Supporting a Student Who Has Been Impacted by Sexual Assault or Relationship Violence: A Guide for Faculty & Staff

The Respect Program
Engaging the Emory community to prevent sexual & relationship violence and advocate for survivors
Office of Health Promotion
Emory University Campus Life

For more information contact
404.727.1514
http://respect.emory.edu

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Dear Emory University Community Member,

This guide is designed to assist you in responding to a student’s disclosure of sexual assault, abuse in a relationship, sexual harassment, or stalking. You should also have the Resource Guide for Students to give to or email a student who comes to talk about an instance of interpersonal violence that she/he/ze or one of her/his/hir friends has experienced*. Sexual and relationship violence are issues that undergraduate and graduate students from all schools in the University struggle with, although they often go unreported. In the event that a student discloses his/her experience(s) with you, please know that you are in a special position to act as a resource. You have been provided with this packet so that you will be able to act as a helpful resource in a student’s time of need.

This packet includes:

- Conversational tools for talking with someone who has been sexually assaulted
- A guide to help you in the response and referral process
- A guide to the student’s rights and options in getting medical care, academic advocacy, ongoing emotional support, and feeling safer on campus
- A list of contact information for resources

As an Emory University community member, you have the support and resources of the Respect Program in the Office of Health Promotion to assist you with any student concerns. The Respect Program’s mission is to engage the Emory community to prevent sexual and relationship violence and create a more survivor supportive campus, and you are an important part of that work. If you need help at any time during the process of responding to a student, do not hesitate to contact the Respect Program Survivor Advocate at (404) 727-7388. We appreciate the important role you take in helping to make Emory University a healthy and safe place where our students can flourish.

Please remember that self-care is important as you come in contact with survivor stories of violence. Support and referral options for faculty and staff members impacted by secondary trauma are available through the Faculty Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) at fsap@emory.edu or 404-727-4328. We support you and thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Wanda Swan

Wanda Swan, MA
Associate Director, Respect Program, Office of Health Promotion

*Sexual assault and relationship violence affect people of various gender identities. Pronouns are varied throughout this document to reflect this fact including she/her, he/him, and the gender neutral pronouns ze/hir and their.
Sexual & Relationship Violence Response Guidelines

I. Respond

- Review issues of privacy protection and your obligation to make a report to the Title IX Coordinator. You can learn more about Emory’s policies and faculty and staff reporting obligations at http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu
- Affirm the student for making the decision to reach out to someone
- Let the student know that as an Emory Employee (unless you are a licensed counselor/therapist/social worker), you will need to make a report to the Title IX Coordinator about what the student shares with you.
- Reassure the student that support and resources are available.
- Ask the student what, if anything, she is comfortable sharing about what happened, remind them that certain details will need to be included in your report (such as when, where, and who the perpetrator is) if shared with you as an Emory Employee.
- Talk to the student about any safety concerns or if he is afraid of seeing the perpetrator or potential repercussions from disclosing.
- Identify and explore the student’s primary areas of concern (e.g., confidentiality, safety, health risks, relationships)
- Provide the student with the “Resource Guide for Students” and review it together. Make sure the student knows where to learn more online via the Respect Program’s website http://respect.emory.edu
- Help the student identify a support system, including friends as well as campus resources.
- Let the student know that he has support at Emory from various resources, including confidential ones.

II. Refer

- During business hours, call The Respect Program Survivor Advocate at (404)727-1514. After hours, contact Emory Police Department at 404-727-6111 and ask them to help you reach the mental health consultant on-call.
- Was the assault or abuse within the past 72 hours? If it was, the student has the option to obtain a medical exam for the purpose of evidence collection. The student does not need to decide she will press charges at the time of evidence collection. (see page 8)
- If the student does not wish to have evidence collected, follow-up medical care is available at Student Health Services, including prophylaxis for HIV, testing and treatment for other STIs and emergency contraception. (see page 9)
- Review options and determine the student’s preferences for support, needs, and campus resources.
- Review what you discussed with the student and possible next steps

III. Report

- File a report with the Title IX Coordinator for Students, Judith Pannell. You can reach her at jpanne2@emory.edu. Learn more about reporting at http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu
Supporting a Student Who Has Been Sexually Assaulted or is in an Abusive Relationship

- **The student may be worried about being disbelieved.** It is important to reassure her that you believe her disclosure. Keep in mind that sexual assault or relationship abuse can occur regardless of gender or sexual orientation and to avoid making assumptions.

- **The student may be worried that the violence was her fault and that she is to be blamed.** Try to help the student explain why she believes it is her fault; you may need to respond with understanding that she wishes there was something she could have done to prevent the assault. She may also be reassured to hear you say that no one ever deserves to be assaulted; however, she may take little comfort in that if she is using self-blame to regain feelings of control over personal safety.

- **The reported assailant may be someone you know.** Eighty to ninety percent of sexual assaults on a college campus are committed by acquaintances. If a student reports abusive in a relationship, you may know both parties. If you know the reported assailant, you may struggle with your own feelings of disbelief that he could be capable of such behavior. However, false reports of assault are very rare. Remember, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you confront the reported assailant or attempt to mediate a conversation between the survivor and reported assailant.

- **The student may be immensely helped by you or another trusted support person accompanying her to appointments.** This may entail a DeKalb Medical Center Emergency Department visit or next day appointment at Student Health Services. Brainstorm with the student about possible help and support from friends, especially if ze’s concerned about coping alone.

- **Individuals’ coping strategies can vary.** Some find talking about the assault helpful and others do not. You may want to let the student know that you are available to her at any time she may want to talk about the experience. Even if she chooses not to discuss it still check in with her. It is important to acknowledge that this is a stressful time.

- **There are psychological and medical risks that may follow untreated sexual assault or relationship violence.** Many students attempt to minimize or deny their experience. This approach may make them unwilling to get necessary medical and emotional care. If the student is unwilling to follow-up with medical evaluation and counseling, be as persuasive as possible and try to help him keep his appointments.

- **If the student is experiencing abuse in an intimate partner or dating relationship, help them plan for safety.** There is a customizable safety plan and additional information available on the Respect Program’s website at [http://respect.emory.edu](http://respect.emory.edu). Help the student determine ways to stay safe, whether or not the student chooses to stay in a relationship in which there is abuse. While you should express your concern for the student’s safety, relationship abuse is complicated, and telling the student to end the relationship may actually create more danger for her. Again, you may know the reported abuser, however UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you confront them or attempt to mediate a conversation between the survivor and reported abuser.
Providing Support

Consider the surroundings:
- Does the student feel safe right now? What would help the student feel more comfortable?
- Is this area private or confidential?
- Does she want someone else there, a glass of water, a closed or open door?
- Turn your full attention to the survivor, ignoring any distractions such as cell phones
- Sit on the same level as the survivor with open body language, avoid barriers (e.g. desk)
- Ask permission before touching or hugging the survivor, even if you are close with them

Things you can say:
- “Thanks for coming to see me (or telling me or calling).”
- “Take your time.”
- “What is your biggest concern right now?”
- “What’s on your mind?”
- “You’re safe here.”
- “What would help you the most today?”
- “You have support at Emory.”
- “No one should have to face something like this alone.”
- “How are you feeling?”
- “No one asks to be sexually assaulted or abused.”
- “You did what you needed to do to make it through.”
- “Feel free to say whatever is on your mind.”
- “You’re not burdening me, I’m here to help.”
- “We don’t have to figure everything out at once. Let’s take it one step at a time.”
- “I believe you.”
- Nothing. Be comfortable with some silence and pauses.

Things you can do:
- Have an open, welcoming stance.
- Sit near the student on the same level, avoiding talking through barriers like a desk.
- Explore options with the student instead of giving advice. She is the best expert on her situation, and this can help her/him regain a sense of control.
- Focus on immediate health and safety issues. It can be overwhelming to consider all of the possibilities at once, and you want to start with those immediate concerns.
- Give written information and referrals to ensure that the student has the information, as he may be too traumatized to fully remember the conversation. If it’s safe to do so and the student feels comfortable with it, emailing can also be helpful.
- It can be challenging or emotionally draining to support someone who has experienced something traumatic. Make sure to take care of yourself. Consult with FSAP if you want to talk through your experiences supporting another individual (Call FSAP at 404.727.4328).
- Minimize future contact with the perpetrator or help the student plan for her safety if she is maintaining contact. Mediation is not an option in situations involving assault or abuse. Do not suggest that they have future conversations or contact. Do not offer to talk with the perpetrator on the survivor’s behalf.
- Keep the focus on the student who has come to you. Do not threaten violence or other retaliation against the perpetrator or focus on what the perpetrator might have been thinking.
• Set a limit to the conversation and ensure follow-up to avoid having the student retraumatize himself by continually retelling the story.
• If the student is going to go to an emergency room after a recent incident, ask if she has showered, changed clothes, or eaten anything. If not, encourage her to wait until after going to the hospital. Also, do not provide medication unless you are a medical professional.
• Keep your focus on the survivor, even if you have experienced abuse or sexual assault yourself. You should have places to disclose this and process through, but mentioning it to the student can redirect the focus to you or can make her feel she needs to do what you did to cope.

Potential Reactions to Trauma

Each person reacts to trauma differently, but here are some possibilities students might experience:

- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Feeling detached or unconcerned about others
- Having trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling jumpy and getting startled easily at sudden noises
- Feeling on guard and constantly alert
- Having disturbing dreams and memories or flashbacks
- Having school or work difficulties.
- Trouble eating or sleeping
- Pounding heart, rapid breathing, feeling edgy
- Severe headache if thinking of the event
- Failure to engage in exercise, diet, safe sex, regular health care
- Using substances more
- Feeling nervous, helpless, fearful, sad
- Feeling shocked, numb, and not able to feel love or joy
- Avoiding people, places, and things related to the event
- Being irritable, agitated, or having outbursts of anger/sadness
- Blaming oneself or having negative views of oneself or the world
- Distrust of others
- Being withdrawn, feeling rejected or abandoned
- Loss of intimacy or feeling detached
The Respect Program: 
Central Hub for Survivor Support Resources & Violence Prevention Programming

The Respect Program’s mission is to engage the Emory community to prevent sexual and relationship violence and advocate for survivors. It’s a part of the Office of Health Promotion in Emory University Student Health & Counseling Services in the Division of Campus Life.

Who we serve: All undergraduate and graduate students

How to reach us:

404.727.1514 | respect@emory.edu

Why a student would contact Respect:

- She’s in crisis and isn’t sure what to do/wants to figure out her/his options.
- Ze needs some sort of accommodation to feel safe and well.

For students who have been affected by sexual assault we provide:

- Crisis intervention and immediate support
- Accompaniment to appointments
- Assistance with reporting to the Title IX Coordinators, including anonymous reporting
- **Confidential** consultations
- Advocacy
  - Transfer of on-campus housing
  - Academic accommodations
- Connecting with counseling, medical care, conduct and legal on and off campus
- Referrals

For more information about the Respect Program or issues of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking go to [http://respect.emory.edu](http://respect.emory.edu).

**Student Support Options**

You have support and options at Emory including:

- Medical care
- Confidential Individual consultations and advocacy
- Personal counseling
- Reporting to legal authorities and/or the Title IX Coordinators
- Housing relocation
- Academic accommodations
Referrals to on and off campus resources

Medical care is the first decision you need to consider because it will influence the type of exam necessary and where the student will receive your medical care.

Emergency Medical Care and/or Evidence Collection

- If you think there is even a remote possibility that you will pursue legal prosecution for sexual assault and the incident occurred within the past 72 hours, we recommend that you go to the Emergency Department at DeKalb Medical Center. **You also have the choice to go to Emory University Hospital**; however, DeKalb Medical Center has the most technologically advanced evidence collection capabilities, staff that specialize in medical evaluation of sexual assault cases, and the option of meeting with an advocate from the Day League (formerly called the DeKalb Rape Crisis Center). Do not shower, change clothes, or douche before going to the hospital. The advocate can meet you at the Emergency Department and support you through the exam process and provide any additional support you may need through the legal system. The evidence collected will remain in storage should you decide to pursue prosecution. **Choosing to have evidence collected does not obligate you to press charges, and the DeKalb Police Department may subsidize some of the cost of the exam.**

- If you have any physical discomfort; suspected injuries; pain; bleeding or soreness; unusual discharge, cuts, or sores; or head trauma it is highly recommended that you receive initial medical evaluation at DeKalb Medical Center. Even if you do not desire evidence collection, their expertise will help you to receive the optimal level of care for your condition.

- If you want testing for evidence of “date rape” drugs, and the assault occurred within the past 12 hours, you should go to DeKalb Medical Center. Most drugs cannot be detected after 12 hours.

Please note: you will incur costs for medical care received at DeKalb Medical Center. To ensure confidentiality in billing, you may choose not to give your insurance information when you fill out the admission paperwork. Additionally, you may provide your on-campus address if you do not want the bill to be sent to your home address.

- Students with the Aetna Student Health Insurance coverage would have a $50 copay and $250 annual deductible to meet, then 80% coverage of the negotiated rate at DeKalb Medical Center.

- More information about DeKalb Medical Center and service costs is included in the appendix.

**Transportation**

- DeKalb Medical Center is located at 2701 North Decatur Road, Decatur, GA, 30033 (for directions call 404-501-2787).

- Getting to/from DeKalb Medical Center:
  - **MARTA:** Take bus North Decatur Rd./Virginia Highland—Eastbound (Route 36) from North Decatur Road (by Complex Hall). DeKalb Medical Center is located at North Decatur Rd and Winn Way.
  - **Taxi:** Checker Cab Company (404-351-1111)
Non-Emergency Medical Care & Follow-Up Treatment

- You also have the choice of receiving same day/next day care at Emory University Student Health Services (EUSHS). Even if you are certain that you do not want evidence collection, you still need preventive medical treatment or treatment for injuries. At Emory Student Health Services, you will not be seen for an examination that can be used as evidence, but you may choose to start your medical treatment there. Your medical care may include optional treatment for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and/or pregnancy. Pregnancy prevention is most effective if a sexual assault occurred within the past 72 hours. Medical treatment may also include follow-up STI testing at 3 and 6 months after the assault. A provider at EUSHS may still recommend that you go to the Emergency Room either at DeKalb or Emory, particularly if there are injuries or other health concerns that require specialized testing. To make an appointment at EUSHS, you may:
  - Call 727-7551, ext. 1
  - Go on-line to studenthealth.emory.edu to access your patient portal
  - Walk in during business hours. Although there might be a wait, you will be seen

- After your first visit at DeKalb Medical Center or Emory University Hospital, Emory Student Health Services is available to provide you with follow-up care. We recommend this appointment occur within 1-2 weeks of your initial appointment.

- Students will incur charges for any necessary laboratory tests and/or medications ordered at Student Health Services. If you have privacy concerns, you may prefer not to have these charges billed to your health insurance, particularly if those bills are sent to your home address. Consult with the Respect Program or the Case Manager in Campus Life about potential funding options for medical care at Student Health Services. Medical care at Student Health Services may be paid for directly by the student; however, if you set up a payment plan, it will go on your bursar bill, which for many students is sent to their home address.

- Bills and statements are billed to the address provided to Student Health Services. If your insurance is being billed, however, Student Health Services has no control over where the insurance company sends its explanation of benefits.

If you want total confidentiality, you can:

1. Provide payment in full at the time of your visit
2. Verify at the checkout desk that Student Health Services has your preferred mailing address on file
3. Specifically ask the checkout clerk to provide you with a statement showing the .00 balance and to note on the account “Do not bill this date of service to insurance.”

Long-Term and Non-Medical Support Options

The Respect Program is dedicated to providing you with necessary information, confidential guidance, and support during this difficult process. The Respect Program is located in the Office of Health Promotion in Student Health and Counseling Services 1525 Clifton Road in the 103 Suite but Wanda Swan can meet with a student in other locations. To schedule a free, anonymously scheduled, confidential consultation, please contact the Respect Program at 404.727.1514 or respect@emory.edu.
Reporting to Legal Authorities

- You may want to report to law enforcement authorities. Depending on the location of the incident, the Emory Police Department or the DeKalb County Police will assist you. You can initiate a report by calling the Emory Police Department, which will contact the appropriate authorities if the assault occurred outside their jurisdiction. Your report will not obligate you to follow through with legal action.

- Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained to the maximum extent permitted by applicable law. Any incident of sexual assault involving a minor (a person under the age of 18 in Georgia) shall be reported to the Emory Police Department. The Emory Police department shall contact any other necessary authorities (DFCS, appropriate law enforcement agency, etc.) If the survivor is a minor, the appropriate representative of Campus Life will also be notified, as s/he must inform the survivor's family of the assault.

Filing a Title IX Report for Sexual Misconduct

- You have the option to report this incident to the Title IX Coordinator for Students, Judith Pannell. If you do so, a professional will be assigned to investigate your case. In cooperation with the Title IX Coordinator, you may determine your participation level in this process. Title IX/sexual misconduct includes “sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.” For more information about resources and policy related to sexual misconduct at Emory go to [http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu](http://sexualmisconductresources.emory.edu).

- The sexual misconduct policy is available here: [http://policies.emory.edu/8.2](http://policies.emory.edu/8.2).

- The policy states that “sexual misconduct can occur between strangers or acquaintances, including people who have an intimate or sexual relationship.”

- A key component of this policy is consent. The policy defines consent as “a clear, unambiguous, and voluntary agreement between participants to engage in specific sexual activity. Consent is active, not passive, and is given by clear actions or words. Consent may not be inferred from silence, passivity, or lack of active resistance alone. A current or previous dating or sexual relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent, and consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity. Being intoxicated does not diminish one’s responsibility to obtain consent. In some situations, an individual may be deemed incapable of consenting to sexual activity because of circumstances or the behavior of another, or due to their age. Examples of such situations include, but are not limited to, incompetence, impairment from alcohol and/or other drugs, fear, unconsciousness, intimidation, coercion, confinement, isolation, or mental or physical impairment.”

- In other words, consent is not the absence of a “no,” but the presence of an enthusiastic “yes.” Any alcohol inhibits someone’s ability to give consent.

Receiving Emotional Support

- You also have the option of meeting with the Respect Program for a confidential consultation to receive support and learn about your options.

- Many survivors will minimize or deny their experience as a coping strategy. This approach may make them unlikely to seek medical and emotional care. If you or someone you are helping has
been affected by sexual assault or abuse in a relationship, please remember that the Respect Program will meet you where you are to assist you.

- It can be helpful for a survivor to identify their support system, including friends or family.
- The Respect Program provides confidential support, advocacy, and crisis intervention. Counseling can be an essential component of self-care after an unwanted sexual experience or to cope with being in or leaving a relationship in which there is abuse. Respect professional advocates can connect you with on and off campus counseling options for longer term care. At Student Health Services, you can see a health care provider to discuss the option of medication to help you sleep or to manage anxiety or stress associated with the assault.
Support Resources
A more comprehensive list is available at respect.emory.edu

On Campus Resources

Counseling & Psychological Services (404) 727-7450

The Respect Program (Confidential Advocate) (404) 727-1514
respect@emory.edu, http://respect.emory.edu

Emory Police Department (404) 727-6111

Title IX Coordinator for Students, Judith Pannell (404) 727-4079
jpanne2@emory.edu

Student Health Services (404) 727-7551

Emory University Hospital (404) 712-7021

Help Line (confidential, student staffed) (404) 727-HELP (4357)
available 8:30pm-1am

Off Campus Resources

Day League (formerly DeKalb Rape Crisis Center) (404) 377-1428
24 hour confidential crisis line (404) 377-1429
free counseling service

DeKalb Medical Center Emergency Department (404) 501-5350
ask to speak with a Physician’s Assistant

National Dating Abuse Helpline (866) 331-9474
24 hour confidential crisis line http://www.loveisrespect.org
Live online chat support (5pm-3am EST)

RAINN Rape, Abuse, and Incest Hotline (800) 656-HOPE (4673)
24 hour confidential hotline https://ohl.rainn.org/online
24 hour confidential online hotline

Georgia 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 334-2836