

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Emergency Response

Are You in Danger Now? If you need help right now, call “911.”

You can also call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233 TDD: 1-800-787-3224

- Get to a safe place. (For example -- someone’s home, the nearest hospital or police department)
- Call 911 to be taken to an emergency room for medical care and/or for immediate police protection and assistance. When you call 911, explain what has happened and request to be sent to an emergency department that has a SANE nurse (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner.)
- Alternatively, go directly to the nearest Emergency Room. If you go to the nearest emergency department that does not have SANE services, you can be transferred to the nearest facility.

Preservation of Evidence:

After an incident of sexual assault, the complainant should consider seeking medical attention as soon as possible at a local emergency room and to have a rape kit completed to preserve evidence in case the complainant decides to file a police report. No law enforcement charges are required in order to have a rape kit collected; however the complainant must use his/her legal name.

It is important that a complainant of sexual assault not bathe, douche, smoke, change clothing or clean the bed/linen/area where they were assaulted if the offense occurred within the past 72-96 hours so that evidence as may be necessary to the proof that criminal activity is occurring or has occurred may be preserved. In circumstances of sexual assault, if complainants do not opt for forensic evidence collection, health care providers can still treat injuries and take steps to address concerns of pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted disease. Complainants of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and dating violence are encouraged to also preserve evidence by saving text messages, instant messages, social networking pages, other communications, and keeping pictures, logs or other copies of documents, if any exists that would be useful to the Institution’s grievance process or police.

Options for Reporting to Law Enforcement:

Although the college strongly encourages all members of its community to report violations of this policy to law enforcement, it is the complainant’s choice whether or not to make such a report and complainants have the right to decline involvement with the police. If the complainant would like to contact Public Safety and/or local authorities either of the following may be completed:

1. File a complaint but not have charges brought against the accused. Charges may be brought at a later time if desired and the prosecuting attorney’s office agrees, however, evidence may be lost. Victims of sexual assault are encouraged to get a rape kit done and cooperate fully with an investigation so the possibility of filing criminal charges may be an option when they are ready to pursue, if ever.)
2. File a complaint and ask that the investigation and charges be pursued immediately. While the prosecuting attorney is still the decision-maker in whether the perpetrator is charged criminally, the victim can cooperate and provide as much timely cooperation and information as may be possible.

IMPORTANT: Victims under the age of 18 that file a report will be deemed a child in need and the appropriate

authorities will make a decision of whether to pursue charges.

No Contact Orders

If the accused individual is a member of the WCU community, a no contact letter will be given to all parties involved by the Institution until the conclusion of the investigation. This will prohibit communication between the parties, including contact verbally, in writing, through technology, or third parties. If you have been the victim of domestic or dating violence, stalking or sexual abuse, you may also want to consider obtaining an order of protection from the State of California, Florida or Texas.

Orders of Protection

The Institution does not issue orders of protection. But victims may be able to secure an order of protection through the courts in the jurisdiction where they live.

The Institution cannot apply for a legal order of protection, or restraining order for a complainant or on their behalf--the victim is required to apply directly for these services in conjunction with the police of the county in which they are located. The Institution will assist students and associates in obtaining court orders of protection to the extent they can.

The Institution will comply with state laws in recognizing orders of protection regardless of whether a complainant elects to pursue a criminal complaint. Persons should provide a copy of the order of protection to Safety and Security and the Title IX Coordinator. A complainant may then meet with Safety and Security to develop a Safety Action Plan, which is a plan aimed to reduce risk of harm while on campus or coming and going from campus. This plan may include, but is not limited to: escorts, special parking arrangements, changing classroom location, etc.

CALIFORNIA

For helpful information see the website, www.courts.ca.gov. In California, an Emergency Protection Order may be available through a law enforcement officer at any time of day.

FLORIDA

For helpful information in Florida see the website www.flcourts.org. In Florida, the injunction process for protection order could be filed at one of the intake locations in the complainant's county. The Intake Unit staff will help to complete all the necessary paperwork, which is taken to a judge to review.

TEXAS

For helpful information in Texas, see the website www.dallascounty.org. In Texas, the protective order may be available through the district or county attorney, a private attorney, or through a legal aid service program. The application must be filed in the county in which the complainant lives.

Risk Reduction, Warning Signs of Abusive Behavior and Future Attacks

No complainant is ever to blame for being assaulted or abused. Unfortunately, a person who is the victim of sexual or dating violence is more likely to be re-victimized. Below are some tips to help reduce your risk, to recognize warnings signs of abusive behavior and how to avoid potential attacks.

Warning Signs of Abusive Behavior

Domestic and dating abuse often escalates from threats and verbal abuse to violence. And, while physical injury may be the most obvious danger, the emotional and psychological consequences of domestic and dating violence are also severe. Warning signs of dating and domestic violence include:

- Being afraid of your partner.
- Constantly watching what you say to avoid a “blow up.”
- Feelings of low self-worth and helplessness about your relationship.
- Feeling isolated from family or friends because of your relationship.
- Hiding bruises or other injuries from family or friends.
- Being prevented from working, studying, going home, and/or using technology (including your cell phone.)
- Being monitored by your partner at home, work or school.
- Being forced to do things you don’t want to do.

Help Reduce Your Risk and Avoid Potential Attacks

If you are being abused or suspect that someone you know is being abused, speak up or intervene.

- Consider making a report with Safety and Security and/or the Title IX Coordinator and ask for a “no contact” directive from the Institution to prevent future contact.
- Consider getting a protective order.
- Learn more about what behaviors constitute dating and domestic violence, understand it is not your fault, and talk with friends and family members about ways you can be supported.
- Trust your instincts—if something doesn’t feel right in a relationship, speak up or end it.

How to be an Active Bystander

Bystanders play a critical role in the prevention of sexual and relationship violence. WCU aims to promote a culture of community accountability where bystanders are actively engaged in the prevention of violence without causing further harm. We may not always know what to do even if we want to help. Below is a list of some ways to be an active bystander. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, dial 911. This could be when a person is yelling at or being physically abusive towards another and it is not safe for you to interrupt.

- Watch out for your friends and fellow students. If you see someone who looks like they could be in trouble or need help, ask if they are ok.
- Confront people who seclude, hit on, try to make out with, or have sex with people who are incapacitated.
- Speak up when someone discusses plans to take sexual advantage of another person.
- Believe someone who discloses sexual assault, abusive behavior, or experience with stalking.
- Refer people to on or off campus resources listed in this document for support in health, counseling, or with legal assistance.