

## HANDOUT HELPFUL HINTS WHEN TALKING WITH SURVIVORS OF RAPE

### WHAT TO DO/SAY

- “It’s not your fault”
- “I’m sorry it happened” or “I’m sorry this happened to you”
- “You are brave for seeking help.”
- “I’m glad you survived” or “You did what you had to in order to stay alive”
- “I’m sorry”
- “I believe you”
- Ask permission before you do anything/everything
- Respect personal space
- Be aware of body posture/positions (Don’t stand over them if they are sitting)
- Introduce yourself and describe your role
- Pay attention to their mood
- Use the same terminology they do: “The bad things,” “the occurrence,” “the assault,” etc.
- Explain Rape Trauma Syndrome (when applicable)
- Offer NWCASA services! 😊

### WHAT NOT TO DO/SAY

- Don’t ask “why” questions: “Why didn’t you fight?” “Why didn’t you scream?” “why did you go into his room?”
- Don’t make promises you can’t keep: “You’ll be safe now.” “I’m sure your husband/boyfriend/family/friends will understand”
- Don’t communicate blame: “Were you drinking?”
- Don’t give advice: “You should have gone to the hospital right after.” “You should report this to the police.” “You have to go to counseling.”
- Don’t assume
- Don’t stand over them if they are sitting
- Don’t touch them unless you ask first
- **Don’t call it rape if they don’t!**

### HOW TO CURB CHAT AND CUT THE FAT IN CALLS

- Take notes of key points (who, what, why) and refer to them if the conversation gets confusing
- If you are talking about the weather, yourself, or the Cubs excessively... it’s time to end the call.
- Go back to your notes. Reiterate to the caller that you’ve addressed their concerns, and then ask: “Is there anything else before I let you go?”

### **HANDY PHRASES IF THE CALLER DOES NOT SEEM TO WANT TO GET OFF THE PHONE:**

- “I don’t want to exhaust you with too much information all at one time, but it sounds like there is a lot going on that you might need some help with. Would it be okay if I gave you the office phone number so you can speak to an Advocate?”
- “It has been a pleasure speaking with you and I’m glad you called. We are here 24/7, so when new challenges arise, we’re here to help.”
- “You really are dealing with an awful lot, but it seems like you’re doing a terrific job. I’m going to let you go now, but please don’t hesitate to call us back in the future.”
- “I know you’re hurting right now, but you indicated that \_\_\_\_\_ might be beneficial for you. And we will be here in the future when the need arises.”
- “There is only so much we can address in one telephone call, but we’ve made a good start. Have you considered working one-on-one with someone? We have licensed counselors...”
- “Thank you so much for reaching out to our hotline. I am going to have to go now, so that I can open the hotline for other callers. We will be here if you need anything in the future.”

### **WHAT TO SAY WHEN THE CONVERSATION SEEMS TO BE GOING NOWHERE...**

- What do you want to do?
- Can you say more about that?
- What do you believe is best for you?
- What actions have you taken so far?
- What resources have you used?
- How is it that I can be helpful to you today?
- How are you caring for yourself through this?
- How can I best help you?
- Have you had a chance to think about....?
- Who have you asked for help? What support do you have?

### **OTHER GOOD PHRASES TO SAY:**

- It is such a show of strength that \_\_\_\_\_
- You really seem to know many of the things I would recommend.
- You are displaying great strength just in reaching out for help.
- Your passion in this situation shows that \_\_\_\_\_.
- I’m so glad you called.
- Would you like our Advocate to follow up with you?