most effectively.
- Keep in mind that you aren't a trained counselor and that you shouldn't take the weight of the world on your shoulders. If it's too much for you to handle, remove yourself and refer your friend to a counselor who can help.
- Offer to walk over to the counseling or campus ministry or hall director's office with your friend. It's another way to actively show support.

*Some pieces adapted from "Showing Support to Someone Close to You" from Mental Health America of Colorado, [www.mhacolorado.org/pdf/Family%20MH/Mental%20Illness,%20Showing%20Support.pdf](http://www.mhacolorado.org/pdf/Family%20MH/Mental%20Illness,%20Showing%20Support.pdf)*