

Responding to Student Disclosures

RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEES

As members of the UConn community, each one of us is responsible for maintaining a safe, respectful, and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment. In carrying out their reporting responsibilities, **Responsible Employees** play an important role in upholding these values.

What constitutes a Disclosure?

In this context, Disclosure is when a student shares information about **Sexual Assault, Intimate Partner Violence**, and/or **Stalking**, regardless of whether the incident or experience happened recently, previously, or is ongoing

*Students disclose in a variety of ways (e.g. in conversation, via email, within a *class assignment or job or scholarship application)*



**Please note reporting exceptions exist for disclosures made during public speak-out events and in connection with course assignments submitted to instructors*

Am I a Responsible Employee?

"Responsible Employee" is a Title IX term that designates **virtually all** UConn employees the responsibility of immediately notifying The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) if they receive a Disclosure

Narrow exceptions include employees empowered by law to maintain confidentiality (i.e. medical care and mental health providers) and Exempt Employees (i.e. cultural center staff)

Title IX is federal civil rights law that prohibits sex and gender-based discrimination (i.e. Sexual Assault, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking) at educational institutions that receive federal funding



Response Steps & Tips

STEP 1: CARE 🤝

- Practice empathetic listening
- Let the student disclosing set the pace and tone of the conversation
- Withhold judgment
- Avoid questions or statements that imply fault or blame
- Stay aware of your biases and assumptions
- Pay attention to the student's verbal and non-verbal cues

STEP 2: INFORM 🗣️

- Remind the student of your reporting responsibilities at an appropriate time
- Explain the purpose of your reporting responsibility
- Inform the student that they may receive outreach from a University administrator regarding resources and reporting options, and it is their choice to respond

STEP 3: CONTACT 📞

- Promptly notify OIE
 - Email: equity@uconn.edu
 - Online form: <https://equity.uconn.edu/reporting-form/>
 - Phone: 860-486-2943
- Be prepared to share all details known to you, including:
 - names
 - dates
 - location

What to Consider Saying

- "Thank you for sharing this with me."
- "I'm sorry you are going through such a difficult time."
- "I care about you and your experience."
- "How can I best support you?"
- "Are you feeling (emotionally and physically) safe?"
- "I have a responsibility to notify OIE. This information sharing is meant to ensure that you will receive the appropriate level of assistance, support, and/or University resources, should you wish" (i.e. the purpose of your reporting responsibility)

What to Avoid Saying

- Commands or questions that demand or pry for more information than the student readily reveals (e.g. Tell me every detail from beginning to end)
- Questions or statements that imply fault (e.g. Why/how did you let this happen?)
- Questions that invalidate the student's experience (e.g. Are you sure you're remembering everything correctly?)
- Statements that promise outcomes that are outside of your control (e.g. There's no way he/she/they won't get expelled)
- Directive statements that include the word 'should' (e.g. "You should tell your parents" or "You should definitely report to the police.")

Why Reporting Matters

Through the application of federal law and University policy, Responsible Employees play an important role in:

- ensuring that impacted students receive timely and accurate information about support resources and reporting options
- helping the University identify and respond to systematic patterns and trends with the goal of making the campus a more safe, equitable, and inclusive environment

What Happens Next

Following receipt of a report, either OIE, The Office of Community Standards, and/or other appropriate University offices will assist the student, should they so wish, with any immediate concerns, such as safety measures (e.g. housing and classroom arrangements), connect the student to support resources, and determine the appropriate investigatory action in response to the report.