UH MĀNOA GENDER EQUITY OFFICE

Tips for First Responders to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

If a student discloses an incident of sexual discrimination or violence to you:

- **Listen with empathy.**
- **Let the victim know they are not to blame for the assault.**
- **Avoid asking questions that imply fault,** such as “How much were you drinking?” or “Why didn’t you call the police?” Instead, say something simple and kind, like: “I’m sorry that this happened to you.” or “Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me.”

- **Treat the victim’s decisions with respect and support.**
  - Remember: victims are often met with disbelief upon telling their story. As such, they may be hesitant to trust someone. Most victims do not contact law enforcement. This is okay.
  - **Remember, you are not an investigator; you are someone the victim trusts.** Avoid telling the victim what they “should” or “must” do.
  - By using the following phrases, you **can help the victim restore the power and agency he or she may have lost:** “What kind of help do you need?” or “When you are ready, there is help available.”
  - Remember to let the victim know what resources are available to him or her. Remind the victim that counseling services and reporting procedures are available if he or she wishes.

- **Confidential resources:**
  - **UH Mānoa Counseling and Student Development Center**
    - 956-7927
    - QLCSS 312
  - **UH Mānoa Health Services**
    - 956-8965
    - 1710 East-West Road
  - **Sex Abuse Treatment Center**
    - (808) 524-7273 (24/7)
  - **Domestic Violence Action Center Helpline**
    - (808) 531-3771

- **You have a duty to report incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence to the Title IX Coordinator.** You must inform the student of your legal obligation to report to the Title IX Coordinator. Remind the victim, though, that the TIXC’s intervention does not equate to a forfeiture of his or her agency. Despite your obligation to report, the complainant has the final say in whether or not a formal complaint, informal complaint, or criminal complaint will be filed.
- **Follow up with the student.** Let the student know that you take his or her disclosure seriously and that you care about his or her well-being.
  - “I was thinking about our conversation the other day. How are you doing?”

Contact Information

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**Title IX Coordinator**

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