

# 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, call 999 for police or 995 for ambulance For on-campus security call 6709 3892

**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 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 61-7 4781 4078 or mob 61-419 245 992 | Nola Kuilboer, Executive Officer 61-7 4781 4929 or mob 61-415 163 290 . Or e: [smo@jcu.edu.au](mailto:smo@jcu.edu.au)

**4**

## **Reporting Options**

It is possible to anonymously report sexual misconduct to JCU, and it is possible to do so without identifying any other person/people involved. To let JCU know about sexual misconduct, contact the Sexual Misconduct Officers or use the online sexual misconduct form at [www.jcu.edu.au/respect/singapore](http://www.jcu.edu.au/respect/singapore)

**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.

2 November 2023