

Guidelines for responding to disclosures of sexual harassment



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

It is important to remain compassionate, respectful, and supportive.

1

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

2

Listen and be supportive - It can be very hard for someone to disclose sexual harassment. Give the person your full attention. Speak calmly, let them tell you at their own pace, without interrupting or asking direct questions about the experience. Silences are okay. Letting someone take charge of what they disclose enables them to reclaim some control.

Believe them - Do not ask 'why' questions – these questions carry blame and judgement. 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 to you is never okay' 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'

Maintain confidentiality - Treat what is shared with you confidentially, do not share with others without permission.

3

Refer to support - Connect in with a Sexual Misconduct Officer

JCU has dedicated Sexual Misconduct Officers who provide a single point of contact for any person who has been subjected to sexual harassment, or to a person who is providing support.

The Sexual Misconduct Officers can assist with connecting to counselling services, and working out what support a person needs to continue with studying or working. Support can include 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.

The Sexual Misconduct Officers, with HR Business Partners as required, can also discuss options for addressing the harassment itself. JCU will act in line with the wishes of the person who has been subjected to sexual harassment.

Sexual Misconduct Officers are Vanessa Cannon, Chief of Staff (07) 4781 4078 or mob 0419 245 992 | Nola Kuilboer, Executive Officer (07) 4781 4929 or mob 0415 163 290 | Damian Dunne, Diversity and Equity Consultant, HR (07) 4232 1136 or mobile 0436 645630. Or e: smo@jcu.edu.au

4

Reporting Options

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. To make a report or complaint to JCU contact the Sexual Misconduct Officers or use online report form on the JCU Safe App or at www.jcu.edu.au/safety-and-wellbeing

You can make a report of sexual harassment to the Queensland Human Rights Commission at any time. www.qhrc.qld.gov.au 1300 130670

5

Take Care of Yourself

It can be difficult to support someone who has disclosed to you. Confidential support is available to you from a Sexual Misconduct Officer. Students can also speak to a counsellor at Student Equity and Wellbeing 1800 246 446, staff can call EAP Lifeworks 1800 604 640.