

# 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.

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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 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.

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## 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 Chief of Staff - Vanessa Cannon (07) 4781 4078 or mobile 0419 245 992 | Manager Student Equity and Wellbeing - Larissa Siliezar (07) 4781 4538 | Damian Dunne, Diversity and Equity Consultant, Human Resources (07) 4232 1136 or mobile 0436 645630. Or e: smo@jcu.edu.au

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## 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 at <https://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](http://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au) 1300 130670

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## Take Care of Yourself

It can be difficult and confronting to support someone impacted by sexual harassment. Students can confidentially debrief by speaking to a counsellor at Student Equity and Wellbeing (Townsville 4781 4711 or Cairns 4232 1150), and staff can call EAP Lifeworks 1800 604 640. Sexual Misconduct Officers can also provide support.

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