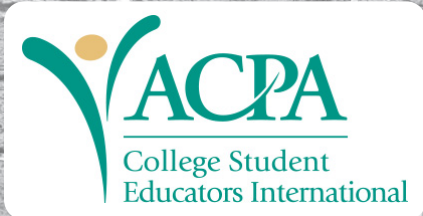


# BEYOND COMPLIANCE

Addressing Sexual Violence  
in Higher Education



## Editors

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Jody Jessup-Anger  
Assistant Professor  
Marquette University

Keith Edwards  
Speaker and Consultant

## Monograph Authors

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Amanda-Rae Barboza  
Assistant Director of Residence Life  
Macalester College

Mark Houlemarde  
Doctoral Student  
Indiana University

Susan V. Iverson  
Associate Professor  
Kent State University

Mollie Monahan-Kreishman  
Researcher/Speaker/Consultant on Sexual  
Assault in Higher Education

Kaaren Williamsen  
Title IX Coordinator  
Swarthmore College

## Other Taskforce Contributors

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Aaron Boe  
Independent Consultant  
Founder, Prevention Culture

Luoluo Hong  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
San Francisco State University

Sonja Jensen  
Program Manager for Student Services  
University of Utah

Connie Jean Kirkland  
Director, NOVACares  
Northern Virginia Community College

Ruth Anne Koenick  
Director, Violence Prevention and Victim  
Assistance, Rutgers University-New Brunswick

Chris Linder  
Assistant Professor  
University of Georgia

Robert Pastoor  
President  
Saint Joseph's College (Indiana)

Kathy Sisneros  
Director of the Women and Gender Advocacy  
Center, Colorado State University

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Sexual assault survival was all-consuming. There was a period when I woke up to what had happened to me and decided to deal with it, talk about it, do workbooks, read books, etc. One of the books spoke about the “shadow rapist” and that always stuck with me because that’s how I really experienced it during that time. I was haunted. My thoughts, when I slept, when I walked alone, all the time.

(Aeryn, sexual assault survivor<sup>1</sup>)

## Introduction

Advocates and activists on college campuses have been working for over 40 years to prevent and respond to all forms of sexual violence. Feminist movements have created resources for survivors and advocated for stronger laws against sexual violence. Despite this ground-breaking work, the rate of sexual violence in postsecondary institutions has remained essentially the same, with 20-25% of college women experiencing rape or attempted rape (Anderson & Clement, 2015; Black et al., 2011; Fischer, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). Sexual violence on college campuses persists across all racial and ethnic groups, sexual orientations, and gender identities (Black et al., 2011), with historically marginalized and underrepresented groups seeing even greater rates of sexual violence. One in eight lesbians and nearly half of bisexual women experienced rape. Four in ten gay men and nearly half of bisexual men experienced some form of sexual violence. Transgender and gender non-conforming people are at even greater risk for sexual violence (Grant et al., 2011). Native and indigenous students, international students, and undocumented students are all underrepresented in the research on prevalence of sexual violence in higher education. Regardless of the gender identity or sexual orientation of the victim or survivor, men are most often the perpetrators of sexual violations (Black et al., 2011). Sexual violence affects the entire higher education community, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators, directly or indirectly.

Continued media interest, legislative action, and investigations by the federal government

of institutions for potential Title IX violations direct the public’s attention to the ways in which postsecondary institutions address sexual violence. The Dear Colleague Letter, issued by the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights in April 2011, clarified and expanded the Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance that was issued in 2001. The letter alerted campus officials of their responsibility to provide services and response to sexual violence and ushered in a new wave of federal guidance that sought to clarify institutions’ responsibilities with regard to addressing sexual violence on campus. In January 2014, following a period of increased student activism about issues of sexual violence on campus (Schnoebelen, 2013), the White House issued an initial report describing the prevalence and complexity of the issue. The report also established the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (Rape and Sexual Assault: A New Call to Action, 2014). After collecting feedback from various constituents, the White House Task Force issued a second report, Not Alone, highlighting recommended best practices for campuses in four areas; climate assessment, prevention, response and adjudication, and enforcement efforts by the federal government (Not Alone, April, 2014). Currently, numerous pieces of legislation are being discussed and introduced at the Federal and state level. Most of these legislative efforts are mandates requiring campuses to put considerable resources toward responding to reports of sexual violence and adjudicating them. We call on postsecondary institutions to move beyond reactionary,

<sup>1</sup> Survivor quotes used with permission from Monahan-Kreishman (2012).

compliance-focused mandates to innovative and inclusive initiatives to prevent sexual violence. All students have the right to learn in environments that are free from sexual violence.

Federally mandated updates to institutional policies and procedures notwithstanding, all college student educators, particularly student affairs staff and faculty in student affairs graduate preparation programs, have an ethical responsibility to create and maintain safe and equitable learning environments for all students (ACPA Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards, 2006). In addition to the traumatic experiences of victims and survivors, sexual violence creates an unwelcoming learning climate for all students, which may result in increased problems with mental health, disengagement in academic life, or dropping out of school entirely. For these reasons, effectively addressing sexual violence is not only an ethical and legal obligation, but is also directly tied to the educational mission of institutions of higher education. Student affairs educators must provide leadership to address sexual violence on campus through both effective prevention and response.

In the spring of 2014, the ACPA President and Executive Director issued a call for members of the association to participate in an ACPA Presidential Task Force on Sexual Violence Prevention in Higher Education. A Task Force of 14 members was selected and convened in the summer of 2014 with the charge of providing direction to the leadership of ACPA on the association's role in addressing campus sexual violence. This monograph resulted from the work of the Task Force to provide direction about educating students, developing professional competency, and guiding institutional leadership about addressing sexual violence. The monograph is intended for all constituencies in

higher education, and provides a student affairs perspective on sexual violence policy, response, adjudication, and prevention in higher education.

**This document is meant to complement and move beyond the current compliance-heavy focus of courts, legislatures, and media response to sexual violence on college campuses toward a more holistic approach that includes prevention.**

## Theoretical Framework and Definitions

**Sexual violence is a social justice issue.**

Members of the ACPA President's Task Force on Sexual Violence Prevention in Higher Education employed ACPA's core values, a feminist informed outlook, and a social justice framework to guide the development of this monograph. Efforts to both respond to and prevent sexual violence effectively must be grounded in a systems approach. This approach acknowledges the complexity surrounding the existence of sexual violence, including misogyny, sexism, homophobia, colonization, racism, and other power dynamics and societal norms, as well as the importance of acknowledging the multiple forms of oppression that may perpetuate sexual violence and influence how a person experiences sexual violence. Specifically, through sustained conversation, members of the Task Force made intentional efforts to consider various identities, keep the dynamics of power and privilege transparent, and be mindful of intersectionality in our work as a group and in our recommendations to address sexual violence on campus.

It is important to note that state and federal laws and college and university policies define sexual violence differently. For the purposes of this monograph, we will use the term sexual violence

We call on postsecondary institutions to move beyond reactionary, compliance-focused mandates to innovative and inclusive initiatives to prevent sexual violence. All students have the right to learn in environments that are free from sexual violence.

to include sexual assault, sexual harassment (both online and in person), intimate partner violence (domestic and dating violence), and stalking. We recommend that campuses develop definitions, policies and educational practices that are consistent with state laws. The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act) amendments to the Violence Against Women Act can provide guidance on these definitions. It is also important to note that terminology surrounding sexual violence matters. We use the terms victim and survivor to refer to students who have experienced sexual violence and perpetrators to refer to those who commit sexual violence. We use the terms complainant and respondent to refer to those who have made a complaint and those who are responding to a complaint against

them in the student conduct system. We recognize that different constituencies (law enforcement, student conduct officers, legal counsel, counselors) may use different terminology to align with their professional and institutional standards. We also recognize that the term sexual violence may have different meanings and evoke different reactions for different audiences. This monograph aims to assist college student educators in moving toward a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual violence by educating students, professionals and institutional leaders. We focus on prevention, policy, response, and adjudication to be consistent with the White House report *Not Alone* and the Center for Disease Control's public health approach including primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

## Educating Students

**Sexual violence prevention requires a holistic approach (American College Health Association, 2008; Center for Disease Control, 2015).** Campuses need to have comprehensive education to prevent sexual violence and equip students with the skills necessary to develop healthy and safe relationships and communities. A holistic and comprehensive approach preventing sexual violence includes addressing the following learning goals:

1. consent, policy, and resources,
2. healthy relationships and sexuality,
3. roots of sexual violence, and
4. empowering actions.

Effective pedagogy to convey these learning goals includes content and delivery that is:

1. sequenced developmentally,
2. integrated throughout the student experience,
3. presented in varying formats,
4. messaged consistently and tailored for specific communities, and
5. inclusive of multiple and intersecting identities.

[Hearing victim blaming statements] made me want to keep silent and not talk to anyone. Even though my roommate did not say “you’re to blame” her comment that I was making too big a deal about losing my virginity made me feel in some ways like “I shouldn’t be so upset about this, so what, I didn’t do enough, this is my fault.” I guess in some ways I thought others would think that too if I tried to talk to them, so I kept quiet.

(Beth, sexual assault survivor)

# Comprehensive Sexual Violence Prevention Education

## Learning Goals

Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

- **Consent, Policy, & Resources** (defining sexual violence, informed consent, campus policy, response and adjudication processes, survivor resources)
- **Healthy Relationships & Sexuality** (ethics, sexual health, personal boundaries (in person and online), communicating desires, asking for and confirming consent, identifying unhealthy patterns and relationships)
- **Roots of Sexual Violence** (understanding perpetration, societal norms, gender socialization, intersecting forms of oppression, power dynamics, role of alcohol in nullifying consent)
- **Empowering Actions** (bystander intervention, social change, community engagement, supporting survivors and those in unhealthy relationships, risk reduction, challenging victim blaming)

## Pedagogy

Delivery

- **Theoretically & Conceptually Grounded, Evidence-Based Content and Delivery** (frameworks that organize prevention efforts with content that is research informed; delivery informed by good practice in teaching and learning, including recognizing varying learning styles and active learning)
- **Developmental Sequencing** (developmentally appropriate progression toward learning goals )
- **Integration throughout the Student Experience** (pre-arrival, orientation, residence halls, student leader training, returning students)
- **Presented in Varying Formats** (films, speakers, student groups, peer educators, advising/mentoring, online modules, awareness campaigns, academic courses, workshops, passive programming, social media)
- **Consistently Messaged & Tailored for Specific Communities** (athletes, Greek Life, study away, men, LGBTQ+, communities of color, international students)
- **Inclusive of Multiple and Intersecting Identities** (sensitive to differing and intersecting identities of audience, avoids heteronormative assumptions)

# Learning Goals

## Consent, Policy, and Resources

Most students come to higher education with little to no prior education on consent, sexual ethics, and how to engage in healthy sexual and non-sexual relationships (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013). Students need to understand how campus policies and state laws define various forms of sexual violence. Clear policies and definitions support effective adjudication, and they also serve as critical educational tools for sexual violence prevention. Solely having policies in a student handbook is insufficient to educate students. Effective education to prevent sexual violence attends to the ways that federal and state laws, campus policies, and human decisions interact to effect relationships, experiences on campus, and feelings of safety and belonging (Iverson, 2015). Measures to address and prevent victim blaming should be infused throughout policy education, which can help equip students to support their peers who are victims/survivors.

A key aspect of both policy and effective education is clearly defining consent. This includes clear, unambiguous affirmative consent at every step of the way that is given freely without coercion. An individual cannot give informed consent when incapacitated due to alcohol, other drugs, unconsciousness, coercion, or other means that invalidate consent. Contrary to mainstream cultural messages, alcohol and other drugs can make getting and giving consent impossible. Someone who is highly intoxicated is unable to give informed consent to sexual activity. Because prevailing cultural messages often counter this definition of sexual violence, it is imperative that colleges and universities clearly explain how informed consent is the basis for campus sexual misconduct policies.

A victim/survivor-centered approach to design of policy and processes of reporting and adjudication is critical not only to response but also in educating students about sexual violence.

A victim/survivor-centered approach to design of policy and processes of reporting and adjudication is critical not only to response but also in educating students about sexual violence. All students must be made aware of relevant campus and community resources for support, reporting, and adjudication of sexual violence and the differences between confidential sources of support and mandatory reporters. Access to immediate and ongoing support is critical for students to recover from the initial trauma, on-going campus adjudication and/or reporting to law enforcement, and other experiences that challenge the healing process.

These resources should be provided in a seamless and systematic manner so as to limit the number of times a survivor must share the details of the trauma. All students should be made aware of similar resources off-campus if they are available, as some students will prefer to seek these avenues for support instead of or in addition to campus resources. Policies and services that are well known and trusted serve as both good response and prevention.

## Healthy Relationships & Sexuality

Assisting students in conceptualizing and developing healthy intimate relationships, with strong and positive messages about communication and consent, can create a non-threatening yet productive way to engage students in sexual violence prevention. Comprehensive sexuality education curriculum can be facilitated by staff or peer leaders in a campus health center or gender and sexuality center (see [Healthy Sexuality for Sexual Violence Prevention: A Report on Curriculum-Based Approaches](#) for reviews of curriculum). Core elements of the curriculum can raise awareness about what is expected in intimate relationships and can be a part of shifting the culture around how students engage in intimate relationships. Each institution will have



to customize this education based on institutional values, student culture, and keep in mind that variation exists in pre-college (K-12) sexuality education curriculum. Topics can include ethics, sexual health, establishing personal boundaries (in person and online), communicating desires, asking for and confirming consent, and identifying signs of unhealthy patterns and relationships.

## Roots of Sexual Violence

The roots of sexual violence are deeply embedded in the socialization perpetuated by many aspects of the society around us. Contemporary popular culture becomes rape culture when it subtly and overtly encourages, condones, and perpetuates sexual violence, particularly men's sexual violence against women. It does this by objectifying women, perpetuating sexism and patriarchy, fostering sexist and misogynistic notions of sexually aggressive men and sexually passive women, and intersecting with other forms of oppression, including racism, classism, heterosexism, and genderism (Edwards & Headrick, 2008). These societal messages also erase experiences of gender violence that do not fit the binary of male perpetrator/female victim. These messages are communicated throughout our society through movies, television shows, magazine advertisements, song lyrics, social media posts, and conversations in locker rooms, chapter rooms, classrooms, and dining halls.

These societal messages perpetuate rape myths that can result in misunderstanding consent, minimizing sexual violence, and blaming the victims of sexual violence. Students must be made aware that most sexual violence is perpetrated by a person known to the victim (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). This reality can compound barriers to seeking help, reporting the violence, and healing.

Addressing the roots of sexual violence also means understanding, reaching, and educating potential perpetrators. Men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of sexual violence regardless of the gender identity and sexual orientation of the victims/survivors (Black et al, 2011; Fischer, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Effectively addressing sexual

violence perpetration must include attention to the gender socialization of men and the context of patriarchy and systemic sexism. Being informed about common perpetrator patterns, mindsets, behaviors, and understandings of consent is critical to effectively reaching potential perpetrators. Finally, it is important to understand that many behaviors that perpetrators exhibit stem from the ways that men are socialized to engage sexually throughout their lives by individuals, the media, and broadly accepted societal norms.

As colleges create specific protocols for responding to intimate partner violence, it is important to be mindful that those who grow up with violence in the home are more likely to be violent as adults (Ehrensaft et. al., 2003). While certainly not all who are exposed to violence become violent, effectively addressing intimate partner creates the possibility of interrupting family cycles of violence.

Effective prevention education seeks to achieve sustainable cultural change by addressing misogyny, systemic sexism, the potential of a family history of violence, and other forms of oppression that are at the root of sexual violence. Campuses should work to create multiple opportunities for students to participate in conversations about gender role socialization and the potential connection to personal relationships and social attitudes. These opportunities include space to talk about gendered dynamics and how students of all gender identities experience this culture (Friedman & Valenti, 2008; Tolman & Higgins, 1996). It is critical to provide students with healthy alternatives to the dominant social and sexual scripts that promote power imbalances and problematic attitudes. Exposure to and conversation about multiple and intersecting identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression, can foster greater learning and social development than focusing only on the problem of sexual violence itself.

## Empowering Actions

**Sexual violence is ultimately prevented by individual, institutional, and social change.**

Bystander intervention, which empowers students

to take action when they observe behaviors related to sexual violence, can engage the larger campus community in sexual violence prevention (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004).

Training and education on bystander intervention is most effective when it assists students in

recognizing problematic attitudes and situations, and equips them with the knowledge and skill necessary for realistic and effective intervention (Tabachnick, 2009). A critical aspect of bystander intervention training is education about the use of alcohol in perpetuating sexual violence. Although it may be difficult for students to discern whether a peer poses a threat to someone, it might be easier to recognize and attend to a person who is vulnerable.

Students can also learn how to recognize and work to change the root causes of sexual violence (including sexism and misogyny).

**Using an empowering, solutions-based, social change approach will bring about a vision for and greater understanding of equitable and just interpersonal relationships, environments, communities, and systems.** Helping students identify the unintended consequences of seemingly harmless attitudes and traditions can

foster healthier attitudes and practices in their communities. Changing campus culture will empower students in ways they will carry with them into their future careers and communities —

therefore influencing many other lives in college and beyond.

Risk reduction is not prevention. Although risk reduction may be part of a holistic and comprehensive approach to sexual violence prevention and response, it must not be the only way sexual violence is addressed on campus. Risk reduction, which educates

students about behaviors that might make them more vulnerable to sexual violence in an effort to curtail such violence, can fuel victim blaming and reinforce myths about sexual violence, therefore it must be approached carefully.

Students may experience trauma related to sexual violence both directly and indirectly while at college and many come to college having already experienced sexual violence (Black et al, 2011). Equipping all students with empathy and awareness of trauma and the dynamics of sexual violence benefits the entire community. Friends are often the first people to whom students report, thus, it is important to equip peers with resources and skills about how to respond. The core concepts of believing survivors, refraining from questioning their actions in relation to the assault, letting survivors guide their next steps, and giving physical space (i.e. only physically comforting with permission or consent) are all important.

Survival began the day after the assault, but I don't think I was doing positive or constructive things to help in my survival. It wasn't until I [got involved in sexual assault prevention] that I started to positively influence my survival and recovery.

(Beth, sexual assault survivor)

# Pedagogy

These approaches to prevention should be grounded theoretically and conceptually and based on empirical evidence whenever possible. The report *Preventing Sexual Violence on College Campuses: Lessons from Research and Practice* prepared for the White House by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention researchers is an example that summarizes research on prevention. Further, as new programs and approaches are created and implemented, new assessment of their effectiveness in fostering student learning is critical. Campuses must be mindful of how delivery methods utilize good practices in teaching and learning, including active learning.

Developmentally sequencing sexual violence prevention education, both in terms of content and method of delivery, is key to fostering learning and growth. Campuses should provide varied and layered opportunities for education to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills. Positive and developmentally appropriate messaging should be integrated throughout a comprehensive prevention effort.

Effective prevention education reaches students through multiple entry points throughout the student experience. Prevention education may be included in pre-arrival, orientation and first-year programs, returning/continuing student programs, peer education, student leader training, and more. It may include both passive programming that promotes resources and active learning that encourages students to engage discussions or activities. Educators should draw upon campus and community resources and expertise in the design

and delivery of prevention education (e.g., women's centers, women's and gender studies faculty, counseling centers, rape crisis community agencies).

Varied modes of education will also help reach the widest audience; films, speakers, peer educators, advising and mentoring, online modules, awareness campaigns, academic course, workshops, passive programming, social media, and social norms campaigns can all play a role in educating students. These efforts should also reach out to a wide variety of audiences with messaging that is consistent but also tailored to specific audiences (e.g. athletes, fraternity and sorority members, international students, incoming or first-year students, graduate students, study away, men, LGBTQ+, communities of color, and more). Prevention education aimed at faculty and staff is also needed. Foundational knowledge and critical awareness of sexual violence can be increased by publicizing resources on websites, in presentations, and on posters throughout campus. This approach creates a layered effect, which supports survivors and helps to cultivate a survivor supportive culture on campus.

Effective education will be inclusive of multiple and intersecting identities, address historical and contemporary narratives about sexual violence, and clarify that sexual violence transcends gender and sexuality. Education must include an understanding of the survivor experience with recognition of multiple and intersecting identities. All educational efforts should assume survivors are likely in the audience and be mindful of the impact of educational efforts on those students. Resources for reporting and recovery should always be included in educational efforts.

I worked closely with the victim advocate on campus and she was able to contact my teachers for me. This was a big relief...Some teachers then asked me to stay after class to figure out how to “cut me slack” and some just forgave missed assignments without ever saying anything.

(Chloe, Sexual assault survivor)

## Educating Professionals

All college student educators, particularly student affairs professionals and faculty in student affairs graduate preparation programs, should understand sexual violence prevention, policy, response, and adjudication in order to effectively educate about and address it. An empathetic understanding of a survivor’s experience, from multiple and intersecting identities, must be part of that understanding. Competence in addressing sexual violence prevention and response can be differentiated as basic, intermediate, and advanced, reflecting varying degrees of expertise necessary in one’s role. For example, the violence prevention or Title IX coordinator will need more specialized knowledge, and thus more advanced competency than a new professional in a generalist role. For sexual violence prevention programs more specifically, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) has a [guide](#) for Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Prevention Programs. No matter one’s proximity to addressing sexual violence on campus, all college student educators must possess basic competence, thus graduate preparation programs in student affairs should consider incorporating prevention and response education into their curriculum, providing foundational knowledge. Below we detail the competencies necessary for professionals and then provide suggested avenues for developing competence.

**Student affairs professionals have an important role in leading efforts in sexual violence prevention, shifting campus culture, and creating trauma-informed response and practice.** Although this monograph is specifically

focused on prevention efforts, it is important to note that many, if not most, student affairs practitioners balance roles in prevention, support, and response efforts, including in the adjudication process. Postsecondary institutions are called on to provide support for survivors, prevention education for all students, and a fair adjudication process for those accused of violating campus policies. Since the same professionals may work on different facets of sexual violence prevention and response, these staff members need to be prepared to balance the tensions that may arise from these complementary or conflicting roles. They must consider, for example, how students (both complainants and respondents) react to an investigation of sexual violence that is led by someone who was involved in an orientation session on preventing sexual violence. In addition, staff members must think about how to ask difficult questions in an investigation while also not undermining the support of those involved. On smaller campuses, the challenge may lie with staff members being involved in multiple roles, while on larger campuses it may be a challenge that staff members are only involved in one aspect of the process and can lack understanding of the other aspects of the process. Below we detail the competencies necessary for professionals and provide suggested avenues for developing competence.

# Competencies

## PREVENTION

## POLICY

## RESPONSE

## ADJUDICATION

### Awareness

- Of one's own assumptions about what sexual violence is, who causes it, and who is affected
- Of how ones' prior experiences, differing motivation for learning, and readiness to delve into sexual violence prevention education, affects one's ability to connect and communicate effectively.

### Knowledge

- About healthy intimacy, including how to talk to students about establishing personal boundaries, asking for or confirming consent, and identifying signs of unhealthy behaviors and relationships.
- Regarding the root causes of sexual violence (sexism, misogyny, and history of family violence), rates of occurrence (both victimization and perpetration), dynamics of victim blaming, and the role of alcohol and other drugs.
- Of how sexual violence intersects with gender, power, privilege, and identity and its occurrence in marginalized, silenced, under-represented, and invisible communities.
- Of available resources/referrals both on and off campus and also understand the difference between and impact of mandatory and confidential reporting structures.

### Skills

- To facilitate and discuss prevention and bystander intervention in individual and group settings.
- To use inclusive and empathic language when discussing preventing sexual violence.
- To create campus specific sexual violence prevention curriculum with learning goals and assessment plan.

# Competencies

PREVENTION

**POLICY**

RESPONSE

ADJUDICATION

## Awareness

- Of institutional policies and the impact these policies have on potential perpetrators, victims, and the campus community.
- Of the need for self-reflection in one's taken-for-granted beliefs, values, and potential blind spots and how these guide authoring, interpreting, and implementing policy.

## Knowledge

- Of how to balance attention to compliance, trauma-informed practice, and prevention.
- Of how to author and implement policy that attends to student populations from multiple and intersecting identities.
- Of how federal and state guidance impacts campus policy and procedures.

## Skills

- To author and implement policy that takes into consideration compliance, due process, trauma-informed practice and care, prevention, and campus values.
- To author and implement policies that recognize both individual behaviors and the systemic roots of sexual violence (Iverson, 2015).
- To author and implement policies and procedures that are responsive to students' multiple and intersecting identities.

# Competencies

PREVENTION

POLICY

RESPONSE

ADJUDICATION

## Awareness

- Of one's own knowledge, fear, bias, and positionality related to sexual violence.
- Of one's own limitations and triggers and be able to refer students to others who can provide more specific or advanced support.

## Knowledge

- Of trauma-informed survivor support, including a distinction between helpful and harmful language and the problem of victim blaming.
- Of federal policies and guidelines, and their application (e.g. Clery Act, Title IX).
- Of the survivor experience in the context of multiple and intersecting identities and the ways in which college student educators are trained (or not trained) and encouraged (or discouraged) to support survivors.
- Of how to work with respondents and complainants, providing due process, support, and accountability.
- Of impact on communities, which may include residence hall floors, Greek communities, athletic teams, or friends of the victim and/or perpetrator.

## Skills

- To develop, demonstrate, and practice empathy in providing survivor support in a culturally competent manner.
- To communicate with respondents and complainants, creating safe and brave spaces (Arao & Clemens, 2013), and use language sensitive to individual student needs.

When a friend said to me once, "I'm so sorry that happened to you," that was probably the best response I ever got. Simple. Direct. Didn't ask stupid questions or get angry at him for me. Just saying, "That was bad. I'm sorry."

(Pink, sexual assault survivor)

# Competencies

PREVENTION

POLICY

RESPONSE

ADJUDICATION

## Awareness

- Of the personal and professional biases they may carry.
- Of the real or perceived multiple roles professionals may be engaged in related to sexual violence.
- Of the differing terminology used in adjudication (victim, survivor, complainant, reporting party, perpetrator, respondent, responding party, responding party), its appropriate use in differing contexts, and its potential impact.
- Of the varying needs students may bring to the adjudication process.

## Knowledge

- Of relevant and applicable campus policies, procedures, rights, and best practices (which incorporate federal and state laws, as well as guidance from the Department of Education).
- Of evidence-based sanctioning, with an emphasis on not only responding to, but ultimately preventing sexual violence.
- Of the adjudication process (for all college student educators), with special training for conduct officers and other adjudicators that draws on established best practices (e.g., [ASCA](#)) and guidelines for applying federal mandates to the campus adjudication process (Bennett, Gregory, Loschiavo, & Waller, 2014).
- Of the trauma experience from the perspective of multiple and intersecting identities.
- Of how to support all students throughout the process and how to attend to community impact.

## Skills

- In providing support and empathizing without taking sides in the adjudication process, while weighing evidence in the context of trauma, social power dynamics, and the multidimensionality of identities.
- In navigating one's responsibilities to provide a fair and compassionate process for all involved, including complainants, respondents, and other affected students.
- Of how to communicate purpose, process, and potential outcomes of campus adjudication in contrast to criminal processes (Bennett, Gregory, Loschiavo, & Waller, 2014).



# Developing Competence

Student affairs professionals and faculty in graduate preparation programs are well positioned to lead sexual violence prevention and response efforts, working closely with faculty, student leaders, and other administrators including the Title IX coordinator, campus police, and general counsel. Although responding to campus misconduct has long been the purview of student affairs and specifically the student conduct staff, it is increasingly important that all student affairs professionals have the capacity to engage in sexual violence prevention and response. A division of student affairs that is well-educated about sexual violence has the capacity to affect campus culture and ultimately change behavior.

All college student educators should seek out avenues to develop basic to advanced competency in addressing sexual violence. These avenues may include relevant scholarship, training, conferences, and courses. When developing competence, particular attention should be paid to curricular sequencing, learning readiness, social justice exposure and training, reflection, and intersectionality. Developing competence is helped by being mindful of how to scaffold and integrate learning from one training session, conference, or other professional development training to the next over time. One professional development opportunity may be a powerful starting position, but is typically insufficient to develop or sustain competence. Educators who conduct and attend professional development opportunities must consider their own and others' readiness to learn, and provide the necessary support for "when new information collides with unexamined prior knowledge" (Chick, Karis, & Kernahan, 2009, p. 11).

Student affairs professionals must also keep in mind the varying aspects of their roles, as prevention educators, mentors, supervisors, investigators, and adjudicators. Knowing how to navigate these roles is essential. When a student shares an experience of sexual violence, staff need to be able to respond quickly and appropriately, giving all the response options (including support resources, and formal processes) while understanding that a victim's healing process is

one path and the college adjudication process may be another. Student affairs practitioners are often charged with creating and offering both spaces. Supporting a student's healing involves creating places where victims are believed, supported, and given opportunities

to process the trauma. College adjudication processes, on the other hand, provide due process for respondents and complainants with a focus on fact finding, fairness, and policy analysis. Being able to articulate the differences between support avenues and investigation/adjudication processes is essential.

Everyone engaged in addressing campus sexual violence must understand how issues of identity, power, bias, and positionality may be at play in prevention and response. This awareness encourages professionals to move beyond simple and impossible objectivity in response and adjudication to bring an ethic of multiparty into the process (Holmes, Edwards, & Debowes, 2009). Rather than ignore underlying dynamics, multiparty is a call to be conscious, aware, and transparent about how issues of identity, power, biases, and positionality may be at play among all parties, including the complainant, respondent, investigators, and adjudicators. Effective professional development related to addressing sexual violence considers these complexities.

I remember early on I thought, I just can't do this, I can't do this... but having great teachers or a victim advocate who says, I can help you make a plan. Let's talk to your teachers. Every possible place, I had support. If I didn't, I don't think I would be here. I don't think I would have graduated.  
(Sweetie, sexual assault survivor)

# Institutional Leadership

Sustainable prevention of sexual violence requires organizational and cultural change that is supported by senior leadership, including presidents, boards, vice-president, and deans. Title IX Coordinators should report directly to the president of the institution to garner organizational access, authority, and unencumbered lines of communication, but also have close working relationships, or a joint reporting line, to the senior student affairs officer. Avenues should also be created for consistent communication and collaboration with all units on campus who are charged with sexual violence prevention and response.

Change at the institutional level arises from adequately resourcing prevention and response efforts (e.g., women's or gender and sexuality centers, counseling and psychological services, victim/crisis centers) and ensuring that these constituents have a space to help inform a campus-wide agenda committed to addressing sexual violence. Some leaders will need to support initiatives with new staff and resources dedicated specifically to addressing the prevention of and response to sexual violence. In what follows, six concrete strategies are provided as considerations for campus leadership to implement and enhance prevention and response to sexual violence.

# 6 Strategies for Institutional Leadership

1. Championing Sexual Violence Prevention
2. Allocating Sufficient Resources
3. Creating Campus-Wide Response and Prevention Teams
4. Implementing Diverse Response and Prevention Efforts
5. Auditing Prevention and Response Initiatives
6. Providing Complementary and Consistent Messaging

## 1 Championing Sexual Violence Prevention

Institutional leaders can serve as champions of sexual violence prevention. Often, senior administrators are called upon to move an agenda forward, and it is important they are equipped with key talking points and data to advocate for resources to support prevention and response efforts. Institutional leaders must have clear, consistent, and concise messaging that is accessible to multiple audiences including alumni, parents, boards, community organizations and agencies. One strategy for education and external engagement is to frame the importance of the work as connected to other key campus priorities. For example, institutional leaders may highlight the connection between comprehensive sexual violence prevention and response and the institutional commitment to recruitment and retention of students. Effective prevention often improves the experience of all students on campus, which has a direct effect on student persistence and retention.

## 2 Allocating Sufficient Resources

On many campuses, the national media and government attention on compliance have highlighted the need for additional resources to address sexual violence. These additional resources may be devoted to responding to sexual violence, including hiring new investigators and conduct officers, preparing compliance reports, consulting with legal counsel, and adding support resources for survivors. Often, increasing the quality of response to sexual violence develops student awareness and trust, which can correlate with a spike in the reporting of sexual violence, straining response resources. It is important for institutional leaders to recognize that prevention efforts also need resource allocation. **If institutions are only devoting resources to response, they lose the opportunity to actually change the culture and prevent sexual violence from occurring in the first place.**

### 3 Creating Campus-Wide Response and Prevention Teams

The tasks of responding and preventing sexual violence require attention and dedicated time from staff throughout institutional leadership, not solely from a single professional or office. It can be difficult for students, staff, or administrators to look beyond their direct responsibilities to learn about what is going on in other parts of campus. Campus-wide teams for response and prevention can ensure a unified approach to each, where all parties are working together to ensure the seamless safety and recovery of the victim/survivor, fair adjudication, and comprehensive prevention efforts. Title IX coordinators and student conduct offices increasingly serve as lead resources in addressing sexual violence, however organizing successful response efforts may require a team that includes other administrators (counseling center, women's center, campus security/police, and/or identity advocacy centers). For example, the Clery Act stipulates that the campus issue timely warnings about crimes that pose a serious or ongoing threat, including some cases of sexual violence. Crafting messages that are sufficiently inclusive to reach an entire community necessitates review by a diverse team who can provide input and quickly coordinate follow up education, reinforce prevention measures, and offer support for the community. Employing a collaborative approach to sexual violence response and prevention can facilitate information sharing, maximize the ability of administrators to respond to the needs of the campus, and create a shared sense of responsibility. Institutional structures that are fluid and responsive to a variety of situations while tending to confidentiality are the most effective.

### 4 Implementing Diverse Response and Prevention Efforts

Institutional leaders must acknowledge that sexual violence and social identities are intertwined in complex ways. Simplifying and/or ignoring this intersectionality can result in ineffective and even damaging practices. Existing prevention measures must be evaluated to ensure inclusive practices. For example, how can a prevention program that is completed within fraternity and sorority life be inclusive of gay fraternities or multicultural fraternities and sororities? Similarly, how can institutions ensure consent campaigns are inclusive of all genders and sexual orientations? A single prevention strategy will not likely reach all students. Area studies programs and identity-based groups who work closely with under-represented populations (e.g., women's centers, multicultural centers, LGBT centers, women's studies, counseling centers) must be integrated into the work to address sexual violence (see, for example *Revising the Sexual Violence Continuum* [Guy, 2006]).

## 5

# Auditing Prevention and Response Initiatives

While many campuses have sexual violence prevention and response efforts in place, students, and even some administrators, may lack understanding of the breadth and depth of these programs and services. Audits serve to evaluate current resources to determine gaps and overlap in services and populations. An audit should be championed by senior leadership and may convene many perspectives from across campus and in the community to share what their respective initiatives bring toward achieving a holistic campus approach toward prevention and response. The Equity Scorecard (Bensimon & Malcolm, 2012) approach may be a good model for conducting an audit, with content informed by this Beyond Compliance monograph. Goals and outcomes should guide the development and implementation of programs and services, especially since campuses see ebbs and flows in programs and services addressing sexual violence. For example, a once-active men's anti-rape violence group on campus may no longer exist. If a program or service is no longer active or no longer meets a need, another program should be identified and implemented to meet new challenges. Similarly, if many initiatives meet a single outcome, it may be best to change some of the initiatives to better utilize resources.

## 6

# Providing Complementary and Consistent Messaging

All messaging efforts that address sexual violence should be tailored to meet the needs of diverse students in the context of specific collegiate environments. Institutional commitment to messaging efforts should be sought through collaboration with the various stakeholders, resource providers, and students. Clear, concise, and consistent messaging – in both print and online media sources – that include information about policies, prevention efforts, and resources for students who have experienced sexual violence can be valuable in centralizing information and communicating with various audiences. For example, if the health education center initiates a consent campaign, consistent consent messaging should be appropriately infused throughout facets of campus (i.e. new student orientation, RA training, orientation for athletes, new member education for fraternity/sorority life). Consistent messaging does not denote homogeneity, but rather complementarity; certain offices should retain the ability to provide messaging that is representative of its specific mission. For example, how does the women's or victim advocacy center (who might serve as a frontline confidential resource for survivors) have complimentary messaging with the Title IX deputy or student conduct office? Above all, institutions have a duty to eliminate confusing and contradictory language, which can limit access to resources and undermine prevention efforts.

# Leadership in Thought and Action

The work of higher education is not static, especially as it pertains to sexual violence prevention and response. As expectations continue to evolve, leaders in higher education must provide strong leadership to create meaningful culture change. As a profession, we sit at a critical political, legislative, social, and cultural crossroad. We must actively contribute to the discourse and question taken-for-granted assumptions about the problems and solutions set forth thus far.

**College student educators must also turn our gaze inward to develop critical consciousness of our intentional and unintentional complicity with a culture that is supportive of sexual violence.** For instance, how might our individual and institutional use of language (such as, “they raped and pillaged my budget”) or permissive attitudes (such as tacit support of date auctions or ignoring sexist or homophobic themes of fraternity recruitment events or athletic team parties), serve to minimize sexual violence and reinforce the structures that permit the status quo to reign on campus. As we cultivate this critical consciousness, we must incorporate campus and community expertise, feminist and queer allies, and social

justice approaches to prevent sexual violence and foster greater equity and justice.

Higher education leaders must be able to translate knowledge and awareness of the changing landscape of sexual violence and systemic roots of sexual violence into active leadership in thought and action. In order to dismantle oppressive structures, deploy social justice advocacy, speak out/up, and create safe and brave spaces, student affairs professionals must be provided ample opportunity to lead in thought and action toward this end. This leadership may take the form of academic projects for graduate students, philosophical training for new professionals, and implementation of policy and practice that is both attentive to compliance while being ever-mindful of the needs of individuals experiencing and living through trauma on our campuses. Student affairs educators, from graduate students in student affairs preparation programs and new professionals, to faculty and senior student affairs officers, will become champions of culture change when we develop the capacity and competence to create a holistic and coordinated approach to sexual violence prevention and response.

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# Resources

- [The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination \(SaVE\) Act](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter, 2011](#)
- [Factsheet: Violence Against Women Act](#)
- [Healthy Sexuality for Sexual Violence Prevention: A Review of Curriculum-Based Approaches](#)
- [It's On Us campaign](#)
- [Jeanne Clery Act](#)
- [Men Can Stop Rape](#)
- [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)
- [Preventing Sexual Violence on College Campuses: Lessons from Research and Practice](#)
- [Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence](#)
- [Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance, 2001](#)
- [Revisioning the Sexual Violence Continuum](#)
- [Shifting the Paradigm: Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault, American College Health Association](#)
- [Student Conduct Administration & Title IX: Gold Standard Practices for Resolution of Allegations of Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses](#)
- [White House Report – Not Alone](#)