

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.

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



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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

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Listen and be supportive - It can be very hard for someone to disclose sexual assault. 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.

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Refer to support - Connect in with the specialist Sexual Assault Services - free and confidential

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 can 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 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.

Specialist Services:

Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service (07) 47757555 (connect after hours by calling 4759 9711)
Cairns Sexual Assault Service (07) 40313590 (connect after hours by calling 4226 0000 Cairns Hospital)
Tablelands Sexual Assault Service (07) 4091 4036 (9am - 5pm)
Mackay Women's Sexual Assault Service (07) 4953 1788
Brisbane - BRISSC (07) 3391 0004

Queensland Health services:

Thursday Island - Women's Support Service (Sexual Health Clinic) (07) 4069 0413
Mackay Sexual Health and Assault Services (07) 4968 3919
Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital Sexual Assault Response Team (07) 3646 5207
Mount Isa - NorthWest Family Advocacy Unit Counsellor (07) 4744 4088

Phone help lines: National 24 hours: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) Queensland Sexual Assault line (DV Connect) 7.30am --11.30pm: 1800 010 120

Refer to support – Assistance to continue work or study

JCU has dedicated Sexual Misconduct Officers who provide a single point of contact. They can assist with working out what support a person needs to continue with studying or working. Support can include safety plans, 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 Vanessa Cannon, Chief of Staff (07) 47814078 or mob 0419 245 992 | Nola Kuilboer, Executive Officer (07) 4781 4929 or mob 0415 163 290 | Damian Dunne, Diversity & Equity Consultant, HR (07)42321136 or mob 0436 645630 or e: smo@jcu.edu.au

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Reporting Options

To make a report or complaint to JCU contact the Sexual Misconduct Officers or use the report form on the JCU Safe App or at www.jcu.edu.au/safety-and-wellbeing
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 report a sexual assault to Queensland Police - <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/adultassault/report> You can make an anonymous report to Police.

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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, or the Helplines/Services listed above. Students can also speak to a counsellor at Student Equity and Wellbeing 1800 246 446, staff can call EAP Lifeworks 1800 604 640.

www.jcu.edu.au/safety-and-wellbeing

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