RESPONDING TO STUDENT DISCLOSURES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

a guide for faculty, staff, and teaching assistants

v. summer 2022

Queen's University
HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY OFFICE
Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Sexual violence is any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity and (or) gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person's consent, and includes such things as: sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and sexual exploitation.

You may be the first to hear about an experience of sexual violence from a student. You may be asked to provide the appropriate considerations. accommodations, make referrals, or otherwise support a student in need. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the most recent versions of policies and procedures with application across the University on matters of sexual violence and other unwanted behaviours involving Queen's University students. Managers/Directors etc. should ensure members of their team understand their obligations.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE & STUDENTS

The existence of intersecting systems of oppression in our community means some students may be more vulnerable than others to sexual violence. All students are entitled to equitable treatment. You may hear about an occurrence of sexual violence from a survivor, bystander, housemate, teammate, perpetrator, etc.

(Please see p. 4 for what to do if you receive a disclosure from a student who believes they may have perpetrated sexual violence).

Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Service
Mackintosh-Corry Hall • Human Rights & Equity Office
Queen's University, Kingston, ON

T: 613.533.6000 x 36330
or hrights@queensu.ca

bjl7@queensu.ca
Attn: SVPRC

STUDENT RIGHTS

Students who have experienced sexual violence may access all support services on campus and should be provided with appropriate accommodations regardless of when/where the sexual violence occurred. Students may disclose sexual violence and access supports, services, and accommodations without making a complaint to the University or to the police.

LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

When a student discloses sexual violence, confidentiality must be protected to the fullest extent possible, but cannot be maintained where sharing of information is required to ensure health and safety. You may need to share information about a student's disclosure if:

The student is at risk of self-harm; an individual may pose a threat or risk to a student who has disclosed sexual violence; there is a potential risk to other members of the University or the broader community; reporting is required by law (e.g., involves a minor); and/or the University has an obligation to investigate. Inform the student about the possible limits to confidentiality. Let them know that, while you cannot promise confidentiality, you can promise to be discreet.

The Sexual Violence Policy allows for consultation with the SVPRC, for the purposes of determining next steps, providing support for the student who has disclosed, other students impacted, and for yourself.

Students making a disclosure must be informed about the support services available and about the existence of the SV Policy. Explain the limits of confidentiality to the student. Employees are required, as per policy, to notify the SVPRC when they receive a student disclosure. The student's name should only be shared if consent has been given. Be prepared to discuss whether the student wishes to share identifying information with the SVPRC for the purpose of receiving additional support.

Students do not need a referral and can contact the SVPRC directly for information about options and next steps. You can access the secure Notification Form at https://www.queensu.ca/sexualviolencesupport/faculty-and-staff

Refer to the Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen's University Students for more information about employee responsibilities

Employees who hear a disclosure from a student, that is related to the behaviour of another employee, should consult with the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator to discuss response options and next steps.

Employees may have responsibilities to report harassment or violence in the workplace under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, or the University Harassment and Discrimination policy. To learn more about some of the university's current policies, go to:

https://www.queensu.ca/sexualviolencesupport/policies-committees-reports

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Queen's UNIVERSITY EQUITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INCLUSION

WHAT TO DO AND SAY:

Sexual violence impacts everyone differently. There is no right, wrong, or normal way for a survivor to react. You may witness many different emotions and behaviours from a student who has experienced Sexual Violence. A survivor may experience :

Shock, disbelief, confusion, denial, anger, sadness, fear, depression, anxiety, guilt, difficulty concentrating, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, sleep disturbances.

Additionally, students may become isolated from their social group. They may avoid areas on campus or in the community where they no longer feel safe (e.g., library, residence, own room, dining hall, meetings, events, restaurants, main streets, community and faith groups, etc.). They might feel that they must leave their job or limit their academic/ athletic activities due to the potential presence of the perpetrator.

The SVPRC may make referrals to both on and off campus resources, discuss and facilitate appropriate accommodations, and provide information about submitting a Complaint under the Sexual Violence Policy.

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A positive first response to a disclosure of sexual assault can have a profound effect on the survivor's decision to seek out further support. You are one point of contact in their process of recovery. As a first responder your role is to recognize, respond, and refer.

DO	DO NOT
• Listen with care and empathy. • Be aware of your nonverbal response. • Respect personal space (do not touch the student). • Facilitate referrals. • Consult the Sexual Violence Policy. • Inform student(s) of your obligations per the policy. Recognize your limits. • Take care of yourself and your own mental health.	• Act without consent. • Compromise the students' safety. • Ask questions out of curiosity • Tell the student what is normal. • Blame the survivor. • Take sides. • Tell the student what to do. • Call services without consulting the student. • Discount the experience if alcohol or substances were involved.

YOU MAY SAY

- How can I help?
- Is this a good place to talk?
- I respect your decision. These services are here for you if you would like them.
- Thank you for sharing this with me.
- I'd like you know that you have options.
- It is not your fault.
- Talk when you are ready.
- Do you feel comfortable in this space?

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REMEMBER

- Show that you are actively listening e.g., nodding, facing in their direction, sitting down at eye level.
- Never assume a survivors' course of action. Have patience.
- You can consult with the SVPRC.

RECOGNIZE

- Determine and address immediate safety needs for yourself and the student.
- Be cognizant of your personal limits as a support person.

RESPOND

- Be compassionate and provide non-judgmental support.
- Be patient and give your undivided attention.
- Respect their decisions.

REFER

- Refer the student to the SVPRC to discuss options and next steps. Provide information about other services/resources.

Students who are alleged to have committed sexual violence should be supported and referred to the Ombudsperson and to Student Wellness Services.

The University recognizes that individuals affected by sexual violence are integral decision-makers in situations pertaining to themselves.

To access sexual violence prevention and response resources, consult the SVPR website: https://www.queensu.ca/sexualviolencesupport/

WHO TO CONTACT

Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Coordinator
613.533.6000 x 36330
bjl7@queensu.ca or hrights@queensu.ca
Attn: SVPRC

Student Wellness Services
Mitchell Hall • 613.533.2506
counselling.services@queensu.ca
www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/

University Chaplain • 613.533.2186
https://www.queensu.ca/faith-and-spiritual-life/home

University Ombudsperson • 613.533.6495
www.queensu.ca/ombuds/home

Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre
613.533.6970
www.queensu.ca/fourdirections/home

Sexual Assault Centre Kingston
1.877.544.6424- 24/7
www.webelievesurvivors.ca • (chat or text)

Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Program
Kingston Health Sciences Centre: Kingston General Hospital
613.549.6666 x 4880

Campus Security and Emergency Services
24/7 Emergency Report Center 613.533.6111
General Inquiries 613.533.6733

Kingston Police, 24/7 • 911 (emergencies)
613.549.4660 (non-emergencies)
www.kingstonpolice.ca