



## HOW TO WRITE A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO A TEEN SURVIVOR

Thank you for your interest in helping write notes! These notes are very much needed and can change a survivor's outlook on life at a crucial moment. Our goal is to **provide hope and a connection**, to let them know someone out there is thinking about them.

After screening the notes, I will deliver them (unsealed) to social workers at New Orleans Child Advocacy Center (NOCAC) for distribution along with our new clothes.

### Please Always:

- Choose beautiful stationary
- DO NOT SEAL envelope
- Handwrite
- Mail the unsealed notes to **Listen to Kids: 2000 Louisiana Avenue #15529, NOLA 70175**
- To avoid wasting nice stationary, write out what you'd like to say on another sheet of paper first. If you plan to craft or draw, practice before the final draft.
- Pray that God will speak to this person through you.
- Send both the note & the envelope, UNSEALED.
- Come up with your trademark anonymous signature. Something like: "Your sister," or "a fan," or "a supporter," or "a survivor," or "your guardian angel."
- Be creative and up-beat.
- Have fun!
- Make sure your package includes information about who wrote the notes, so we can thank them!
- Remember: your notes may be as short as two or three sentences.

### Background Information:

- Some who end up at NOCAC do NOT consider themselves victims. They may have been groomed to see their perpetrators/pimps as boyfriends or girlfriends who care for them.

- Meaningful, positive connection stimulates the social engagement system in our brains; it accelerates healing and fosters resilience.
- Most teenaged clients of NOCAC are homeless or in foster care. They may not often hear encouraging words from parents.

BE:

- **Anonymous.**
- **Supportive.** (Empower them; Build them up.)
- **Positive.**
- **Non-judgemental.**
- **Encouraging.** (without belittling the severity of their experience)
- **Personal.** (Hand-decorate your note, and/or use caring nouns of address, such as “sister,” “dear,” “friend”...)
- **Vulnerable.** (If you’re comfortable with it, you may share non-specific struggles you’ve had, but **ONLY** if you **also** include a description of how you overcame, or things you found helpful at that time.)
- **Yourself.** Use your own words.
- **Validating.** Feel free to acknowledge the unfairness or horror of this event & that it will affect their lives.

**Please Don’t:**

- Ask “why” questions
- Ask for their personal information
- Place any blame at all
- Address your note “to whom it may concern”
- Give advice
- Include any of your personal contact information, or your name
- Assume you know their story (or use the phrase “I know exactly how you feel.” Even if you’ve had a similar experience, everyone responds differently.)
- Have a negative tone
- Share a bible verse or other scripture if it could be interpreted as a command, or judgemental

**Any notes that don’t follow the above requirements will be discarded.**

## Phrases to Get You Started:

- “It takes a lot of courage.”
- “It’s not your fault.” (no matter the circumstances)
- “You didn’t do anything to deserve this.” /  
Nobody deserves this.”
- “You’re not alone.”
- “This shouldn’t have happened to you/anyone.”
- “This must be really tough for you.”
- “You’re going through something really hard.”
- “This event does not define you.”
- “You can control your story; it doesn’t have to control you.”
- “Follow Listen to Kids of Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter to be part of our support system.”
- “There are trustworthy people out there who know how to help you. I encourage you to look for them. It’s okay to be skeptical.”

**\*PLEASE REMEMBER NOT TO SEAL THE ENVELOPES!\***

We can’t thank you enough for participating in this important ministry,

Listen to Kids  
Matthew 25:25-36