

sexual assault

Reference Guide

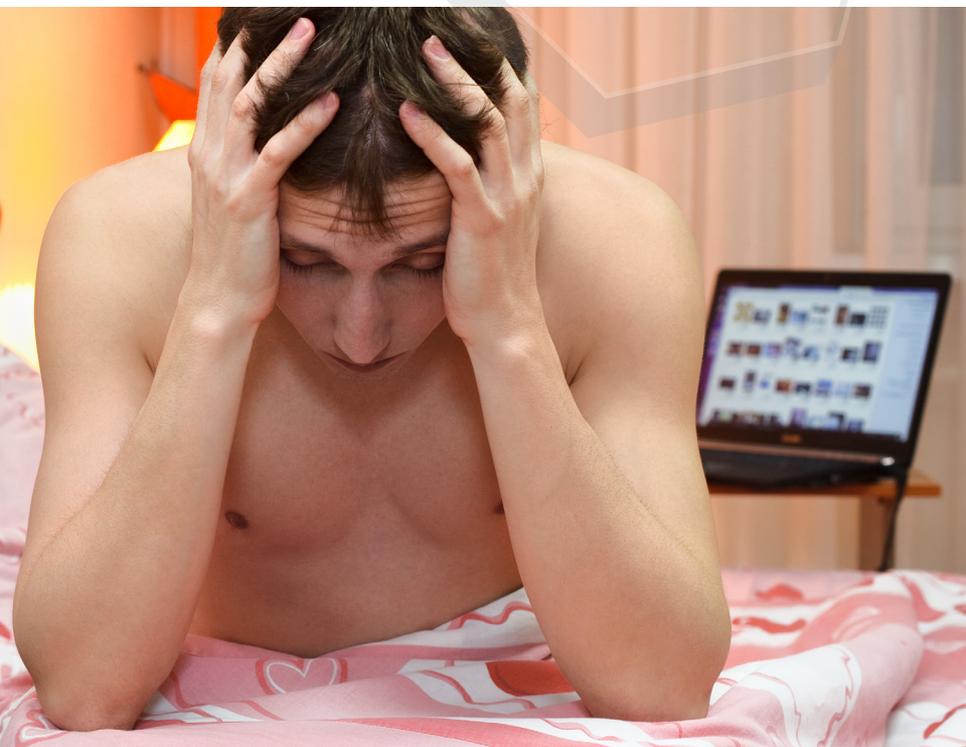


UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

A Guide for Helping Students

This guide provides the first steps to getting help for someone who has been a victim of sexual assault. It is not a law book, medical text, or counseling manual. There are professionals on campus to help answer legal, medical, or psychological questions about sexual assault. Ask them if you need more information.

Use these questions and information as guidelines for how to listen, talk to, and help someone. Above all, be caring, listen to your own comfort level in handling the situation, and stay calm. Your caring, calmness, and hope will begin the process of getting the right help for the person who has come to you.



What to Do: Recent Assault

Sexual assault may be the most traumatic victimization that can happen on campus. Talking about it, and re-living the assault, can be more traumatic. Being a caring, effective helper to someone who has been sexually assaulted can be challenging.

Is this an emergency?

If the sexual assault just occurred, an emergency exists. Identify the victim's immediate needs. If the sexual assault did not occur recently, this may not be an emergency, although the victim may still be in crisis.

Is the victim hurt?

If any of the following are visible or reported, the individual will need immediate medical attention:

- ▷ torn or blood stained clothes
- ▷ reported bleeding
- ▷ bruises, scrapes, open wounds
- ▷ pain from injury
- ▷ abdominal cramps
- ▷ dizziness, vomiting, faintness
- ▷ other signs of physical injury or violence

If your job requires that you report such emergencies, follow the policies and notify the proper authorities. If not, it is still essential to get the individual medical care. Call 9-1-1 and request an ambulance to transport the individual to the Emergency Room of Iverson Memorial Hospital. Have the victim lie down and keep them warm. Discourage the victim from showering, washing, or changing clothes, as this may destroy evidence.

Ask the victim if they would like to have a friend or family member go with them to the hospital, and make the call for them. Stay with the individual until help arrives. Or go with the hospital with them if they request.

Is the victim safe?

If the victim fears or believes the perpetrator may come after them or has threatened to harm the victim or others if the assault is reported:

- ▷ If your job has safety regulations that apply, follow the procedures and notify appropriate authorities.
- ▷ Call the University Police at 307-766-5179 to request immediate assistance with a potentially dangerous situation. Stay with the victim until officers arrive.
- ▷ Ask if you may place a call to the STOP Violence Program (307-766-3296). The STOP Victim Advocate is available to provide support and information during the interview with the police, as well as help find a secure place for the victim to stay if they don't feel safe in their own room or home.



Is the victim overwhelmed?

If the victim can't talk (crying uncontrollably or "shut-down"), the first step is to help make a connection so they can talk to you:

- ▷ Quietly place yourself in front of the victim at their level
- ▷ Ask simple questions in a soft voice
- ▷ Ask the victim to take slow, deep breaths. Breathe with them.
- ▷ When the victim is calmer, tell them you will try to help them. Continue to provide support until the individual can talk.
- ▷ Ask if the victim would like for you to call a friend or family member to come be with them.
- ▷ Call a professional staff member from the STOP Violence Program at 307-766-3296 or after hours 307-766-7897.
- ▷ Stay with the victim until help arrives.
- ▷ If you feel "over your head," ask if you can call some support for yourself (supervisor, professional, etc.).

What to Do: Past Assault

Is there a specific problem you can help the individual solve?

Sometimes people need help solving problems created by a sexual assault or other crisis. Identify the problem. What is the individual having trouble doing? What have they tried? What worked? What didn't? Explore other options. What support do they have available?

Does the individual need additional resources to solve the problem?

How can you help connect them with those resources?

Does the person have health concerns?

If the individual has health or medical concerns (can't sleep, loss of appetite, unwanted pregnancy, STIs or AIDs), help them make an appointment at Student Health Services at 307-766-2130 or with a private physician for a medical evaluation and testing.

Does the person want to report the sexual assault or file charges against the perpetrator?

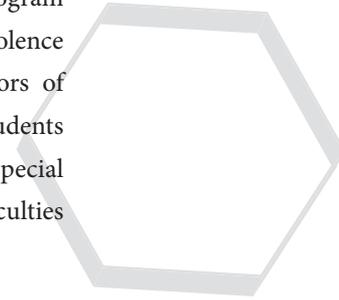
Call University Police at 307-766-5179. Have the individual request an appointment with a specialist in interviewing victims of sexual assault. You may also call the STOP Violence program Victim Advocate at 307-766-3296 to help facilitate what the individual's legal options are.

Are they falling behind in school or thinking about withdrawing?

Have the individual call the STOP Violence Program Coordinator at 307-766-3296. The STOP Violence program specializes in working with survivors of sexual assault and is a part of the Dean of Students Office, which is there to assist students with special circumstances to help resolve academic difficulties without jeopardizing their standing at UW.

Do You Need Some Help?

Be realistic about your own limits. Don't promise more expertise, strength, or support than you can provide. If you are the first contact for a sexual assault victim, we encourage you to consider "debriefing" afterwards with a supervisor or professional staff member with the STOP Violence Program (307-766-3296 or stop by Knight Hall 118).



Numbers You May Need:

STOP Violence Program – 307-766-3296

After Hours – (307) 766-STOP (7897)

University Counseling Center – 307-766-2187

UW Police Department – 307-766-5179

Student Health – 307-766-2130

SAFE Project – 307-745-3556

Iverson Memorial Hospital – 307-742-2141



STOP Violence Program

Dean of Students Office

University of Wyoming

1000 E. University Avenue

Department 3135

Knight Hall Room 118

Laramie, Wyoming 82071

www.uwyo.edu/stop

(307) 766-3296

Office Hours: 8am-5pm

After Hours: (307) 766-STOP (7897)

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