

# RESPOND

Northeastern  
University

A GUIDE TO RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF (BOSTON)



## BE PROACTIVE.

It's important that students and your colleagues understand your reporting obligations so they can make informed choices about what to disclose to you. Contact OUEC or OPEN for a consult on sexual violence prevention or cultivating a safe culture.



## RECOGNIZE PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Students might say things like, "I had a weird night...," or "an uncomfortable experience," but may not clearly label that experience as sexual assault or sexual harassment, for example. Pay attention to the behaviors they are describing. Reactions to trauma can vary from distressed to numb. Use your Quick Reference Guide to help recognize behavior as needed.



## EXPRESS EMPATHY

Express empathy through your words and body language. Believe them. Say things like: **"I'm sorry that happened to you."**; **"You deserve so much better."**; **"It's not your fault."**; **"Thank you for telling me."**



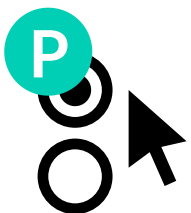
## EXPLAIN REPORTING OBLIGATIONS.

"I am sorry that happened to you, and I appreciate you sharing this with me. I want to let you know that I am considered a "Mandatory University Reporter" at Northeastern. That means that I need to report to the Office for University Equity and Compliance when (students/employees) share this kind of information. You can absolutely talk to me about this, but before you shared anything else, I wanted to make sure you knew about my reporting obligations so you could decide if you wanted to tell me more. If you prefer, I can also connect you to a confidential resource. Do you have any questions?"



## SEEK SAFETY.

- Assess if it's an emergency. If a student is in immediate danger, call NUPD directly at 617-373-3333,
- Use phrases like: **"How are you feeling in terms of your safety?"**
- Ensure the space where you are speaking is safe and protects privacy (if the conversation is online, make sure you have headphones in or that no one else can hear), and ensure that the other person has a safe space to speak.
- Do not touch the student.
- Do not investigate or ask for full details. It can be painful to retell.



## PROVIDE CHOICE.

Provide choices when possible: **"What do you need in this moment?"**; **"How can I support you?"**; **"Would you like to email OUEC together or would you prefer I do that separately?"** Avoid saying things like, "You should..." or "Why didn't you...?"



## OFFER OPTIONS.

Ask if they'd like to know more about resources. You can also offer to accompany them to an office or make a phone call with them. For example, you could say, "**I know a bit about [resource]. Would you like me to tell you more?**" Respect their choices as to whether they access resources or not.

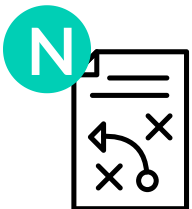
The following resources are free and confidential:

- **University Health and Counseling Services (UHCS):** UHCS provides comprehensive medical and mental health support to students on Northeastern's Boston campus. Students can call to schedule an appointment at 617.373.2772.
- **Find@Northeastern:** An extension of UHCS' services, Find@Northeastern offers 24/7 mental health support no matter where in the world a student is located. When a student calls Find, they are connected with a licensed mental health professional who can discuss current concerns and next steps. Through Find, students can be connected to free, unlimited counseling sessions. You can reach Find via phone at 877.233.9477 (U.S.), 855.229.8797 (Canada), or +1.781.457.7777 (Int'l).
- **Sexual Violence Resource Center (SVRC):** The SVRC provides confidential, trauma-informed support services to Northeastern students who have experienced any form of sexual violence. SVRC staff work with students to understand their rights and resources, and support survivors in making the best choices for them going forward. To schedule a meeting, students can fill out OPEN's service request form at [bit.ly/svrequestform](https://bit.ly/svrequestform).



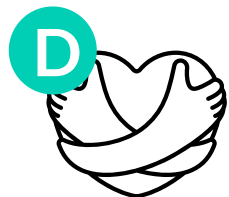
## NEXT STEPS: SUBMIT A REPORT.

Complete the discrimination complaint form on OUEC's website ([northeastern.edu/ouec/file-a-complaint/](https://northeastern.edu/ouec/file-a-complaint/)). Report just the facts, including the date, time, and specific location of incident(s), names of people involved and witnesses, events leading up to incident(s) if you know them. Do not include opinions.



## NEXT STEPS: MAKE A PLAN.

The person who shared information with you might feel anxious about how your interactions will look going forward. Try, "**How can I support you going forward?**" Avoid becoming a sole support. Respect their decision to share or not to share updates with you. Keep their information private.



## DON'T FORGET TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

Trauma can impact first responders. If you notice that you aren't feeling quite yourself after responding to a disclosure of sexual violence, reach out for support.