

Supporting Incarcerated Survivors: Answering Hotline calls

Like survivors in the outside community, incarcerated survivors use hotlines for emotional support, information, and hope.

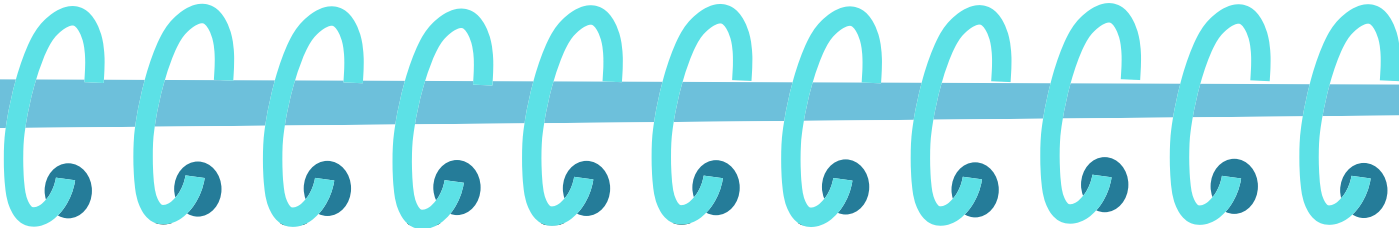


Tips on What to Do Before Taking Calls

- Familiarize yourself with the facility layout and specifically whether the phones are in areas where it might be difficult to maintain privacy
- Learn how survivors can make a report and follow up on an investigation

Tips for Taking Calls

- Introduce yourself and your agency, and the purpose of the hotline
- Inform the caller about any limits to confidentiality and any calling restrictions (e.g., if the call is being recorded or monitored and any limits on time and/or limits on the number of calls)
- Determine the nature of the call
 - Kindly but professionally redirect any calls that are not about sexual abuse or sexual harassment
 - If a caller is inappropriate, immediately set boundaries and end the calls if the behavior continues

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- Provide emotional support, review coping skills, and develop a safety plan
 - Remind the survivor that any sexual abuse or sexual harassment they have experienced is not their fault and that you believe them
 - If a survivor asks "what should I do?," offer to work together to come up with a plan
 - Support the survivor in whatever decision they make around reporting abuse. Let the caller know:
 - Their rights under PREA
 - Their right to a sexual assault medical forensic exam depending on when the assault occurred in the last 120 hours and explain the process of the exam
 - Remember that you may be the caller's only source of support. Incarcerated people are isolated, and offering a referral for care may not be possible; many survivors just need someone to listen.
 - When you end the call, let the survivor know how they can continue to receive support through your agency's hotline and via written correspondence. Make sure to get all the necessary contact information (full legal name, booking or DOC number, and mailing address).