Helping Someone Who Has Been Impacted by Sexual Violence

**Note:**
Anything included in this resource is designed to assist you, not to serve as a step by step guide to talking with students about sexual misconduct. You are encouraged to consider each situation and find your own voice to have this conversation as genuinely and compassionately as possible. If you have questions about whether something is reportable or just need some help in how to approach, respond to, or support a student, please contact the appropriate Dean of Students.

A faculty or staff member is often the first person at CSB/SJU a student will tell if she/he has experienced or is experiencing any form of sexual misconduct. **Note:** ‘In person is best’ for any kind of a conversation about a disclosure, regardless of what form the disclosure comes to you.

The student may share the information for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Requesting a different seat in class
- Requesting a room change in the residence hall
- Explaining an absence or requesting an extension
- Asking not to be placed in a group with a certain student
- Stepping down from leadership in a student organization
- Complaining about a colleague’s behavior
- Explaining uncharacteristic classroom or work behavior
- Requesting different work hours
- Requesting assistance or support
- Resigning from a work position
- Responding to a question regarding any of the above

All faculty and staff should be able to identify Title IX-related concerns when they are raised by a student to assure that students receive appropriate support, resource information, and complaint options.

**What are common Title IX-related concerns students report to faculty and staff?**

- Sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Relationship violence
- Sexual orientation/gender identity/transgender harassment
- Gender-based stalking
Be prepared for a disclosure if someone begins a conversation with:

“I have a friend who...”
“This weekend was tough.”
“Something happened this weekend.”
“I don’t want to get anyone in trouble.”
“I don’t want to get in trouble.”
“I don’t want to go to class.”
“This class is hard to go to now.”
“Work isn’t a place I really want to be right now.”

Ways to Approach Student

Validation and belief are CRITICAL

- I am sorry this happened to you.
- Thank you for coming forward.
- This was not your fault.
- You did not deserve to be hurt.

Avoid asking “why did you” or “why didn’t you” questions, as they can be experienced as blaming.

- Let the impacted student determine the parameters of their disclosure. Do not probe for details.
- Remember that experiences related to sexual misconduct can take away a person’s sense of individual power and control. As such, be mindful to allow them to be in control of what happens next.
- Avoid unsolicited physical contact.
- Encourage, but do not insist, that the impacted student seek out support services and medical attention. Offer to assist them in connecting with these resources.
- Know and be clear and upfront about your ability to maintain confidentiality or your obligation to report.
- Reinforce the message that the victim/survivor is not at fault.

It seems like you may need someone to talk to and I want to make sure that I get you to the right person so that we can get you the appropriate support.
I can see that something is troubling you. If you would like to speak to someone confidentially, I can help you make an appointment with Counseling or Health Services. I would even be happy to walk there with you now.

I apologize, I need to stop you. As a University/College employee, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct. Only share what you are comfortable having me share. I don’t want to scare or intimidate you. Your personal safety and overall health is our number one concern. My report is about ensuring the schools can let you know about resources and options that are available to you.

Just a heads up – I have to report any incidents of sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking or relationship violence that I am made aware of so only share what you are comfortable having me report. I will make every effort to respect and safeguard your privacy regarding your concern and will only speak with those employees who “need to know.”

The reason we do this report is to make sure you are able to get all the help and support you need. How can I help you?

I am obligated to report the names of the alleged perpetrator(s) and student(s) affected, as well as relevant facts (date, time, location), if I know them. My report will result in the Dean of Students contacting you. This report does not obligate you to file a complaint or do anything that you don’t choose to do.

I want you to know that I care about you and want to help you get the resources you need, but I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, and relationship violence) and will be required to report your situation to Campus Administration.

How should faculty or staff respond if a student discloses a concern of discrimination/harassment?
All CSB/SJU employees are responsible for promptly reporting any concern related to sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking involving a student. Employees can contact the appropriate Dean of Students.
It can be difficult to tell a student that you need to report the concern she/he has raised. Here are some tips to help you:

- Tell the student you need to report the concern but offer them confidential resources such as CSB/SJU Counseling Services, CSB Health Services and the Central MN Sexual Assault Center.
  - As soon as you are aware that the student may have a sexual harassment/assault, relationship violence or stalking concern let her/him know your reporting obligation so that s/he can determine what information s/he would like to disclose.
  - If the student is reporting an incident of violence (sexual assault, relationship violence) let the student know you will be obligated to report the names of the alleged perpetrator(s) and student(s) affected, as well as relevant facts (date, time, location).
- Listen to the concern carefully and empathetically without judgment.
- Try not to make comments about the specific people or situations involved in the concern.
- Try to gather information from the student that will be helpful in assessing the concern without forming an opinion about the viability of the complaint.

What if the student asks that you maintain confidentiality after s/he has already shared information with you?

- Tell the student you are unable to and must report the concern.
- Let the student know that even when you report a concern s/he remains in control of whether or not to file a complaint, utilize support/assistance options, etc.

Remember that most interim/immediate measures such as no-contact orders and housing and academic changes are coordinated by the CSB and SJU Deans of Students. It is important that you promptly report concerns.

A couple of ways to gently interrupt and inform of your obligation:

I want you to know this upfront. In reporting this information, the Dean of Students Office will be in contact with you to let you know your options and resources in this type of a situation. Their first priority is to make sure you are safe and supported. You are brave to come forward and I know how difficult this is to talk about. I also know sometimes students worry in cases like this that they are somehow at fault or in trouble. The Deans do not think that way and please do not be afraid to talk to them. They are here to help, just as I am. The Deans can answer any questions you may have about how the process works. The information I share will be shared with the utmost discretion and will only be shared with those people who need to know.

I want to give you this information so you can make an informed choice about what you disclose to me today. If you would rather talk to someone who can ensure your confidentiality, I am more than happy to connect you with CSB/SJU Counseling, CSB
Health Services or the Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center. How would you like to move forward?

I need to tell you that I am considered a required reporter. I must inform the University an incident has occurred. I don’t want to scare or intimidate you, but your personal safety and overall health is our number one concern. The reason we do this report is to make sure you are able to get all the help and support you need. If you do not want details of what occurred reported or are not interested in making a complaint at this time, you have the right to maintain your privacy. I will only report what you confide in me.” If you would rather talk to someone who can ensure your confidentiality, I am more than happy to connect you with CSB/SJU Counseling Services, CSB Health Services, or the Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center.

Sample e-mail response to a written disclosure:

Sometimes students may share something by e-mail when they are explaining an absence, or asking for some type of consideration. If at all possible, respond to them in person. E-mail could be your method of setting up a personal meeting. Only respond by e-mail if a personal meeting is not possible and then it may be a good idea to talk through your approach with the appropriate Dean of Students.

I am truly sorry to hear about what happened. I want you to know that I care about you and want to help you. If you’re interested, I can recommend several resources available to assist you during this difficult time.

The CSB or SJU Dean of Students is an excellent starting resource that is student-survivor centered. You are brave to come forward and I know how difficult this may be. I also know that students sometimes worry in cases like this that they are somehow at fault or in trouble. I encourage you to consider talking with one of the Deans as they are here to support you and do not think that way. They are here to help.

Due to my reporting obligation, I must provide your name and contact information. The information I share will be shared with the utmost discretion and will only be shared with those people who need to know. The appropriate Dean will reach out to you and discuss your options with you. He/she can also explain the many ways in which efforts are made to protect your privacy. Please know that I will help in any way I can. However, the CSB and SJU Deans of Students are the most knowledgeable in how the process works and will work with you to ensure that you are informed and supported every step of the process.