

# Conifer Counseling Informational Page

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## Dos and Don'ts When Talking To A Rape Victim

Hearing that someone has been raped can take you by surprise and stun you. It is hard to know the right thing to say or do. It's not an everyday conversation and may bring up many emotions, which may cloud your ability to listen, process, and respond in the best way possible. If you find yourself at a loss, here are some dos and don'ts to remember:

### DON'T:

- Claim to understand if you haven't been there
- Make it about your experience if you have been there
- Try to fix it
- Retaliate or offer to retaliate (don't be a hero)
- Attempt to make her feel safe by defending the majority of men who are safe
  - (note: this not to say all perpetrators are men or all victims are women)
- Treat them as broken
- Interrogate for details
- Tell them how they should feel

### DO:

- LISTEN! LISTEN! LISTEN!.. with quiet and patience
- Be prepared for more emotions to come
- Show empathy, not pity
- Ask them what they need rather than assume
- Keep the conversation open so they can come to you again
- Feel honored they trusted you enough to tell you
- Maintain some sense of normalcy
- Get your own support - Just knowing is traumatic in itself