

# RESOURCES

## ON CAMPUS

University Counseling Services, Gasson  
607-552-3310

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

Tracy Kennedy, 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