

Supporting Survivors Series: Pt. 1

Trauma- Informed Approach & 50 First Words



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Green palm frond and SARA Team logo on right half of slide



FOCUS:

Supporting a survivor in a **TRAUMA-INFORMED** manner while being cognizant of **CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC** barriers to help-seeking for those with minoritized identities



Introductions



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Agenda

01 50 First Words

02 5 Key Steps

03 Helpful &
Inappropriate ?'s

04 Barriers to
Help-Seeking

05 Advice on
"Advice"

06 Support &
Healing





50 First Words

What to say after someone discloses their traumatic experience to you

50 First Words



“I’m sorry that you’ve been hurt. How can I help? Stanford has resources to support you and help you decide what you want to do next. Would you like to speak to a confidential counselor or a staff person about your resources or reporting options? We are here to help.”





5 Key Steps

To keep in mind when helping others after disclosure



LISTEN

Trust that they chose you for a reason.

The most immediately helpful thing you can do is listen to what they have to say. Listening can be as simple as being there as they process on their own.



AFFIRM

Affirm their experience.

All too often their stories are not accepted or believed by friends, family, and institutions, which can increase harm.



SUPPORT

Empowerment-based support is critical.

Your friend should be given the space to **make their own choices** about what they want to do, including what resources they want to access.



REFER & CONNECT

It can be difficult to know all the available resources on and off-campus that can help those affected by sexual or relationship violence, stalking, sexual harassment, or other gender-based discrimination.

So, here is a quick reference...



Student Support Resources

Confidential Support Team (CST)

Free, confidential counseling & support

- Business line: (650)-736-6933
- 24 hour hotline: (650)-725-9955
- vaden.stanford.edu/cst

YWCA Silicon Valley

Confidential & anonymous crisis support

- 24 hour hotline: 1-800-572-2782
- ywca-sv.org

Office for Religious Life

Confidential pastoral presence & care

- Business line: (650)-723-1762
- religiouslife.stanford.edu

Weiland Health Initiative

LGBTQ+ focused support & therapy

- Business Line: (650)-723-3785
- weiland.stanford.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Assessment, therapy, & referrals

- 24 hour hotline: (650)-723-3785
- vaden.stanford.edu/caps

Confidential Options: *These resources, by law, will keep your identity & info private*



*To learn more about support options
and reporting options, please visit*

sara.stanford.edu/get-help



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

It's critical to take care of yourself.

This means **knowing and expressing your own boundaries and limits** in supporting a friend and being aware of your own experiences of trauma.

Remember that you need to care for yourself first and foremost in order to be your best in supporting another.



The As One Project

asoneproject.org



*HELPING FRIENDS AND FAMILY
MEMBERS OF SURVIVORS OF
SEXUAL VIOLENCE MOVE
FORWARD*

AS ONE.

**Respect the
survivor's
autonomy**





Helpful & Inappropriate Questions pt.1

When supporting a
survivor



Helpful Phrases

Focus on affirmation and agency

- “I am willing to listen if you decide that you want/need to talk about this. I don’t want to force you if you are not ready-- just let me know if/when you are.”
- “I believe you and I am here to support you -- regardless of what you choose to do.”
- “Thank you for sharing.”
- “It’s not your fault. You didn’t do anything to deserve this.”

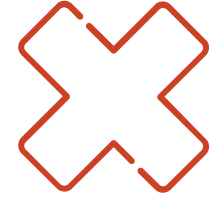
Helpful Questions

Focus on their needs/wants

- “Would you like to speak to a confidential counselor or a staff person about your resources or reporting options?”
- “How can I help?”

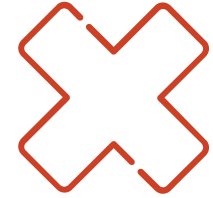


Inappropriate Phrases



- **Avoid phrases that suggest they're taking too long to recover**
 - *"You've been acting like this for a while now."*
- **Avoid phrases that insert yourself into their decision-making**
 - *"I think you should report this immediately."*

Inappropriate Questions



- **Avoid questions of disbelief**
 - *“Really?,” “Are you sure?,” “Are you serious?”*
- **Avoid asking “Who did it?” or “Where did this happen?”**
 - *Consider whether the person who confided in you has purposely omitted this information. You should respect their privacy and continue to support them.*
- **Avoid questions that assign blame to the survivor**
 - *“Were you drinking?,” “Did you try to fight back?,” “Why did you stay after they assaulted you?”*
- **Avoid questions that can make survivors feel guilty or not in control**
 - *“Don’t you want to warn other people about your perpetrator?”*



Helpful & Inappropriate Questions pt.2

When supporting
someone who has
caused harm

Helpful Phrases

- “Thank you for sharing this with me. I can tell this is hard for you to say.”
- “Let’s talk about how you can get the support you might need moving forward.”

Helpful Questions

- “What do you want to do?”
- “How do you feel about that?”
- “What do they think about that?”



If you think your friend or someone you know may be causing harm, here are some things to consider:

Think of your own safety first, as it might be dangerous to confront someone who has been physically abusive

Start with gentle questions like “How have things been going between you and [partner] lately?”

Express your concern and convey how important it is that your friend not use violence as a means of conflict resolution or control

Know where to refer them, such as CAPS, CST, or the SARA Team



REMEMBER, BEING A FRIEND DOES NOT MEAN:

Approving all of
your friend's
actions or
choices

Taking action
into your own
hands

Being the right
person to offer
them support



Barriers to Help-seeking

For survivors, with a
focus on barriers
affecting
minoritized groups



Barriers that may prevent a survivor from reporting or seeking help

Fear of how they will be treated by members of the criminal justice system
(secondary victimization)

Fear of losing community and social ties

Feeling that the incident was not serious enough

Fear of lack of evidence

Fear of not being believed

Feelings of shame due to social stigma around assault



Examples of additional barriers faced by survivors with minoritized identities

Survivors of stigmatized racial/ethnic groups and the LGBTQ+ community fear that reporting will make their community “**look bad**”

For LGBTQ+ survivors, barriers can include a **fear of being outed, being discriminated against, or not being taken seriously because of stereotypes and harmful myths**

“For survivors with disabilities, the aftermath of trauma can be challenging” if resources are **not particularly accessible** (Bryant-Davis, 2005)

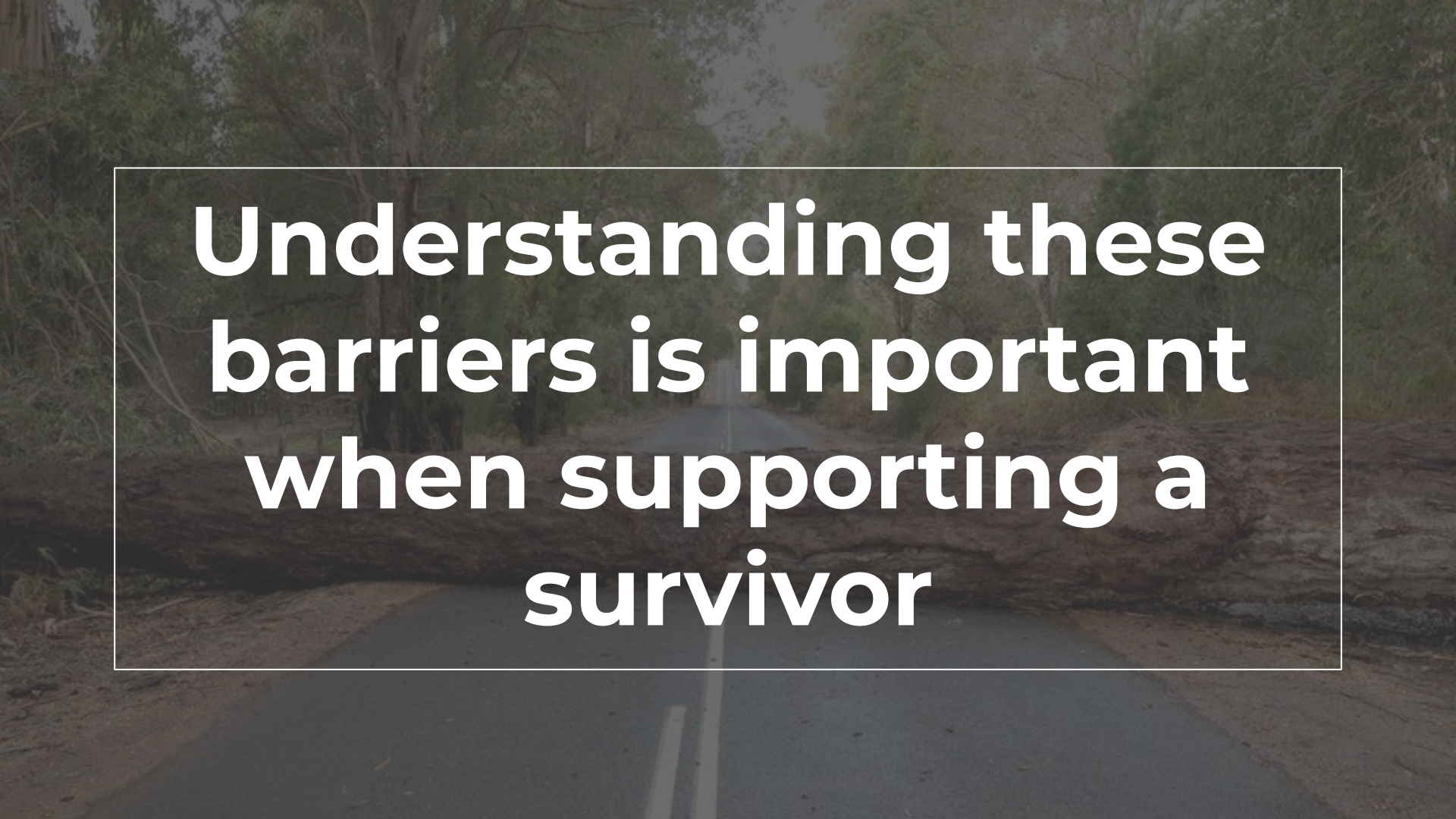
For survivors who are low-income and first-generation students, factors such as **money, time, and energy** can be difficult barriers to overcome



Cumulative Trauma

The term cumulative trauma (CT) refers to **exposure to multiple types of trauma**, or events that stress an individual's coping mechanisms and threatens harm to self or others.

In comparison to exposure to a single trauma type (e.g., sexual violence), individuals exposed to CT (e.g., sexual violence and racial discrimination) are likely to experience *higher levels of chronic psychological and physical health issues* due to the cumulative effects of different victimization experiences.



**Understanding these
barriers is important
when supporting a
survivor**



Confidential Support Team

Free, confidential support to students impacted by sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and other forms of gender-based discrimination



Advice on “Advice”



Avoid giving advice!

Advice can be *unhelpful* and *harmful* because it gives less agency to the survivor and tends to be uninformed about:

- **Processes or changes in policies within the criminal justice or the Title IX systems**
- **The context the survivor is living in (such as the financial support their partner may provide)**
- **What the survivor needs or wants**



Culturally- Specific Healing

Culturally-specific healing

Acknowledges and incorporates a survivor's history, culture, and environment to better support and empower them



**It can be difficult to know
what to do, so remember to**

Listen

Affirm

Support

Refer & Connect

Take Care of Yourself

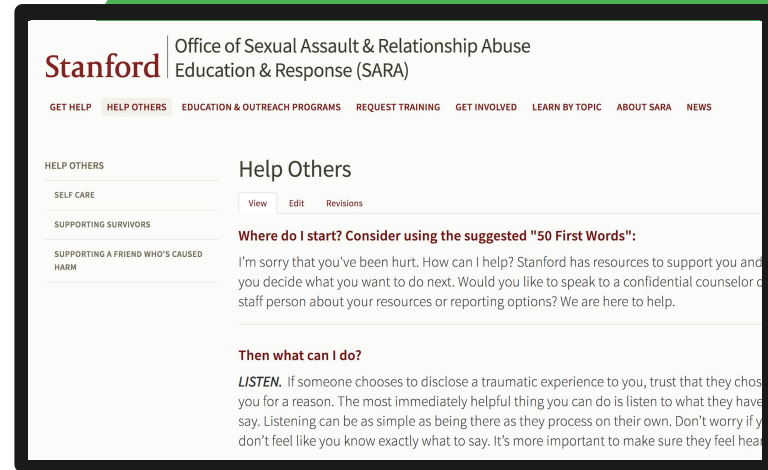


To learn more,

Watch our **“First 2 Hours”** video
in our Supporting Survivors
Series

Or visit

sara.stanford.edu/help-others



Connect with Us



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sara.stanford.edu



**Thank
You!**

