



# Support After Non-Consensual Encounters

*A guide for Sanctuary volunteers*

**11<sup>th</sup> Principle focuses primarily on consent education and advocacy. While these efforts are largely preventative, we know that our community needs a plan in place for violations if and when they occur. These are not only sexual: a violation of consent may take many forms, including but not limited to non-consensual photography, gifting, coercion, and non-sexual touch.**

**Our Sanctuary team provides invaluable support to burners who need to decompress after a trying or traumatic experience. This guide is intended to provide Sanctuary volunteers with tips for supporting a person after a non-consensual encounter.**

Do:	Don't:
Call a team lead if someone has been the victim of sexual assault at the event. They will handle the reporting appropriately.	Discuss what is happening on the radios. Do not use names on the radios. Simply page your team lead to your location and discuss the matter privately.
Ask if they want to talk about it. Not everyone wants to, whereas others are waiting to hear that you're open to listening.	Ask specific questions about the incident, including details about the perpetrator. You're responsible for emotional care, not collecting information for a police report. They will share with you what they want to share.
Believe them. Determining if a given incident actually occurred is for the courts. Your job is to listen and support.	Blame them for what happened. This is Consent 101. Additionally, asking questions about what they were wearing, if they were intoxicated, etc is a backhanded way to victim blame.
Validate their experience. If they feel violated, they have been violated. Trust that they are the authority on their experience, and remind them of such.	Downplay their experience. It doesn't matter if you personally would feel violated by what happened to them.
Listen <i>calmly</i> . Practice active listening: make eye contact, nod as they talk, interject with affirmations and statements of understanding, etc.	Get visibly angry and upset at what happened to them. This feeds into their emotions and will send you both into a negative spiral.
Ask for permission before offering any kind of physical comfort measure (hugs, back rubs, etc). Follow their lead on physical contact: if they want a hug, let them initiate.	Compare their experience to something that happened to you. This is a common mistake people make in these situations. Your experiences are unique, and you could inadvertently downplay theirs by making such a comparison.
Know your limits, and seek support if you need it! No one gets a medal for burnout, so don't be afraid to ask for help from fellow volunteers.	Ignore your own emotions, especially if you have a history with a consent issue. If you personally cannot support someone through this kind of issue without becoming triggered yourself, have someone else handle it.

*The 11<sup>th</sup> Principle exists to promote consensual interaction in the burn world and beyond. We seek to prevent non-consensual encounters through education, advocacy, and demonstration. Contact us at [11thPrinciple@transformus.com](mailto:11thPrinciple@transformus.com) for additional information or guidance.*