

WHAT TO SAY (AND NOT SAY) TO TRAUMA SURVIVORS



Note: Your intentions may be to help, but the impact might not be helpful. Don't be afraid to try again. The goal is to humbly and carefully support others, with love, strength and empowerment.

DON'T SAY:	INSTEAD TRY:
"Just tell me what happened!"	"Do you feel comfortable talking about this with me? Or should we find another resource* for you?"
"It's time to move on."	"Healing is possible, but it takes time and support. How can I be here for you? Is there something that has been helpful for you? If not, maybe we can brainstorm some coping strategies together."
"You're always thinking about yourself!"	"I can see this hurts. It takes a lot of strength to talk about it."
"You could have just done ____ [to stop the crime/abuse/victimization]."	"You don't deserve this. You can choose what to do next with the support of resources*."
"It's time to report what happened to the appropriate authorities."	"When you are ready, would you like resources* to help explore options? You have the power to decide what works best for you."
"This will get better."	"This experience has impacted you significantly, take the time you need to heal."

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DON'T SAY:	INSTEAD TRY:
"Why didn't you tell me sooner?!"	"You are brave for sharing this. There are some resources* that can help, if you like. Thank you for trusting me."
"This is not the Sikh way...."	"Sikhi can be a source of immense personal strength. It serves as a reminder that every individual deserves to live with freedom, dignity and without fear."
"Calm down!"	"I see/hear you are hurting, but also I see your strength and resilience."
"Look on the bright side, at least...."	"We don't have to talk about this right now, but I am here to listen. Or we can talk about anything else, if you are looking for a distraction from this topic. Let me know what is useful, I'm here to help as much as I can."
"Why don't you remember?"	"This is understandable. Scientific research demonstrates that trauma can significantly affect memory. Be gentle with yourself."