

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

This resource guide is intended for faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and others who work directly with students at UW-Madison. It serves as a reference concerning steps to take when a victim of sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking discloses his or her experience to you. While you are only mandated to report first-hand knowledge or disclosures of sexual assault, you can learn to assist and support students experiencing any of the following forms of violence.

Sexual assault is defined as any sexual contact made without consent, which should be given freely, with overt words or actions, and clearly communicates a person's sexual boundaries and desires.

Dating/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.

Stalking is repeated harassment that reasonably terrorizes the victim, such as approaching the victim, sending the victim unwanted items, or contacting the victim through phone, email or letter.¹

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

As a faculty member, staff member, or teaching assistant, you are in a unique position to build positive relationships with students and offer guidance and assistance. Oftentimes you may serve as the initial contact person to whom victims of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking disclose their experiences. Most students do not choose to disclose or file reports with law enforcement officers, often because they do not think the incident was serious (perhaps they were incapacitated due to alcohol consumption), they are afraid of parents and friends finding out, or because they fear that they will not be believed or will be treated with hostility by law enforcement officers.² Students do, however, confide in friends, roommates, and other trusted adults.³ By educating yourself and following some simple guidelines, you can confidently and effectively respond to students who are experiencing dating or domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

What to do if a student discloses to you:⁴

Listen, without judgment. Listening is the single most important thing that you can do. No one deserves to be the victim of violence, regardless of the surrounding circumstances. Avoid victim-blaming and asking questions that could imply fault, such as "How much were you drinking?" or "Why didn't you call the police?" Instead, you can say something like, "I'm sorry that this happened to you. Thank you for telling me." Let the victim know that he or she is *not* to blame for what happened.

Tell the victim that you believe him or her. Victims of sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking are often met with disbelief when they decide to tell someone. Furthermore, their trust in someone they know has been broken. They may be hesitant to trust others with their story. Remember, you are not an investigator; you are someone the victim has decided to trust and to confide in. Let them know that you believe and will support them.

Refer the victim to resources on campus and in the community that are specifically designed to deal with these issues ([Sexual Assault and Dating Violence Services](#), UHS). 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 who can provide advocacy and support. If the incident involved bodily harm, immediate medical care may be needed and you can refer victims to clinical resources listed in the guide.

Support the student's decisions about how to proceed. Avoid giving advice or telling the victim what he or she "should" or "must" do. Many victims of sexual assault or dating violence do not immediately file a report with law enforcement. This is okay. You can encourage the victim to report the incident, while still respecting that the final decision is for the victim to make. Remember, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking are about power and control; one of the most important things you can do is let the victim take back the power he or she lost in the incident(s).

Visit the [811-735-2345](#) to file a confidential third-party report in cases of sexual assault. As a UW employee, you are required per state law to report any disclosures of sexual assault to campus authorities. These reports are confidential and do not include identifiable information about the individual victim. Reports may either be filled out with the victim or after the victim has left your office. Please refrain from giving students the form to fill out on their own, as it is the responsibility of UW personnel to fill out and file this form. Information on reporting and Wisconsin Statute 36.11(22) is available at: <http://www.provost.wisc.edu/memos/mandsas.html>. Further training on completing reports and supporting survivors may be obtained by contacting the Dean of Students Office at 608-263-5700 and speaking with the Dean on Call.

Don't be afraid to follow up with the student after his or her disclosure. Letting the student know that you take his or her disclosure seriously and that you care about his or her well-being can be extremely validating for a victim. For example, begin the conversation with "I was thinking about the conversation we had the other day. How are you doing?"

Be sure to obtain information and support for yourself as a helper. Being exposed to issues related to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking can be difficult. It is not uncommon for first responders to experience secondary/vicarious trauma, and it can be helpful to discuss your experiences or feelings with another professional (not the victim or victim's family).

Resources available to victims of sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking at UW-Madison:

Links to resources can also be found at the University Health Services website dedicated to sexual assault and dating violence: <http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/assault>.

Dane County Rape Crisis Center:

<http://www.danecountyrc.org>

24-hour \ch]bY: 608.251.7273

Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS):

<http://www.abuseintervention.org>

24-hour crisis lines: 608.251.4445 or 800.747.4045

University Health Services (includes Counseling and Consultation Services):

<http://www.uhs.wisc.edu>

608.265-560 (*Mental health crisis services by phone 24-hours a day; visit website for hours of medical clinics*)

Division of Student Life–Student Assistance and Judicial Affairs:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/>

608.263.5700

Meriter Hospital Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE):

<http://meriter.com/mhs/hospital/sane.htm>

202 South Park Street

608.417.5916

UW Police Department (UWPD): <http://www.uwupd.wisc.edu>

Non-Emergency: 608.264.COPS; call 911 in emergencies

Madison Police Department: <http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/police>

Non-Emergency: 608.266.4275; call 911 in emergencies

A brochure outlining campus and community resources can be found online [here](#). Hard copies of the brochure can be obtained by contacting Carmen Hotvedt, Violence Prevention Specialist at University Health Services at chotvedt@uhs.wisc.edu.

Information about Sexual Assault and Dating Violence on College Campuses:

- Women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rates sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking.⁵
- In a recent study of 5,446 college women, 11.9% had experienced completed rape, while under force or incapacitation.⁶ Over the course of an average 5-year college career, it is estimated that between one-fifth and one-quarter of college women will become victims of completed or attempted rape.⁷
- 19% of college women report being the victim of attempted or completed sexual assault since entering college. Women in their first and second years are at the highest risk for victimization.⁸
- 21% of college students report that they have experienced dating violence by a current partner and 32% report dating violence by a previous partner.⁹
- 13% of college women report being victims of stalking.¹⁰ Nationally, 59% of female victims and 30% of male victims are stalked by an intimate partner, while 80% of campus stalking victims know their stalker.¹¹

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¹ Definitions are from “Sexual Assault and Dating Violence Services,” a brochure available from University Health Services, available at <http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/docs/SARVBro906.pdf>

² Fisher et al., 2000.

³ UW-Madison Sexual Assault Study, 2002.

⁴ These recommendations are adapted from many sources, including: the University of California Santa Barbara’s “Responding to Distressed Students” website (<http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/distressedstudentsguide/>); Emory University’s “Sexual Assault Response Guide” ([http://studenthealth.emory.edu/hp/Sexual%20Assault%20Response%20Guide%20\(Online%20Version\)%20--%20For%20Faculty%20and%20Staff.pdf](http://studenthealth.emory.edu/hp/Sexual%20Assault%20Response%20Guide%20(Online%20Version)%20--%20For%20Faculty%20and%20Staff.pdf)).

⁵ Greenfield, L., Rand, M., Craven, D., et al. US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. *Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends*. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/vi.pdf>

⁶ Krebs, et al. 2007. CSA Study.

⁷ Fisher, B., Cullen, I. and Turner, M. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice Research Report. *Sexual Victimization of College Women*. December 2000. Available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

⁸ Krebs, et al.

⁹ C. Sellers and M. Bromley, “Violent Behavior in College Student Dating Relationships,” *Journal of Contemporary Justice*, (1996).

¹⁰ Greenfield, et al.

¹¹ National Center for Victims of Crime. Stalking resource center. <http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx>