



# Faculty “911” Guide

## SEXUAL ASSAULT FACULTY & STAFF GUIDE

Sexual assault is a violation of physical, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing. Such a serious interpersonal impingement can leave the survivor feeling unsafe, confused, and scared. When someone reports a sexual assault to you, you may help the survivor by reasserting physical, psychological, and spiritual safety.

In your role as faculty or staff, students may perceive you as someone who can lend a helping hand or be a good listener. Your expression of interest and concern may be a critical factor in helping a struggling student find appropriate assistance. The purpose of this guide is to advise you of the resources available, the procedures in place, and the responsibilities you have if you are in a situation where a student discloses they have been sexually assaulted.

If a student discloses sexual assault, it is often difficult to know how to react and yet your reaction is crucial in helping them overcome this trauma and seek support. Faculty and staff members should determine for themselves their personal comfort levels with becoming involved with student problems. Becoming the main source of support to a troubled student sometimes can be overwhelming, frightening, and/or tiring. It is important that you know your own limitations in providing assistance to students and that you are aware of times when the best option is a referral. Counseling Services (474-2420) provides consultation services to the entire UWF community and can assist you in making an effective referral.

Do your best to stay calm and attentive to the immediate needs of the survivor. Create an environment that is respectful, private, and non judgmental. Assure that the individual is not at immediate risk of harm. If so, the police should be contacted immediately. Take a supportive, non judgmental stance. Comments like, “What were you wearing,” “why would you go along with someone like that,” or “you shouldn’t have . . .” are not helpful and can further victimize the survivor. Take a look at the Faculty/ Staff 911 checklist. The survivor has chosen you for a reason.

**Included below is a quick reference guide of what to do and what to consider doing in this kind of situation. On the other side of this sheet is a checklist and resource guide for services available on campus and within the local community.**

### CONSIDER:

- Assessing the student’s immediate safety.
- Listening without conveying judgment and be aware that survivors can feel shame and anger.
- Letting them know you believe them.
- Encouraging them to get medical attention.
- Encouraging them to report the incident.
- Advising them of resources available and encourage them to use the resources.
- Advising them of your reporting obligations (If you are uncertain what your reporting obligations are, contact the UWF police at 474-2415).
- Thanking them for trusting you.

### AVOID:

- Expressing judgment even when high-risk behaviors on the part of the survivor (e.g., intoxication) were involved.
- Pressuring the student to do anything they do not want to do, including filing a police report.
- Ignoring the need to seek medical attention even if obvious physical trauma is not evident.
- Initiating comfort in the form of physical touching (e.g., hugging).
- Asking for details of the incident.
- Making statements or commitments that cannot be upheld due to reporting requirements.

## **Checklist for Faculty/Staff Assisting UWF Students Who Disclose a Sexual Assault**

1.  **SAFETY.** Assess the immediate physical and mental safety of the student. If student appears to be in danger or crisis, contact the University Police (911 or 474-2415), Escambia Sherriff's Office (911 or 436-9630), or University Counseling Center (474-2420).
2.  **MEDICAL NEEDS.** Some medical attention can be obtained at the University Health Center during regular operating hours. If emergency medical attention is required, students should seek treatment from Baptist (434-4811), Sacred Heart (416-7850) or West Florida Hospitals (494-4702). Transportation to seek medical assistance can be coordinated by University Police.
  - FORENSIC EVIDENCE EXAM.** All sexual assault survivors should consider undergoing a forensic evidence exam "rape kit" as soon as possible up to 96 hours after the incident. Both Baptist and Sacred Heart hospitals have specially trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE Nurse) available to conduct this exam.
    - Instruct not to wash, bathe, douche, or change clothes if student intends to complete a rape kit exam; bring a change of clothes to the hospital as clothes will likely be taken into evidence.
    - Inform that having a rape kit exam preserves the option to prosecute but that having the exam does NOT commit an individual to press charges.
    - Inform of the importance of medical care to screen/treat for injuries, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy.
3.  **VICTIM ADVOCACY and COUNSELING.** Advise the student of victims' advocacy resources available through the University and other local agencies.
  - University Police (474-2415, ask for the victim advocate)
  - University Counseling Center (474-2420)
  - Rape Crisis Center at Lakeview (433-7273 [RAPE])
4.  **STUDENT REPORTING.** Whether or not the student wishes to press charges, they can and should report the incident to police. Reasons for doing this include: 1) giving the student the option of pressing charges later, 2) having an incident report on file in case the same assailant hurts someone else, and 3) making police aware of potential danger to other students. Offer referral for reporting the incident to University and local authorities:
  - University Police (474-2415, ask for the victim advocate)
  - Escambia Sherriff's Office (436-9630)
5.  **FACULTY/STAFF REPORTING OBLIGATIONS and CONFIDENTIALITY.** Do not **INQUIRE** about time, date, location or other incident details until you have informed the student of the following information:
  - The University will do its utmost to protect the student's privacy. Her/his name and other identifying information will **not** be released without her/his permission (unless the student is in imminent danger in which case 911 should be called whether the student consents or not).
  - Certain university faculty/staff are obligated to report the time, date and approximate location of the incident to the Police (474-2415) and Dean of Students (474-2384). If uncertain what your obligations are, please visit [www.uwf.edu/uwfpolice/cleryactinfo.pdf](http://www.uwf.edu/uwfpolice/cleryactinfo.pdf)
  - A community notice is possible in situations where the community is deemed at risk; the survivor will be informed if this is to happen and their anonymity will be preserved.
  - Health and counseling records could be subpoenaed by a court as part of a trial if charges are pressed.