

# **National Week of Action:**

*A conversation toolkit for talking about  
campus sexual assault*



# Let's Get Started:

*How to use this toolkit on your campus*

Dear Campus Organizer,

Thank you for taking the *It's On Us* pledge. As you prepare for the National Week of Action (November 17 - 21), this toolkit can help guide your conversations. These resources highlight the important role that students play in keeping their friends safe and in preventing rape on campus.

Included in this toolkit, you'll find the following:

- Protecting Your Friends
- How To Support a Friend After an Assault
- Questions For Students, Administrators and Policymakers
- How To Get Involved Long-Term
- Social Media Content
- Hotline Info Cards (formatted for double-sided printing)

Thank you for working to end sexual violence on college campuses. We hope these resources spur conversations on campus and inspire change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott", written in a cursive style.

Scott Berkowitz  
President and Founder, RAINN

PS: Stay tuned to our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/RAINN01) (facebook.com/RAINN01) in the coming weeks for additional updates and shareable graphics.

# Protecting Your Friends:

*How you can prevent sexual assault and keep friends safe*

You have a crucial role to play in keeping your friends safe. No matter what the setting, if you see something that doesn't feel quite right or see someone who might be in trouble, there are some simple things you can do to help out a friend.

- **Distract.** If you see a friend in a situation that doesn't feel quite right, create a distraction to get your friend to safety. This can be as simple as joining or redirecting the conversation: suggest to your friend that you leave the party, or ask them to walk you home. Try asking questions like: "Do you want to head to the bathroom with me?" or "Do you want to head to another party – or grab pizza?"
- **Step in.** If you see someone who looks uncomfortable or is at risk, step in. If you feel safe, find a way to de-escalate the situation and separate all parties involved. Don't be shy about directly asking the person if they need help or if they feel uncomfortable.
- **Enlist others.** You don't have to go it alone. Call in friends or other people in the area as reinforcements to help defuse a dangerous situation and get the at-risk person home safely. There is safety in numbers.
- **Keep an eye out.** Use your eyes and ears to observe your surroundings. If you see someone who has had too much to drink or could be vulnerable, try to get them to a safe place. Enlist friends to help you.

*Even if you weren't around when the assault occurred, you can still support a friend in the aftermath. For ways to support a friend, see RAINN's tip sheet on **6 ways you can respond to a survivor** included in this conversation toolkit.*



*If you or someone you know has been affected by sexual violence, it's not your fault. You are not alone. Help is available 24/7 through RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE and [online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org). If you know a friend who is in immediate danger, call 911.*

# “Something happened to me.”

*Six ways you can respond to a survivor*

It can be difficult to hear that a friend has been sexually assaulted. But the reaction of the first people a survivor tells can significantly impact his/her decision to move forward and get help. You can have a profoundly positive impact just by the language you use.

- 1. “I’m sorry this happened.”** Acknowledge their experience and how it affected their life. You can use words to show you empathize using phrases like “This must be really tough for you” and “I’m so glad you are sharing this with me.”
- 2. “It’s not your fault.”** Survivors may blame themselves, especially if they know the perpetrator personally. Remind your friend – maybe even more than once – that they are not to blame.
- 3. “I believe you.”** It can be extremely difficult for people to come forward and share their story. They may feel ashamed or they may fear being blamed for the assault. So when someone shares their experience with you, the best thing you can do is to believe them.
- 4. “I’m here to listen.”** Remind your friend that you are there to listen. The wake of an assault can be challenging for a survivor, as they might be making difficult decisions, such as deciding to go through the justice process.
- 5. “You can trust me.”** If a survivor opens up to you, it means they trust you. Reassure that you won’t judge them and respect them by respecting their privacy. Before you share their story with others, make sure it’s okay with them. They may not be ready to take that step yet.
- 6. “Are you open to receiving medical attention?”** Your friend might need medical attention, even if the assault happened a while ago. You can ask, “Are you open to seeking medical care?” or offer to send them information about health resources on campus.



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# Get Informed and Inspire Change:

*Questions for students, administrators and policymakers*

The *It's On Us* campaign has brought renewed attention to sexual assault on college campuses. Consider the questions below to assess how well you, your college and your congressional representatives are informed about campus safety resources and policies. During the National Week of Action, here are some questions to get the conversation started.

## Ask Yourself:

- Do you know where to send a friend in need of medical attention?
- Do you know who your school's Title IX administrator is?
- Do you know how to access 24/7 confidential support through National Sexual Assault Hotline?
- Do you know who you can talk to confidentially about sexual assault on campus?

## Ask Your College Administrator(s):

- What training is available to students and staff about sexual assault?
- What happens if I report a crime of sexual assault?
- Where can I find our school's policies and information about crimes on campus?
- How does this school protect the privacy and safety of those who come forward?

## Ask Your Member of Congress:

- Do you support the Campus Safety and Accountability Act (CASA) or other legislation regarding campus safety?
- Will you visit my campus and speak to students about your work on this issue?



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# Take the Next Step:

*Three ways you can make a difference*

Looking for more ways to help survivors? Here are three ways to make an impact. Remember: No action is too small to make a difference.

**1. Volunteer.** Volunteer for your local rape crisis center or on-campus organizations.

- Search for volunteer opportunities at a center near you: [volopps.rainn.org](http://volopps.rainn.org)
- Contact your school's health or counseling center for on campus opportunities.

**2. Support survivors.** Ensure that survivors have access to the care they deserve through the National Sexual Assault Hotline.

- \$10 provides help for one survivor through the National Sexual Assault Hotline.
- Host a fundraiser or donation drive for RAINN with your friends or campus organization.

**3. Become an online ambassador.** Share crucial resources and engage your friends with the power of social media.

- Share the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE and [online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org)) to let even more people know that help is available.
- Connect with RAINN on social media to stay informed on issues related to sexual assault: **RAINN01** on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#).



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# Social Media Content

*Help spread awareness on social media during the National Week of Action*

Let's connect! You can follow RAINN on social media via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#). Look for graphics from RAINN that you can share on social media.

## Facebook:

- Ready for the #ItsOnUs National Week of Action? Get started by taking the pledge: [itsonus.org](http://itsonus.org).
- Do you have a friend or loved who has been affected by sexual assault? Share RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800.656.HOPE and [online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org). #ItsOnUs
- Show your support for survivors! Take a picture of yourself with the #ItsOnUs hashtag to commit to creating a safer, more supportive campus.
- Sometimes a simple word of encouragement can make all the difference. Support a friend in the aftermath of an assault by being open to listening. Learn more at [rainn.org](http://rainn.org). #ItsOnUs
- See something? Speak up. Step in. #ItsOnUs to create a safe community at [college/university]. Learn more about how you can protect your friends at [rainn.org](http://rainn.org).

## Twitter:

- #ItsOnUs to support survivors. Take the pledge here: [itsonus.org](http://itsonus.org)
- #ItsOnUs to support survivors. Share @RAINN01's National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800.656.HOPE and [online.rainn.org](http://online.rainn.org).
- #ItsOnUs to make a difference in our community. Visit @RAINN01's [centers.rainn.org](http://centers.rainn.org) to get resources in your area.
- Everyone has a role in protecting their friends. If something doesn't feel quite right, speak up and step in. #ItsOnUs
- Do you know what to say when a friend has been raped? @RAINN01 has some ideas on how to support a friend or loved one: [ow.ly/sUYLM](https://ow.ly/sUYLM). #ItsOnUs



**Get visual!** Show us how your school is taking action by tagging @RAINN01 in your pictures on Pinterest and Instagram, along with the #ItsOnUs hashtag.

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On-campus resources:

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