

GIVING SUPPORT

When someone discloses to you that they have been subjected to sexual violence, *listen to them, believe them and validate them.*



It can help to use the acronym **CLEAR** to remember these steps:



Confirm their immediate safety and find privacy.

Listen without judgment

Ensure confidentiality

Assist them with support and information

Respect their choices

CONFIRM THEIR IMMEDIATE SAFETY AND FIND PRIVACY

If an assault happened recently, make sure the survivor is in a safe location away from the perpetrator.

If their physical safety or the safety of any community member is at risk - call 911 or contact Campus Security at 250-370-3075.

FIND A SAFE PLACE TO TALK

Disclosures are sensitive, personal, and private matters. Find a comfortable, private place to have your disclosure conversation. Make adjustments to the setting to ensure privacy and comfort.

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LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Survivors may be very apprehensive about sharing their personal, difficult information for the first time. A supportive response can make a big difference. Here are some ways to communicate support and concern:

Helpful responses:

- Let the survivor control the pace of the conversation
- Listen carefully and without judgment
- Acknowledge the courage it took to come forward
- Give them time to decide what they'd like to do next

Unhelpful responses:

- Questioning the survivor's behaviour or experience
- Making dismissive or victim-blaming statements
- Interrupting or asking for specific details about the incident
- Making physical contact without their consent

The college may be required to breach confidentiality in cases where:

- An individual is identified as being at imminent risk of harming themselves or another.
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that members of the college community or wider community may be at risk of harm.
- It is necessary to do so in order to promote fairness of process for all parties involved.
- Notification and/or action is required by law, other college policies, or an external body with proper authority (ex. if one of the people involved is a minor, or if a judge subpoenas the college's case records).

ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY

Knowing that one's personal information will be treated confidentially is essential in creating the safety required for someone to feel comfortable enough to disclose sexual violence, and to seek support.

Tell the person that you will respect their privacy and the confidentiality of their personal information to the fullest extent possible.

In rare cases, in accordance with the Sexual Violence Policy, the college may be required to breach confidentiality. A student will be notified by the Office of Student Support if confidentiality needs to be breached in accordance with privacy legislation and applicable laws and policies.



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ASSIST THEM WITH SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

An important part of supporting someone who has experienced sexual violence is to provide them with **information about their options** for support and resolution.

Navigating college and community resources can be challenging. A good place to start is to ask them what support looks like for them. See Services for a full range of options.

If they have **recently experienced sexual violence or assault**, recommend that they contact the **Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic 24/7 at 1-888-494-3888** where they can meet with a support worker and a specially trained forensic nurse examiner. Here, they will receive the appropriate medical examination, medication, crisis support, connections to community resources, and reporting options. Alternately, they may choose to go to a hospital emergency department.

- If they choose not to seek medical support, and they are a student, recommend that they contact the **Counselling Centre** on campus or the **Office of Student Support**
- If they choose not to seek medical or professional support, encourage them to tell a trusted friend or family member.

Recommend they speak directly to the Office of Student Support, in order to learn about the options for resolution of situations involving sexual violence.

The office can assist with:

- Safety planning
- Referrals to medical and community support services
- Self-care resources
- Academic and workplace accommodations
- Understanding available reporting options
- Navigating systems and resources within the College and the community

Ask the person what support looks like for them. It's important for the person to leave your conversation with a sense of a positive next step.



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RESPECT THEIR CHOICES

Remind the person making the disclosure that there are different options for how to proceed toward resolving the situation, including receiving support and taking no further action. The college respects their right to proceed according to their preferred choice and their readiness.

Each survivor has their own personal experience, emotions, and ways of coping. There is no right or wrong way for someone to act when telling their story of sexual violence. These responses can be a common reaction to sexual violence or misconduct:

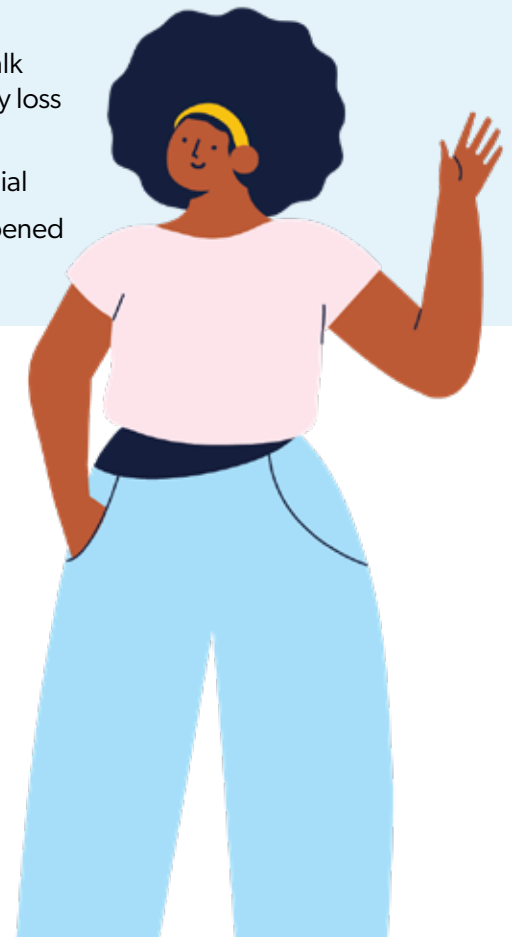
EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

- Sadness, fear, grief, or anger
- Shame, self-doubt, or self-blame
- Anxiety, panic, or hyper-vigilance
- Shock
- Flatness or calm

MENTAL RESPONSES

- Hesitance or reluctance to talk about it
- Confusion or memory loss
- Distraction and inability to concentrate
- Disbelief or denial
- Uncertainty about what happened

What to expect when someone discloses?



PRACTICING SELF-CARE

Whether you are a student or an employee, it is important to respect the limits of your knowledge and skills. Remember, you may not be an expert in this area and you don't have to have all the answers. It can also be challenging to give or receive a disclosure and have a disclosure conversation. Practicing self-care means asking for what you need.

If you feel that you need to debrief your experience with a professional, and you are a Camosun student, you can contact the Counselling Centre or the Office of Student Support.

If you are an employee, you can contact your Dean or Director, or the Employee and Family Assistance Program.