



Universalizing Statements

- “A lot of people report...”
- “It’s very common to....”
- Some people in that situation have described _____. Does that sound familiar to you?

Support Statements

- “It’s important that you’re telling me these things.”
- “I’m sorry this happened to you.”
- “What would it take for you to feel more comfortable here?”
- “It’s okay for you to have these reactions.”
- “What you are feeling is very normal for someone who has been through what you have.”
- “If you want to take a break at any point, just let me know.”
- “I am grateful that you chose to share this with me.”

Psychological First Aid

Avoid:

- Forcing people to share their stories
- Giving simple reassurances such as “everything will be alright” or “at least you survived” or “I know how you feel”
- Telling people what they should be thinking, feeling, or doing
- Telling people how they should have acted earlier
- Making promises that cannot be kept
- Criticizing existing services in front of people who need those services



In General

- Introduce yourself and the type of work that you do.
- Set expectations, minimize surprise.
- Offer options wherever possible.
- Use reflective listening, allow for silences, and check in frequently.
- Check your assumptions and judgments.
- Remember that survivors have many differing identities, ways of being, and ways of navigating the world.

Additional Resources

- **Interpersonal Violence:**
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ron_Acierno/publication/13913248_Health_Impact_of_Interpersonal_Violence_1_Prevalence_Rates_Case_Identification_and_Risk_Factors_for_Sexual_Assault_Physical_Assault_and_Domestic_Violence_in_Men_and_Women/links/5771549608ae10de639dd863.pdf
- **CDC SV and DV Survey:**
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/>
- **Classic ACES:** <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>
- **Philadelphia ACES:**
<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/134/1/e13.full.pdf>
- **The Danger of a Single Story:**
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story