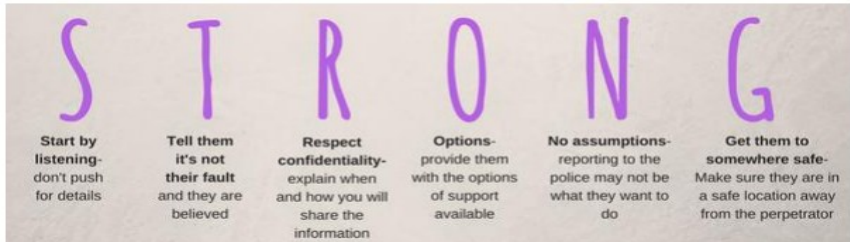


Girton College

Sexual assault and harassment: Advice for supporting friends



If you have a friend who has experienced sexual assault, they may ask you to listen to them and support them. You can use the STRONG approach, shown below. Please keep what they tell you strictly confidential – it is important that your friend is able to control who knows about their experience, and please bear in mind that a breach of confidentiality could prevent a formal investigation or any precautionary action moving forward.



Your friend may be seeking support or may be interested in their reporting options, or may simply want someone to listen and take care of them. If they are seeking further support or reporting options, please refer them to the College booklet on sexual assault and encourage them to speak to a College Tutor.

The most important thing you can do for them is to listen and not push for information or pass judgement. You should reassure them that you believe them.

It is up to your friend who they discuss their experience with, and they may wish to keep it as private as possible. It is very useful if you or they can discuss it with a College Tutor, because they can help access the various means of support and help make a decision about which of the procedures to follow – please note that this does not have to be their/your own Tutor (Dr Amy Donovan and Dr Arik Kershenbaum are particularly equipped to discuss issues of this kind—email cdhc@girton.cam.ac.uk, and you/they are welcome to approach the Senior Tutor too (senior.tutor@girton.cam.ac.uk).

Your friend can also discuss with the nurses or contact the [University Sexual Harassment and Violence Advisor](#)

Being a supporter can be invaluable to your friend, but you will be most effective at this if you ensure you have support too.

You can discuss the case anonymously with the people suggested below if you need advice. You do not have to deal with difficult situations like this alone. No one will press you to reveal names if you are not comfortable doing so. You should not be deterred from seeking help for this reason. The JCR/MCR Welfare Officers can help you decide which of the below to contact if you wish to discuss it first.

- **Your tutor, or another of the tutors (Dr Amy Donovan and Dr Arik Kershenbaum are particularly equipped to discuss issues of this kind—email cdhc@girton.cam.ac.uk);**
- **The Senior Tutor (senior.tutor@girton.cam.ac.uk);**
- **The College nurses (nurses@girton.cam.ac.uk).**

The only exception to confidentiality is if you believe there is a risk of significant harm to someone. In that case, if the risk is immediate you should contact the police, or the porters or duty tutor if you prefer. If you think there is ongoing risk that is not immediate let the Senior Tutor know. She will be happy to discuss with you as to whether or not revealing names is necessary. You do not have to make this decision alone.

If your friend decides to report to the police, this can involve very lengthy reporting procedures that can be sensitive and stressful. It is really helpful for them to have a friend with them, but you should also protect yourself. They can also ask a College Tutor or a family member to accompany them as well. If you witnessed the assault, you might be asked to give a witness statement.

Thank you for looking out for your friend.