Responding to Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence

What You Need to Know

You may be the first to hear a disclosure of Sexual Violence from a student. You may be asked to provide accommodations, make referrals, or otherwise support a student in need.

Familiarize yourself with the most recent versions of policies and procedures with application across the University on matters of Sexual Violence involving Queen's University Students.

Please Consult

www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/board-policies

Sexual Violence

Means any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity 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
- sexual exploitation

Sexual Violence & Students

Students with marginalized identity status may be more vulnerable to Sexual Violence. All students are entitled to equitable treatment.

A disclosure of Sexual Violence can come from a victim/survivor, bystander, housemate, teammate, perpetrator, etc.

You can promise to be discreet. You cannot promise complete confidentiality.

Student Rights

It is important to know that students have the option to access all support services on campus and 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 formal report either to the University or to the police.
LIMITS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality in a Disclosure must be protected to the extent possible, but cannot be maintained where disclosure is required to ensure health and safety. Inform the student about the limitations if:

- an individual may be 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.

All members of the University can access the Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Coordinator (SVPRC) for information and advice. Students making a disclosure should be informed about the SVPRC. Students do not need a referral and can contact the SVPRC directly for information about options and next steps.

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.

Student name(s) should not be shared with the SVPRC unless consent has been provided by the student.

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, pubs, campus social events, sporting 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.

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.
"The impact of negative social reactions can be quite profound... negative reactions have an extremely detrimental impact on recovery"

(Ahrens, et. al., 2007, p. 38).

WHAT TO DO & SAY

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

- listen with care and empathy
- be aware of your non-verbal response
- respect personal space (do not touch the student)
- facilitate referrals
- consult if you are unsure of next steps
- inform student(s) if you intend to notify your supervisor
- recognize your limits
- take care of yourself and your own mental health

DO NOT

- act without consent
- compromise the students' safety
- ask questions out of curiosity
- make assumptions
- 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 substances were involved (alcohol | drugs | other)

For more information please visit: [http://www.queensu.ca/sexualviolencesupport/](http://www.queensu.ca/sexualviolencesupport/)
RECOGNIZE

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

RESPOND

- Be compassionate and provide non-judgmental support.
- Be patient and give your undivided attention.
- Respect their decisions.
- Inform students if you have a duty to notify your supervisor.
- Direct students to the SVPRC.

REFER

- Provide students with information about on and off campus resources.
- Offer to make a call with the student.
- Follow up with your supervisor.

RESPONDENTS & STAFF

- Students who are alleged to have committed sexual violence should be referred to the Ombudsman (ombuds@queensu.ca) for information and advice. Those students should also be referred to Student Wellness Services for support.
- If a student alleges that an employee has committed sexual violence, please consult with the SVPRC for advice on next steps. Employees should review the Interim Workplace Harassment & Discrimination Policy located on the Human Resources webpage. (http://www.queensu.ca/humanresources/)

WHO TO CONTACT

Campus Security & Emergency Services
24/7 first response | liaison with the police
613.533.3611 | emergencies
613.533.6733 | general inquiries

Kingston Police, 24/7
911 | emergencies
613.549.4660 | non-emergencies
collecting statements | investigating | documentation (photos, statements) | hospital accompaniment

Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence (SADV) Program
Kingston Health Sciences Centre
Kingston General Hospital
613.549.6666 ext. 4880
emergency medical care and treatment | forensic evidence collection (with consent from survivor) | service is discreet and non-discriminatory

Good2Talk 24/7 | 1.866.925.5454

Mental Health Support Line | Ontario | 170 Languages
1.866.531.2600

Queen's University