
EMPOWERMENT IN PRACTICE

- Provide a safe and confidential space to talk, accepting each person for how they need to be in that moment, i.e. cry, angry, sad, quiet, etc.
- Believe
- Non-judgemental - accepting each person whilst exploring what choices they want to make.
- Respect and value
- Validate each person's experience.
- Gently challenge myths and self-blame, reinforcing that it is not their fault and they did nothing wrong and are not to blame.
- Reassure that someone did everything they could in that one or many moments to survive being raped
- Be non-directive - explore choices and what they want to do without telling what you think someone should do.
- Be honest and hold clear boundaries – this is really important in relation to safeguarding procedures. As much as possible, the survivor should be at the centre and in control of the process.
- Empower – acknowledge strengths and unique qualities.

WHAT IF SOMEONE WAS RAPED RECENTLY?

- Support available;

Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) provide specialist medical and health support to men, women and children who have experienced rape or sexual assault in the past 12 months.

There are SARC's situated in different parts of England and Wales – each SARC may have different policies and provide different services. In London they are known as 'The Haven's'.

- **Reporting to the police**

Many survivors choose not to report to the police, for many different and personal reasons. The decision to report or not to report to the police always has to be the survivors. You can explore this option with someone, without telling them what you think they should do. Whatever decision each person makes needs to be accepted and respected.

- Survivors can report a crime and bring a case against the perpetrator(s) at any time after the event regardless of when the incident happened - there is no time limit.
- Survivors can also opt out of the police reporting process at any stage.
- Specialist police units are responsible for investigating sexual offences – both recent and non-recent.
- There is specialist and confidential support available from **Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVAs)**. ISVAs are independent from the police and can provide emotional

and practical support, enabling survivors to make informed decisions which they feel are right for them.

- If someone wants to report to the police they can phone 999 and ask to speak to a specialist officer.
- If someone wants to speak to an ISVA first, you can look to see where their nearest ISVA service is.

- **Emotional Support**

Remember to offer emotional support – when responding to someone who has experienced rape or sexual abuse, it can be easy to be pulled into focussing on practical information. Being gentle, patient, kind and sensitive, whilst asking how s/he is feeling and what s/he wants to do is also really important.

- **Therapeutic Support**

Please also explore whether someone has had or would want any specialist counselling. There are a range of specialist independent sexual violence support services providing counselling for survivors from all social groups.

At every stage invite someone to consider and explore what feels right for them. Giving space and time for each person to decide what they want the next steps to be.