

Guidelines for responding to disclosures of sexual assault

A resource for staff and students in responding to a person who discloses they have been sexually assaulted.

Responding to and supporting someone who has been sexually assaulted can be complex. It is important to remain compassionate, respectful, and supportive, and ensure they are able to access relevant resources.

01

Attend to Safety

Determine whether there are any immediate risks to the person's wellbeing and safety.

For immediate assistance of police or ambulance call 000

For on-campus security call 1800 675 559

02

Listen and be supportive

Whilst a person may disclose a sexual assault, it should not be assumed this means they wish to make a formal report to anyone.

Listen without interrupting. Do not ask for additional details. Do not ask 'why' questions - these questions carry blame. Do not get angry on their behalf - they have enough to deal with without worrying about you. Do not assume you know how they feel - everyone experiences assault differently.

Validate the person's experience by acknowledging their distress. Saying 'I am sorry for what has happened' is heard as 'I believe you'; saying 'What happened is a crime' is heard as 'This is not your fault', saying 'I will do what I can to find help' is heard as 'You are not alone'.

Treat what is shared with you confidentially, do not share with others without permission. Assist the person to access the specialist Sexual Assault Services.

Allow them to make their own decisions.

03

Connect in with the specialist Sexual Assault Service - free and confidential

Help Lines: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732 National line 24 hours)

Sexual Assault (Queensland 7.30am --11.30pm) 1800 010 120

Specialist Services:

Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service (07) 47757555 (connect with service after hours via 4226 0000 Sexual Crimes Unit)

Cairns Sexual Assault Service (07) 4031 3590 (connect with the service after hours via 4759 9743 Cairns Hospital)

Tablelands Sexual Assault Service (7) 4091 4036 (9am - 5pm only)

Queensland Health services:

Mt Isa Sexual Assault (Mt Isa Hospital) (07) 4744 4447

Mackay Sexual Health and Assault Services (07) 4968 3919

Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital Sexual Assault Response Team (07) 3646 5207

The specialist Sexual Assault Services will meet the person in a safe and private place, and offer ways to help manage the physical and emotional effects of sexual assault.

They will explain and assist with legal and medical options - including any emergency health care or forensic examinations, and any decisions about reporting to Police.

They can advise and assist with access to the support JCU can provide to continue with studies or work. They will ensure the person's decisions are communicated and respected.

04

Assistance to continue with study and work

JCU has dedicated Sexual Misconduct Officers who provide a single point of contact. The Sexual Misconduct Officers can assist with working out what support a person needs to continue with studying or working, regardless of who perpetrated the assault. Support includes, for example, safety plans, short term emergency housing, or changes to class scheduling, assessment, or work reporting lines. Support can be provided without identifying the other person/people involved.

Sexual Misconduct Officers are Chief of Staff - Vanessa Cannon (07) 47814078 | Manager Student Equity and Wellbeing - Larissa Siliezar (07) 47814538 or e: smo@jcu.edu.au

05

Reporting Options

To report a sexual assault to Queensland Police contact <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/adultassault/report/> You can make an anonymous report to Police.

To make a Report or Complaint to JCU contact the Sexual Misconduct Officers or visit www.jcu.edu.au/safety-and-wellbeing/report-an-incident.

It is possible to make an anonymous Report to JCU, and it is possible to make a Report to JCU without identifying any other person/people involved.

06

Take Care of Yourself

It can be difficult and confronting to support someone impacted by sexual violence. You can call the Helplines or Specialist Services listed above to confidentially debrief.

Students can also speak to a counsellor at Student Equity and Wellbeing (Townsville 4781 4711 or Cairns 4232 1150), and staff can call Benestar 1300 360 364.