

## Talking with your loved one

Issues of interpersonal violence can be very difficult to talk about. Even thinking about it may bring up feelings that are distressing. Being embarrassed or ill at ease is normal but should not get in the way of helping your friend or loved one.

If you know someone who has been sexually assaulted, s/he needs you to provide support and understanding, and to do so in a non-judgmental and non-controlling way. When someone has experience an act of interpersonal violence, his/her sense of control and power over his/her life has been taken away. In order to regain that control, s/he needs to make decisions about reporting to the police, seeking medical attention, counseling and whom to tell. Each person needs to move at his/her own pace and you can help by making sure s/he has the information and support to make his/her own decisions. Some of the things that you can do to assist in the victim's recovery are:

- Be there for the person
- Be non-judgmental
- Listen to what the person has to say
- Present options and offer to go with the person to get help
- Don't force the person to do anything she/he isn't ready to do