

RESOURCES

ON CAMPUS

University Counseling Services, Gasson 001
617-552-3310

The Women's Center, Maloney 441
617-552-3489

Sexual Assault Network (SANet) Hotline
617-552-2211

CARE Team walk in hours, Maloney 441
Mon-Fri 3-4pm

Melinda Stoops, Title IX coordinator,
Maloney 412
617-552-3280

OFF CAMPUS

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)
617-492-8306

BARCC Hotline
1-800-841-8371

The Center for Trauma and Embodiment
at the Justice Resource Institute
781-559-4900



SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE:

A Guide for Friends and
Family

Boston College
University Counseling Services

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE

An umbrella term, encompassing any forced sexual contact or attention without consent.

A survivor can define their own experience in their own terms, in their own time.

THE IMPACT

Each survivor reacts in their own unique way and there are a wide range of emotions and responses to trauma.

Some common reactions include...

Shame	Numbness	Changes in Sleep
Guilt	Depression	Unhealthy Coping
Denial	Panic Attacks	Isolation
Distrust	Flashbacks	Minimizing

Disclosing is Difficult

A survivor may feel...

- Humiliation and shame
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of being blamed
- Confusion about what happened
- Conflicting feelings about the perpetrator
- Fear of retaliation
- Fear that nothing will be done

DISCLOSURES

RECEIVING A DISCLOSURE

- Your response to a disclosure can impact the survivor's well-being and how they make sense of what happened to them
- Listen to, believe, and validate the survivor
- Having your own reactions (shock, anger, sadness, ect...) is normal
- Check in on your own emotional well-being and get support from someone other than the survivor if you need it

THINGS TO AVOID

- Don't try to fix the problem or try to make their feelings go away.
- Don't assume you know what the survivor needs.
- Don't make decisions for them.
- Don't ask for details about what happened.
- Don't challenge their experience or language.
- Don't be judgmental or engage in victim blaming.
- Don't get upset with them for not telling you sooner.

WHAT DO I SAY?

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

- "I believe you."
- "Thank you for sharing this with me."
- "It took a lot of courage to share this with me "
- "I'm so glad you told me."
- "This shouldn't have happened to you."
- "This is not your fault."
- "I'm here to listen and help in any way I can."

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Let the survivor express themselves
- Believe the survivor
- Acknowledge their pain
- Ask them how you can be helpful
- Provide suggestions and offer to assist but don't push, let the survivor choose what resources they will utilize
- Maintain connection and check in but also offer normalcy
- Be patient, healing takes time
- Take care of yourself