

Tips for Working with Survivors of Sexual Abuse

www.viewsfromatreehouse.com

Take Care of Yourself . . .

- Believe in your own strengths and capabilities
- Tune into your own body and remember to breathe
- Replace fears of clients' disclosures with personal affirmations
- Practice regular self-care such as meditation, yoga, pleasure reading, walks in nature, watching comedies, etc.
- Seek ongoing support from a trusted co-worker or supervisor
- Have a strong healthy network of friends to be with to enjoy life
- Be easy on yourself and be kind to yourself

Skills for Working with the Survivor . . .

- Allow the survivor to go at her own pace and disclose what she is comfortable with
- Ask her to define in her head what a safe space may be for her
- Be genuine and honest
- Demonstrate personal warmth, compassion, and skilled listening
- Be present emotionally and mentally
- Validate her experiences with sexual abuse
- Incorporate grounding tools that she can use on her own, including deep breathing, stomping feet on the floor, or changing thoughts and visualizing pleasant experiences, such as walking on the beach, witnessing a sunset, gazing at stars, etc.
- Be aware of a survivor's need for personal space
- Reassure her and recognize her for her courage