

# ADDRESSING SEXU

## Talking consent and how to support a friend who has been sexually assaulted



Kelly Addington and Becca Tieder are Alpha Gamma Delta sorority sisters. When Kelly was sexually assaulted during her senior year of college, they wondered, where do we go for help? Recognizing that **one sexual assault is too many and one student can make a difference**, Kelly and Becca offered advice

during their talks with collegians and alumnae during Anchor Academy on Thursday, June 23.

Though it may be difficult to comprehend how one in five women will be sexually assaulted by the time they graduate college (according to the Campus Sexual Assault Survey), Kelly and Becca argue that it's important to be aware and start working to change the rape culture prevalent on campus and in our communities.

"Life is best lived without fear, but with awareness," said Kelly during the award-winning keynote "Let's Talk About IT."

"Everyone has the opportunity to make a huge impact to shift the culture on your campuses and in your communities," said Becca.

After a standing ovation from the crowd, **Christina Mather**, Zeta Delta-Rochester chapter president, said, "I really liked that she said she was an average person with a goal. We are just collegiate members, but we can go back to our campus and make a difference."

Attendees were provided with the resources and information about how to support a friend who has experienced sexual assault. See the opposite page.

# SEXUAL ASSAULT ON CAMPUS

## SUPPORTING SURVIVORS: HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

People who have been sexually assaulted often experience a range of emotions and reactions, and no two survivors of assault will feel exactly the same. As a friend, family member or partner, your help during this process is essential. Survivors need a great deal of support and caring as they begin to address and work through surviving this very frightening experience.

Remember that your primary role is to be a friend. You are not a counselor, or a lawyer, or a doctor; your friend should turn to professionals for the best information on emotional, legal and medical issues.

### **STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP:**

#### **Believe them**

Believe your friend unconditionally. Expect a friend in crisis to be confused and don't criticize. It's not your role to question whether or not they were sexually assaulted.

#### **Never blame them**

Say clearly and with care, "It was not your fault."

#### **Help them explore their options**

Don't pressure them to do what you want to do. Empower your friend. Let them know he or she is not alone and remind them of available resources (campus counselor, campus or community crisis center, women's center, hospital, police, peer educators, etc.)

#### **Allow them to react**

Remember, there are many ways for a survivor to respond after being raped. Don't ask a lot of probing questions.

#### **No more violence**

How would you react? It's important to remain calm and as hard as it may be, it's important to refrain from offering to "hurt the person who did this to them." Although it's natural to want to protect your friend, an aggressive reaction is not a good response.

#### **Listen to them**

Offer your support and offer your time. Let your friend know that they can talk to you about their experience when they are ready.

#### **Confidentiality**

Help them identify confidential resources (confidentiality laws vary by state—visit [NotAlone.gov](http://NotAlone.gov) for more info).

#### **Let the survivor be in control**

Encourage them, but let them be in control. They decide if they want to talk with someone, press charges, etc.

#### **Encourage them to seek help**

Talk about the kind of support he or she needs and keep talking about it because their needs will change as they work through the crisis. If they suspect they have been drugged encourage them to go to the hospital within 72 hours to have a rape kit done and to be tested for drugs in their system.

#### **Seek professional help**

Insist that your friend seek help if the crisis escalates to the point of being worried about their safety or long-term well being.

#### **Get help for yourself**

Don't blame yourself for the feelings you may have after learning someone close to you has been sexually assaulted. It's important to pay attention to your own needs and express them to your friend and others.

*If you are a survivor of sexual assault seeking assistance, please contact your Campus or Community Rape Crisis Center, Campus Advocate or Counseling Center or contact one of these national resources: Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) [NotAlone.gov](http://NotAlone.gov) National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) 1-877-739-3895*