Information for Faculty, Staff, and TAs: Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, and Stalking

This document is intended for faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and others who work directly with students at UW-Madison. It outlines steps to take when a victim of sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking discloses his or her experience to you.

**Sexual assault** is any sexual contact made without consent. Consent is a clear yes, not the absence of a no.

**Dating or domestic violence** refers to an ongoing pattern of controlling and abusive behaviors that individuals use against their intimate partners. These behaviors include physical, sexual, or emotional attacks and/or economic control. For more information, see the College Relationship Power and Control Wheel.

**Stalking** is repeated harassment that causes the victim fear. Examples of harassment include approaching the victim, sending the victim unwanted items, or repeatedly contacting the victim through email or text.

Information about Sexual Assault and Dating Violence on College Campuses:

- In Fall 2010, 7.3% of UW-Madison student respondents indicated they had been sexually assaulted in the past 12 months; 3.6% indicated they had experienced rape or attempted rape in the same time period.¹
- Only 13% of student sexual assault victims report the assault to law enforcement, and only 2% of victims report when alcohol is involved.²
- 32% of students experience dating violence by a previous partner.³
- 3 in 10 college women are injured emotionally or psychologically from being stalked.⁴

The role of faculty, staff, and TAs in responding to student victims:

As a faculty member, staff member, or teaching assistant, your relationships with students put you in a unique position to offer guidance and help. Often you may be the first person to whom victims disclose their experiences. Most students do not disclose to law enforcement; however, victims do confide in friends and trusted adults.³ By educating yourself and following some simple guidelines, you can confidently and effectively respond to students who are experiencing dating/domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
If a student discloses to you:

1. **Listen with empathy.** Listening is the single most important thing that you can do. No one deserves to be the victim of violence, regardless of the circumstances. Let the victim know they are **not** to blame for the assault. Avoid asking questions that imply fault, such as “How much were you drinking?” or “Why didn’t you call the police?” Instead, say something simple and kind, like:

   “I’m sorry that this happened to you.” or “Thank you for telling me.”

2. **Support and respect his or her decisions.** Victims are often met with disbelief when they tell someone. They may be hesitant to trust others with their story. Many victims do not immediately file a report with law enforcement. This is okay. Remember, you are not an investigator; you are someone the victim trusts. Avoid telling the victim what he or she “should” or “must” do. You can encourage the victim to report the incident to law enforcement, but respect that the victim makes the final decision. One of the most important things you can do is help the victim take back the power he or she has lost. Try phrases like:

   “What kind of help do you need?” or “When you are ready, there is help available.”

3. **Know where to refer the victim for further help.** There are many offices on the campus and in the community that specialize in these issues. You are not expected to be an expert on sexual assault, dating violence or stalking; however, you can direct the victim to people who are experts and can provide advocacy and support. Refer to the [Sexual Assault and Dating Violence Services](http://www.students.wisc.edu) brochure or the [service provider videos](http://www.oed.wisc.edu) for more information about crisis response, medical care, counseling, support groups, and legal advocacy. Ask gentle questions, like:

   “Would you like to see a nurse or doctor?” or “Are you interested in talking to a counselor?”

4. **File a confidential third-party disclosure form in cases of sexual assault.** All UW employees are required by state law to report any first-hand student disclosures of sexual assault to the Division of Student Life. These reports are confidential and do not include identifiable information about the individual victim. Reports may be filled out with the victim or after the victim has left your office. It is the responsibility of UW personnel to file this form; do not give students the form to fill out on their own.

   - **Sexual Assault of Students:** Information on reporting and Wisconsin Statute 36.11(22) is available at: [http://www.provost.wisc.edu/memos/mandsas.html](http://www.provost.wisc.edu/memos/mandsas.html). For more information, please contact the Dean of Students Office: [www.students.wisc.edu](http://www.students.wisc.edu)
   - **Sexual Harassment:** Information about Title IX, sexual harassment, and training opportunities can be found via the Office for Equity and Diversity: [www.oed.wisc.edu](http://www.oed.wisc.edu)
   - **Mandatory Child Abuse reporting:** Per Executive Order #54, effective December 19, 2011, all employees of UW System are now required to report child abuse and neglect to local law enforcement or Child Protective Services.

5. **Follow up with the student.** Letting the student know that you take his or her disclosure seriously and that you care about his or her well-being can be very validating for a victim. You could begin the conversation with:

   “I was thinking about the conversation we had the other day. How are you doing?”

---

For more information, see [http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/assault](http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/assault) or e-mail [violenceprevention@uhs.wisc.edu](mailto:violenceprevention@uhs.wisc.edu).

---
