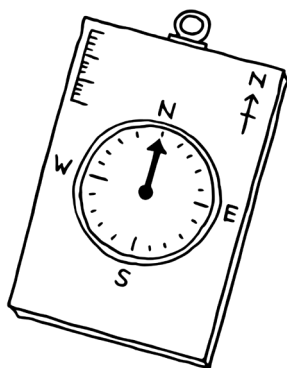


# FOLLOW MY LEAD



## Reflective questions to victim-survivors

- Please describe a specific example of when a responder (formal or informal) has followed your lead
- What was the responder doing/saying (or not doing/saying) to not take over - to follow your lead?
- From your perspective, what thinking, or beliefs do you think the responder had, to make it possible for them to follow your lead?
- Responses can have immediate and lasting influence and impact. In the example you have given what difference do you think that made in the moment to where the conversation or contact went?



GUYDOWNES ©

**“She asked me how I thought he would react and what he might do in certain circumstances, she didn't make assumptions of his behaviour.”**

The responder listened to my story and agreed that my choice to stay in the relationship, living with my perpetrator was the best option for me at that time for my safety and the safety of my children. The responder helped me make a plan behind the scenes to find a new rental home, before I left the relationship - so I could move to a safe and secure home with my children, instead of entering homelessness.

The responder never told me what I should do. She asked me what I felt was the best thing for me and my family. She asked me how I thought he would react and what he might do in certain circumstances, she didn't make assumptions of his behaviour - she provided me options and she didn't give me scenarios based on other women in my situation. I felt that she provided me with the best information, and then allowed me time and space to make my own choices based on what was right for me and my kids.

I believe that the responder understood that no domestic violence situation is the same. I believe she understood the complexity of domestic violence. She made me feel that it was much more important for me to feel empowered to make my own choices and choose my own path out of domestic violence. She believed (and told me so many times) that I am the expert in my own life.

I felt calm when talking to the responder. I didn't panic that something was going to happen, and my control of the situation would diminish. It helped me trust the responder and be more honest about my situation and what I was dealing with.

