

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD SURVIVOR FOLLOWING A DISCLOSURE OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

You may have just received the call that every parent dreads. You have every right to your feelings of grief, anger, and fear, AND it is now time to show up for your child in a way you've never needed to before. You can do this. Here is how.

Remember your two critical jobs:

- Show respect for your child and their experience. This means listening to your child, affirming your belief in what they are telling you, and affirming your love for them.
- Act and advocate on behalf of your child and put their needs first.

Apply the Litmus Test for Healing™ when considering any next step or making a decision. The goal is to respect your child and their needs. To do this, ask yourself:

- Does this action help my child see how inherently good and worthy of respect they are?
- Would I take this action if it did not make me personally feel better at all?

Build a Cocoon of Love™ around your child survivor and reject the pressure chamber of the status quo by:

- Using [A.B.L.L.E.™ phrases](#) when discussing an assault: **A**ffirm, **B**elieve, **L**et your child lead the conversation, **L**isten, and **E**xtend the reassurance that you can.
- Practicing compassionate listening. (Learn more about what that is [here](#).)
- Avoiding asking “why” questions
- Holding the conversation you *want* to have with your child, even if it feels forced
- Believing the survivor, and showing it



- Being careful about placing blame and making threats
- Creating and protecting space around the survivor

Once you've built it, keep your child at the center of the Cocoon of Love by:

- Embracing that there are multiple avenues to healing and justice
- Making decisions based on the needs of the survivor, not your own
- Considering the implications of reporting or not reporting sexual assault
- Knowing what kind of support your child's school will provide
- Being aware of typical behaviors survivors display post-assault and how to navigate them

Above all, **show up with love when it's hard**. You can do this, and [we are here](#) to help.



THE HUB FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND EDUCATORS LOOKING FOR INFORMATION, SUPPORT, AND AVENUES OF ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT.
TAKEACTION@IHAVETHERIGHTTO.ORG