



## Sensitive Responses to Disclosures of Past Trauma: What to Say, Actions to Offer, and Easy-to-Access Resources

- I'm sorry you were hurt in that way.
- You aren't alone. Unfortunately, (childhood abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault) is more common than people realize.
- You have been through a lot and survived. You must be very strong.
- What happened was not your fault. You are not to blame for what happened to you.
- It takes a lot of courage to tell your story.
- You deserve help in dealing with something so difficult. I'll give you a resource you may want to call at the end of our conversation.

### Additional Suggestions

Use grounding techniques if the person seems to be disconnected from the conversation or in distress.

#### Mental Grounding

- Describe the environment in detail. Describe objects, sounds, smells, temperature, etc.
- Play a categories game, i.e., types of dogs, cities, TV shows, etc.
- Say a safety statement, 'My name is \_\_\_\_\_. It is (date) \_\_\_\_\_. I am sitting in (office) \_\_\_\_\_. It is (time) \_\_\_\_\_.'
- Describe an everyday activity in great detail.

#### Physical Grounding

- Use the body's contact with the furniture or floor to remind you where you are
- Grab the arms of the chair as tightly as you can
- Eat something. Describe the flavor and sensation in detail (e.g., have a mint or chocolates on your desk)
- Stomp your feet or push your body into a chair
- Clap your hands or touch your tongue to the roof of your mouth

#### Soothing

- Think of "favorites"
- Remember a safe place
- Picture people you care about
- Think of things you are looking forward to in the next week

### Resources

- **2-1-1:** A special abbreviated telephone number meant to provide information and referrals to health, human and social service organizations
- **608-251-7273:** Dane County Rape Crisis Center Helpline 24/7 or National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-4673
- **Text "GO" to 741741:** Free, 24/7, confidential trained crisis counselors