



Sexual Assault Prevention for Graduate Students

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Introduction

Welcome

Interactivity Audio Script:

Welcome to Sexual Assault Prevention for Graduate Students -You Can Make a Difference.

This course provides information about critical topics affecting graduate and professional students everywhere — relationship abuse or violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and stalking.

If you're thinking, "But I've been married for five years," or, "I've already had this training through work," or, "Maybe undergraduates need this training, but those issues don't affect me!" it's important to remember that these issues can impact anyone, regardless of their job or position, marital status, age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

Even if you have not been directly impacted by these issues, chances are you know — or will know — someone who is.

Introduction to the Course

Video Script:

Introduction to the Course.

Graduate school is an exciting and challenging time — full of ideas, people, and opportunities that are likely different from many of the educational or professional experiences you've had so far. This course will help you explore how your role as a graduate student, as well as your life experiences, may prepare you to recognize situations of potential harm and intervene to help someone.

In this course, you will:

- Learn strategies to help you recognize and take action in risky or harmful situations.
- Explore options for how to respond if someone who has experienced this behavior comes to you for help.
- Learn how to access resources for support if you're personally affected by these issues.

Keep in mind that the topics addressed in this course can be very sensitive for some individuals. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, we encourage you to access the resources provided in the menu and to seek out services provided by your school and your local community.

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Values, Identities and Relationships

What are your values?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What are your values?

This section is focused on your values and identities, and how they may have changed — or perhaps, been reinforced — as a result of the educational and professional experiences and relationships you've had.

Take a moment to reflect on your values. Reflection may give you a chance to interpret your experiences, learn from them, and clarify what you want for yourself personally and professionally, as well as what you expect from the relationships you have with others.

As you work through this section, consider the following questions:

- What values influence the choices you make in your daily life?
- How have you responded (or how do you think you should respond) in situations where your values are challenged?

What is a “good” relationship?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What is a “good” relationship?

Our values influence our relationships. Most of us seek out and want “good” relationships — with family, friends, colleagues, and in dating or more intimate relationships and partnerships. But what exactly is a “good” relationship?

Select the expandable panels to learn more about the topic. You must open all the panels to continue.

Interactivity Text:

[Tab 1]: Honesty.

Honesty means being truthful, genuine, and sincere in your words and actions.

[Tab 2]: Individuality.

Individuality means valuing the things that make us unique, including encouraging one another to pursue professional goals, explore personal interests, and spend time with friends.

[Tab 3]: Respect.

Respect means accepting someone for who they are and what they stand for, including their boundaries.

[Tab 4]: Trust.

Trust means having confidence in someone; feeling physically and emotionally safe with them.

[Tab 5]: Communication.

Communication means exchanging thoughts and ideas in an honest and open manner; speaking up for yourself while respecting the right of others to do the same.

[Tab 6]: Maturity.

Maturity means staying calm and thinking clearly in difficult situations; being open-minded and accepting constructive criticism; taking responsibility and accountability for individual actions.

Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Interactivity Audio Script:

Maintaining Healthy Relationships.

Graduate school is a rewarding and challenging experience, but the commitment it requires can make it difficult to juggle other priorities in your life. Priorities may include spending meaningful time with friends, family, and significant others, and even making time to care for yourself.

Select the previous and next buttons to review the cards. You must review all the cards to continue.

Interactivity Text:

[Carousel 1]: Open and Honest Communication.

Open and Honest Communication.

Being open and honest about your commitments, and when you can and can't spend time with a spouse, partner, friend, or family member, is an important part of maintaining respectful relationships. It may be helpful to communicate about when you're stressed or feeling overwhelmed, and the needs and expectations of those who are close to you.

[Carousel 2]: Planning Ahead and Keeping Commitments.

Planning Ahead and Keeping Commitments.

It can be easy to become immersed in coursework or research and forget that you're more than "just" a graduate student. One way of ensuring that you're maintaining a balance is to plan ahead. Whether that means planning to meet up with friends, spend time with family, or go on a date-night, scheduling downtime can be helpful for your work-life (or school-life) balance.

[Carousel 3]: Setting Boundaries.

Setting Boundaries.

When you do make plans with others, do what you can to keep those commitments and to be “in the moment.” Set boundaries around when you’re going to put work aside and focus your attention on those, you’re spending time with. This can make your time with them more meaningful and allows you to show them that you value and appreciate them.

[Carousel 4]: Prioritizing “You” Time.

Prioritizing “You” Time.

In the same way that it’s important to make time for the important people in your life, it’s also important to make time for “you.” We sometimes neglect to set aside time for ourselves — to reflect, relax, and recuperate from our day-to-day obligations. Taking care of yourself enables you to fully contribute to your relationships with others as well.

Recognizing Relationship Violence or Abuse

Interactivity Audio Script:

Recognizing Relationship Violence or Abuse.

Some people assume that relationship abuse, or “intimate partner violence,” only consists of physical harm. However, relationship abuse comes in many different forms — some of which are more subtle and difficult to identify than others.

Select each type of abuse to learn more about what they mean and what signs to look for.

Interactivity Text:

[Tab 1]: Academic Abuse.

Academic Abuse.

This kind of abuse is characterized by actions that monopolize someone’s work or study time and negatively affect their academic success.

It may include the following behaviors:

- Deliberately starting an argument before an exam, project deadline, or presentation
- Using insults to undermine a partner’s academic status, grades, intelligence, or ability to succeed
- Undermining academic performance by preventing a partner from attending class, study groups, or department events
- Sabotaging a partner’s relationships with other students or with faculty by spreading lies or gossip about them

[Tab 2]: Emotional Abuse and Isolation.

Emotional Abuse and Isolation.

Abuse of this type is characterized by behaviors that are intended to psychologically hurt or confuse someone, or to keep them from forming or maintaining connections with others. These behaviors can be subtle or more overt and may include:

- Making someone feel bad about themselves or unworthy of being treated well
- Spreading rumors or lies about someone
- Pressuring someone to choose them over completing coursework or job responsibilities, or spending time with friends or family
- Pressuring someone to quit their job, activities, or program, or to turn down internships or other professional or academic opportunities
- Minimizing or denying abuse, or blaming a partner for abusive actions

[Tab 3]: Financial Abuse.

Financial Abuse.

Financial abuse is characterized by behavior that is intended to manipulate and control someone by threatening their financial stability or independence, and access to financial resources. Manipulation involving children or other family members (financial or otherwise) is often characterized by behaviors that are intended to harm or undermine someone's relationship with children or family members or threatening to take someone's children away from them.

These behaviors can be difficult to identify, but may include:

- Preventing a person from getting or keeping a job
- Refusing to provide agreed-upon financial support related to child support, utility bills, rent, tuition, or other needs
- Withholding financial information and/or controlling access to shared money
- Threatening to take children away or falsely reporting a person for child abuse or neglect
- Telling lies to children or other family members about a person in order to frighten them or undermine their trust
- Using children to make a person feel guilty about spending time on their schoolwork or job duties

[Tab 4]: Stalking and Intimidation.

Stalking and Intimidation.

Abuse of this nature is characterized by attempts to control another person through fear, threats, and intimidation. Some examples include:

- Excessively monitoring someone's behavior in an attempt to control what they do and with whom
- Continuing to contact someone who has asked you to stop contacting them
- Tracking someone through technology or social media
- Blackmailing a partner with knowledge of illegal or unethical activities

- Threatening to share harmful, personal, or embarrassing information (for example, photos) with a partner’s family, friends, colleagues, or professional network
- Threatening to end the relationship, harm themselves, or take their own life

Supporting a Friend

Interactivity Audio Script:

Supporting a Friend.

Now that you have been introduced to the signs of relationship abuse, take a moment to read and respond to a few scenarios to apply your knowledge.

Interactivity Text:

You've recently become friends with Jaden, another student in your program, and you've been spending a lot of time studying together over the past few weeks. Lately, when you're hanging out, Jaden seems on edge, checking their phone a lot and worrying out loud about "getting back in time" so their partner doesn't get mad.

Select the correct answer, then Submit. You must select the correct answer to continue.

How should you respond?

[Question-Text]:

You've recently become friends with Jaden, another student in your program, and you've been spending a lot of time studying together over the past few weeks. Lately, when you're hanging out, Jaden seems on edge, checking their phone a lot and worrying out loud about "getting back in time" so their partner doesn't get mad.

Select the correct option and Submit.

How should you respond?

[Options]:

1. Hey, are you feeling OK about going home? You seem a bit worried, so I wanted to check in with you to see if everything is OK, or if there's something you'd like to talk about."
2. "You're always on your phone — you sure this is a good time for us to work or are you busy with something else?"
3. "It sounds like your partner is really controlling. I was in a relationship like that once and honestly, you need to tell them to back off."

[Answer]:

"Hey, are you feeling OK about going home? You seem a bit worried, so I wanted to check in with you to see if everything is OK, or if there's something you'd like to talk about."

[Feedback]:

[Feedback 1]

That's Right!

Good choice. Expressing your concern for your friend is a great way to communicate that you care. "Checking in" is a good, non-confrontational, non-judgmental approach.

[Feedback 2]

Not Quite.

You've noticed that Jaden appears anxious, so instead of criticizing or pressuring them, it would be better to gently acknowledge that they seem distracted or upset. Offering support — even just by listening — is a better approach. Try again.

[Feedback 3]

Not Quite.

Giving unsolicited advice undermines Jaden's agency and could make their situation worse. It would be better to express your support, listen, acknowledge your friend's feelings, and be respectful of their decisions. Try again.

Darrell's Dilemma

Interactivity Audio Script:

Darrell's Dilemma.

Interactivity Text:

You and Darrell have worked together for several years and have become pretty good friends. You've offered support to Darrell in the past when he's told you about his partner putting him down and criticizing him. Still, you're surprised when you're leaving work and see him crying in his car in the parking lot. When you stop and ask him what's wrong, he shares that when he tried to end his relationship, his partner said that he would take his own life. He doesn't know what to do.

What should you say to Darrell?

Options:

- "That's super serious. Have you all been experiencing more relationship stress lately or do you think he's always been depressed?"
- "I'm so sorry to hear that. I know that you've been going through a lot lately. Look, suicidal statements are really serious, so he needs to talk to a qualified person for support immediately."

- “I’m so sorry to hear that and, you know, we’ve talked about this before — remember what we said about you being firm about leaving? I don’t want you to have to keep going through this situation again and again.”

Correct Option: 2

“I’m so sorry to hear that. I know that you’ve been going through a lot lately. Look, suicidal statements are really serious, so he needs to talk to a qualified person for support immediately.”

Feedback:

option 1: Not Quite

Suggesting that Darrell is responsible for his partner’s threats is not supportive. Suicidal statements are very serious and can be experienced as a form of emotional abuse if they create pressure for a person to stay in a relationship. Try again.

option 2: That’s Right!

Good choice. Expressing empathy and concern for Darrell while acknowledging the severity of his partner’s words and offering resources is a really positive way to show him you support him.

option 3: Not Quite

Implying that Darrell has not been firm enough about leaving his relationship can come off as blaming him. Suicidal statements can be a form of emotional abuse, and it’s not Darrell’s fault that his partner’s behavior is creating pressure for him to stay. Try again.

It’s Academic

Interactivity Audio Script:

It’s Academic.

Interactivity Text:

Tori is one of the smartest students in your cohort, so you’re excited that you’ll be co-authoring a journal article with her. However, lately she’s been missing project deadlines, is really inconsistent about answering emails and showing up for meetings you’ve scheduled, and she just seems exhausted all of the time. You’re concerned that she’s not prepared for your meeting with the lab director next week. When you ask Tori what’s up, she reveals that every time she has an important deadline, her boyfriend starts a big fight with her. This has prevented her from focusing on her research and getting enough sleep.

How should you respond to what Tori has just shared with you?

Options:

1. “Oh wow, OK, I didn’t know. Well, do you think you can find some time to prepare your part before our meeting next week? We’re running out of time to be able to submit this article for review.”
2. “Hmm. Yeah, I know a lot of people who have stress in their relationships because of their research and coursework, so maybe that’s the situation. Are you may be saying things to him you don’t mean just because you’re stressed?”
3. “I’m so sorry to hear that he’s been acting that way. You don’t deserve that. Do you know about the local resources that you can connect with for help?”

Correct Option: 3

“I’m so sorry to hear that he’s been acting that way. You don’t deserve that. Do you know about the local resources that you can connect with for help?”

Feedback:

option 1: Not Quite

Tori’s boyfriend may be emotionally abusing her. Deliberately starting an argument before a deadline is one way that academic abuse occurs. It’s important to recognize the implications of what Tori is sharing with you and express your support for her. Try again.

option 2: Not Quite

This response actually blames Tori for her boyfriend’s behavior. When someone discloses that they’re possibly experiencing any kind of relationship abuse, the best thing you can do is to express your concern and remind them that you support them. Try again.

option 3: That’s Right!

Good choice. Expressing your concern for Tori shows her that you care about and support her. This response asserts that Tori’s boyfriend’s behavior is wrong and that Tori, like all of us, deserves a respectful, caring partner.

A Stressful Situation

Interactivity Audio Script:

A Stressful Situation.

Interactivity Text:

Your friend David from your Business Communication class suddenly stopped logging into your online course discussion board about two weeks into the semester. You email him to check in and he tells you that he’s withdrawing from the class. You’re surprised, because this was the last class, he needed in order to graduate this spring.

David writes back to explain that his partner wants him to move out because his partner said that David’s school work is preventing him from contributing to the relationship. You know that

David and his partner made an agreement that his partner would help cover living expenses and tuition while David finished the program.

How should you respond to David?

Options:

1. "I'm so sorry — that doesn't seem fair. Do you think you could talk him into letting you live there for the next few months just so that you could finish this class and then you can move out?"
2. "We all get caught up in school work sometimes, so maybe you should apologize and see if he changes his mind. You might also want to see if you can get a part-time job — to show him you know what it means to work hard."
3. "Wow, that's surprising. I know you're working hard so this must be upsetting. Is there anything I can do? I remember learning about the resources available through the university for grad students in these kinds of situations. Can I share those with you?"

Correct Option: 3

"Wow, that's surprising. I know you're working hard so this must be upsetting. Is there anything I can do? I remember learning about the resources available through the university for grad students in these kinds of situations. Can I share those with you?"

Feedback:

option 1: Not Quite

David's partner seems to be manipulating him. Additionally, they had a financial agreement and his partner has broken that commitment. Try again.

option 2: Not Quite

Actually, this kind of response blames David and dictates to him what you think he should do, instead of providing him with support and encouraging him to think about what he thinks is the right next step. Try again.

option 3: That's Right!

Good choice. Listening to and reinforcing him are supportive ways to show him that you recognize that what's happened to him is hurtful and that you want to help. You've also reminded him that there are resources on campus for additional support.

Federal and State Laws: Relationship Violence

Interactivity Audio Script:

Federal and State Laws.

Relationship Violence

It's important to be aware of federal and state laws defining relationship violence.

Explore federal and state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

Review your state's laws.

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

Dropdown: View your state's laws

Explore federal law definitions using the dropdown below.

Dropdown: View federal laws

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

Video Script:

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972.

Title IX is the federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex or gender stereotyping — including sexual harassment and violence, relationship violence, and stalking — in any educational, athletic, or other program or activity of a federally funded school, if it jeopardizes a person's equal access to education that Title IX is designed to protect. Title IX also prohibits discrimination against pregnant or parenting students.

Title IX requires schools receiving federal funding to appoint a person who is responsible for coordinating a school's efforts to address sex or gender-based harassment or violence, ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities or benefits, and prevent retaliation against someone who reports, or participates in an investigation or proceeding involving, sexual misconduct. This person is identified as the Title IX coordinator.

Summary

Video Script:

Summary.

Most of us want to be, and are, engaging in healthy relationships of all kinds — with friends, family members, colleagues, mentors, and dating or intimate partners.

Key Takeaways

- **Know Your Values**

Your values are the beliefs, principles, and ideas that are important to you. The people in your life who are most important to you probably share many of the same values as you.

- **Maintain Healthy Relationships**

Graduate school can pose some unique challenges to maintaining healthy relationships; however, open and honest communication and investing some time away from work are good ways to keep healthy relationships strong.

- **Support With Care**

If a friend discloses that they're in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, the best way to show them you care is to thoughtfully express your concern, listen, avoid being judgmental, and encourage them to seek support and resources.

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Sexual Harassment and Stalking

Sexual Harassment and Stalking

Interactivity Text:

Defining Sexual Harassment.

Respect is an integral part of healthy personal and professional relationships, so it's important to be aware of behavior or hurtful conduct that can, under certain circumstances, have a strong, negative effect on relationships and the learning environment.

Title IX prohibits the following types of sexual harassment:

- Rape and sexual assault
- Relationship violence
- Stalking that is based on sex
- Unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive, creating a "hostile environment" that effectively denies a person equal access to an education program or activity
- An institution's employee conditioning a grade or other educational benefit or service on an individual submitting to unwelcome sexual conduct (called "quid pro quo")

Title IX applies to sexual harassment that occurs in an educational program or activity against a person who is located in the U.S.

Anyone can experience or commit sexual harassment, including students, faculty, and staff.

In this section you will:

- Identify different types of sexual harassment
- Identify and interpret the nuances of power in relationship roles
- Define stalking

Power and Responsibility

Interactivity Audio Script:

Power and Responsibility.

One of the challenges that comes with being a graduate student and balancing all of your various roles is that each of them puts you in a different position of power and authority. For example, you might begin your day as a teacher and then shift to working with your advisor on a research project, and then move into the role of a student attending a class.

As you transition between these roles, you adopt different positions of power in your relationships with others. Some of these positions may affect how you experience or become aware of issues like sexual harassment, and the responsibilities you may have.

Select the previous and next buttons to review the cards. You must review all the cards to continue.

Interactivity Text:

[Carousel 1]: Student-Peer Relationships.

Student-Peer Relationships.

Graduate students come from all kinds of cultural and academic backgrounds, so it's important to be respectful of others' diversity when engaging in classroom discussions or in general conversation among peers. It's a good idea to avoid assuming others will be OK with sexually suggestive remarks, jokes, or other types of comments about a person's age, appearance, gender, or position, even if they aren't intended to offend someone else.

These are all examples of disrespectful, and potentially hurtful, conduct.

[Carousel 2]: Teaching Assistant-Student Relationships.

Teaching Assistant-Student Relationships.

Many graduate students are also Teaching Assistants (TAs) in undergraduate programs. This puts them in positions of authority and decision-making — and potentially, in the position of being mentors to their students. Sometimes, students who have had harmful experiences choose to disclose to their TAs because the TA represents someone in a position of authority but, at the same time, someone who may be fairly close to the student's age and may be perceived as somewhat of a peer.

[Carousel 3]: Student-Faculty Relationships.

Student-Faculty Relationships.

A healthy relationship is one where the faculty member and the student communicate with one another clearly and professionally. In an advisor-advisee relationship, the role of the faculty member should be as a respectful, supportive resource and mentor to the student. However, student-faculty relationships can face challenges around power and authority.

Graduate students have the right to learn, research, and teach in a supportive and safe environment. Disrespectful, sexist, and other derogatory or unwanted comments about a student's sex, gender, age, or appearance can interfere with a student's right to feel safe and supported, and may be considered sexual harassment, if it becomes severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive to the point that it effectively denies a person access to educational opportunities or benefits.

Identifying Sexual Harassment

Interactivity Audio Script:

Identifying Sexual Harassment.

Now that you have reviewed various examples, take a moment to see whether you can identify warning signs of sexual harassment.

Read each scenario and think about whether it describes conduct that could lead to sexual harassment. Flip over each card to reveal the answer.

Interactivity Text:

[Flip Card 1]: Name Calling.

Name Calling.

In a Gender Studies class, a student consistently uses derogatory terms to describe individuals who identify as bisexual.

Result

Threatening or intimidating comments targeted at particular students are not protected by the First Amendment. These comments would be uncomfortable for most students and, if they escalate, may create hostile environment sexual harassment that denies or negatively affects students' access to a school's educational programs or activities.

[Flip Card 2]: Compliments.

Compliments.

One of the tenured faculty in the History Department says, "I really like your voice; it has a sexy movie star quality" to a younger female Teaching Assistant.

Result.

This doesn't seem to be meant as a harmful comment, but remember: unlawful hostile environment sexual harassment is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to education. One in ten female graduate students at major research universities reported being sexually harassed by a faculty member. This comment could be a warning sign of sexual harassment, and power disparities may cause people with less power to think it's just part of the job or make it harder for them to report harassment for fear of repercussions.

[Flip Card 3]: Dinner Date.

Dinner Date.

A faculty member responds to a student's request for a recommendation letter with: "Let's discuss this over a date — dinner and drinks?"

Result

The invitation was in response to the student's request, so it could imply a "quid pro quo" proposition. Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when someone withholds an education decision or benefit contingent upon the student submitting to unwelcome sexual advances or conduct.

[Flip Card 4]: Too Close for Comfort.

Too Close for Comfort.

A group of students regularly meet on Fridays for a discussion session with their director. While telling a funny story to the group, the Director puts his arm around the student next to him and acts out part of his story, which embarrasses the student.

Result

A single instance of nonsexual conduct would not be considered sexual harassment, but a pattern of severe sexual misconduct by the Director could be considered sexual harassment — especially given the Director's position of power.

[Flip Card 5]: Texting.

Texting.

Students assigned to a group project exchange phone numbers and one of the group members sends numerous texts a day to another group member insisting that they decide on a time for the group to meet.

Result

Although frequent texting may be annoying, it doesn't appear as though the texts are so severe, pervasive, or objectively offensive that they deny equal access to education and therefore rise to the level of sexual harassment.

[Flip Card 6]: Congratulatory Hugs.

Congratulatory Hugs.

A first-year Research Assistant asks a student of hers to stay after class to talk. She hugs the student and congratulates him on submitting such a well-written paper.

Result

An unwelcome hug that makes the student feel uncomfortable could be interpreted as a sexual advance. Especially when an interaction is initiated by a person in a position of authority, it's safest to ask before touching someone.

Defining Stalking

Video Script:

Defining Stalking.

Another form of sexual harassment is stalking that is based on sex. Stalking is a pattern of unwanted contact or other attention that is repeated, intimidating, and causes a person to be fearful or suffer emotional distress.

Though state and federal laws may differ, stalking behaviors generally include, but are not limited to:

- Following or watching someone
- Unwanted and repeated face-to-face, phone, text, email, or other communication
- Constantly giving unwanted gifts
- Using other forms of technology to track or spy on someone

Coming up next, we'll explore a few scenarios involving different types of interactions, and you'll be asked to determine whether or not they're describing stalking behaviors.

Rethinking that Recommendation

Interactivity Audio Script:

Rethinking that Recommendation.

Now that you have been introduced to the signs of relationship abuse, take a moment to read and respond to a few scenarios to apply your knowledge. As you review this scenario, think about how you might respond if a friend were to share this experience with you.

Interactivity Text:

Marc, a friend from your cohort, recently wrote a recommendation letter for a former undergraduate student, Tatiana. Tatiana sent Marc an email thanking him profusely for submitting such a kind letter and offering to take Marc to coffee next time they saw each other on campus. Marc followed up by texting Tatiana to ask if she was interested in grabbing dinner and a drink instead. Tatiana didn't respond right away, so Marc texted again. After another day of no response from her, Marc called her and left a voicemail, where he jokingly said, "Hey, at this point, I'm re-thinking some of the good stuff I wrote about you in that recommendation letter!" He texted her a few hours later to apologize, thinking he may have offended her somehow. When you see Marc later that day, he tells you about the situation and you can see that he's upset.

[Question-Text]:

What should you say to Marc?

[Options]:

1. "You could try reaching out to her again, but through email and only to apologize."
2. "I'm sorry you're upset, but you need to leave her alone."

3. “You should have never texted or called her — don’t you realize how unprofessional and inappropriate that is?”

[Answer]: 2

“I’m sorry you’re upset, but you need to leave her alone.”

[Feedback]:

[Feedback 1]

Not Quite.

Marc should not reach out to Tatiana again. In general, personal and/or romantic relationships between graduate student teachers and undergraduate students are likely to raise warning signs of possible quid pro quo harassment. Try again.

[Feedback 2]

That’s Right!

Good choice. This response validates Marc’s feelings, but is also direct in advising him to stop contacting Tatiana.

[Feedback 3]

Not Quite.

Blaming Marc and making him feel badly about his actions isn’t the most supportive response. Try again.

Uncharitable Actions

Interactivity Audio Script

Uncharitable Actions.

As you review the following scenario, think about how you might respond if a friend were to share this experience with you.

Interactivity Text:

You and Sari, a third-year doctoral candidate, are in the Engineering program together and have become close friends over the past few years. She’s noticeably pregnant, and at a department meeting today you see the Chair rub his hands on her stomach and lean in to tell her that she “looks fabulous in her pregnancy glow,” and that he “hoped that she would put her academic career on hold to enjoy motherhood.” Sari looked confused, and didn’t respond to him.

[Question-Text]:

What should you do?

[Options]:

1. Let Sari know that you saw what happened, that you're sorry about what the Chair said, and ask if she is OK or if she wants to talk to you (or a confidential resource) about it.
2. The Chair inappropriately touched Sari's stomach and made potentially discriminatory comments to her. Because you're her friend, you should stand up for her by letting the Chair know what you saw.
3. It would be inappropriate to get involved because what you saw and overheard was between Sari and the Chair. You could also be putting yourself in a vulnerable position by getting involved, so in this case, you should let Sari resolve the issue herself.

[Answer]: 1

Let Sari know that you saw what happened, that you're sorry about what the Chair said, and ask if she is OK or if she wants to talk to you (or a confidential resource) about it.

[Feedback]:

[Feedback 1]

That's Right!

Good choice. The Chair's inappropriate touching of Sari's stomach combined with his problematic comments make his actions an egregious error—unwelcome physical touching and potentially discriminatory comments about her pregnancy. Title IX prohibits discrimination and harassment against pregnant or parenting students and employees. However, in this moment, empowering Sari to make a decision by providing her with support and access to the appropriate resources is the best way to act while respecting Sari's agency in the situation.

[Feedback 2]

Not Quite.

This kind of action takes away Sari's agency by not allowing her an opportunity to consider how she wants to respond. It would be better to let her know that you saw what happened and provide her with information about resources that are available to her. Try again.

[Feedback 3]

Not Quite.

You've recognized that Sari looked uncomfortable. You can show your support by letting her know that you saw what happened. Offering to talk and reminding her that there are resources to support her would be good ways of showing her you care. Try again.

Clear Communication

Interactivity Audio Script:

Clear Communication.

Think about the behavior that's described in the following scenario and then choose the best response.

Interactivity Text:

Megan and Layla have been together for about two years, but recently they went through a difficult break up. Since then, Layla sent Megan dozens of text messages, threatening to disclose Megan's identity to her family and to post private photos they took together — unless Megan responds to her. This made Megan really upset and angry, and she firmly told Layla to stop contacting her and also blocked Layla's number. Layla has Megan's course schedule, so she knows what nights she'll be on campus for class. She really wants to talk to Megan, so she decides to confront her in person after class.

[Question-Text]:

Is this potentially stalking behavior?

[Options]:

1. Yes, because Layla threatened her and is continuing to contact Megan after Megan has asked her to stop.
2. No, because Megan and Layla know one another very well and someone can't technically stalk someone they already know.
3. No, because Layla is trying to meet Megan in a safe, public place.

[Answer]:

Yes, because Layla threatened her and is continuing to contact Megan after Megan has asked her to stop.

[Feedback]:

[Feedback 1]

That's Right!

By making threats and continuing to contact Megan after she has been asked to stop, Layla's behavior may constitute stalking. Sharing private photos without Megan's consent may also be illegal.

[Feedback 2]

Not Quite.

It is, in fact, more likely that a person will be stalked by someone they know than by a stranger. Regardless of an existing or past relationship, every person has the right to end contact with someone. Try again.

[Feedback 3]

Not Quite.

Think about the choices Layla is making: she is showing up, unannounced and unwanted, to confront Megan when Megan has already asked her to stop contacting her. Try again.

Federal and State Laws: Stalking

Interactivity Audio Script:

Federal and State Laws: Stalking.

It's important to be aware of federal and state laws defining stalking.

Explore federal and state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

Review your state's laws

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

Dropdown: View your state's laws

Explore federal law definitions using the dropdown below.

Dropdown: View federal laws

Summary

Video Script:

Summary.

Sexual harassment and stalking are harmful behaviors that can have a negative impact on someone's academic or professional success. It's important to be able to recognize this kind of behavior and to know how to respond if you, or someone you care about, experiences it.

Key Takeaways

Understand Sexual Harassment

Title IX prohibits quid pro quo sexual harassment and hostile environment sexual harassment that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to educational programs or activities.

Understand Stalking

Title IX also prohibits stalking that is based on sex. Stalking is generally a pattern of unwanted contact or other attention that is repeated, intimidating, and causes a person to be fearful or suffer emotional distress.

Remember Resources

If someone you know discloses to you that they've experienced sexual harassment or stalking, remember to validate what they're telling you, remind them that it isn't their fault, and that there are resources available to help them.

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Consent, Coercion, and Taking Action

Communication is Key

Video Script:

Communication is Key.

Open communication is important to healthy relationships and respectful interactions. Communication plays a vital role in a variety of relationships — from friendships to relationships with other students, faculty and staff, and also with more intimate and/or sexual partners.

In this section, you will:

- Examine the concepts of consent and coercion.
- Identify and apply tactics to intervene if you see a problematic situation or behavior.

Defining Consent

Interactivity Audio Script:

Defining Consent.

Consent is an important part of communication — and asking for and giving consent isn't [only] about sexual activity. In your day-to-day life, you make decisions, set boundaries, respect other people's choices and expect others to do the same. In other words, you consent, or not, to different kinds of activities all the time.

This is true in relationships where both individuals are equal, as well as in those where there are differences in influence or social power.

Use the arrows below to explore the benefits of communication in forming positive relationships.

Interactivity Text:

[Carousel 1]: It's Natural and Healthy.

It's Natural and Healthy.

Communicating what you do and what you don't want is a normal, natural, and expected part of healthy communication, and it is reasonable to expect that others will do the same. Consent, whether that's agreeing to meet for coffee, sharing personal information with someone, or something more serious, like sexual activity, is a natural part of relationships.

[Carousel 2]: It Can Be Clarifying and Empowering.

It Can Be Clarifying and Empowering.

For any interaction that involves another person (whether it's sexual or not) it's the responsibility of the person initiating the activity to get the other person's consent. While it's possible to give non-verbal consent, using words is the clearest way to make sure that someone is agreeing to something. Clear indications of consent include a response that is given knowingly, explicitly, freely, mutually, and with obvious pleasure. It's also the most effective way to share exactly what you are and are not interested in doing.

[Carousel 3]: It's an Ongoing Process.

It's An Ongoing Process.

Only you can decide what's best for you — you have the power to choose and the right to change your mind about what you want at any point in an interaction. If you're initiating an activity, whether sexual or not, listen for and respect the other person's choices throughout the interaction. If you're unsure of what the other person is communicating, check in to ensure that you're both on the same page. Unclear communication is a signal to stop and clarify. Boundaries should be part of an ongoing discussion and consent to one act does not mean consent to other, similar acts.

Test Your Knowledge

Video Script:

Test Your Knowledge.

Whenever you make decisions that affect other people, you need to have their consent. Coming up next, we'll explore a few scenarios involving different types of interactions, and you'll be asked to determine whether or not the person initiating the activity has properly received consent.

Eva and Jake

Video Script:

Eva and Jake.

Eva: Hey. Now that we're hanging out more, there's this thing that you should know about me. Please ask before you hug me. I have a thing about being hugged out of the blue.

Jake: No problem. Thanks for letting me know. Is it OK to hug you now?

Eva: Yes

What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Audio Script:

[Question-Text]:

Did Jake receive consent from Eva?

[Options]:

Yes

No

[Answer]:

Yes

[Feedback]:

That's Right!

In this example, Eva does give Jake consent, which is important — even among friends. Eva told Jake about her personal boundaries, and Jake respected her wishes and asked to hug her, to which Eva responded with a direct, active, and enthusiastic, “yes!”

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite

In this example, Eva does give Jake consent, which is important — even among friends. Eva told Jake about her personal boundaries, and Jake respected her wishes and asked to hug her, to which Eva responded with a direct, active, and enthusiastic, “yes!”

A Couple of Weeks Later

Video Script:

A Couple of Weeks Later.

Narrator: This is an example of a conversation about consent. Consent is important, even among friends, and even when it's not related to sexual activity. Eva told Jake about her personal boundaries and Jake listened, respecting her wishes. He then asked her permission, and listened to her response before he hugged her.

In this situation, both people involved understood one another, and were in agreement with their actions. This scenario depicts two people with relatively equal power in the relationship. If this scenario was different, and for instance, a professor wished to hug a student, or an employer wished to hug an employee, the student or employee might not feel comfortable directly stating

their boundaries, and would instead use an indirect response, such as pulling away, or making an excuse like, “I have to go now.”

Eva: Whoa. Remember when talked about asking before hugging?

Jake: Yeah. But we’ve been friends for a while now, and I thought I could read you pretty well at this point.

Eva: No. I’m still at ask first. I’m always at ask first. If that ever changes, I’ll let you know.

Jake: Got it.

What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Text:

[Question-Text]:

Did Jake receive consent before hugging Eva?

[Options]:

Yes

No

[Answer]:

No

[Feedback]:

That's Right!

Jake assumed that because he’s known Eva for some time and has hugged her before, that he no longer needed to ask before hugging her again. But that’s not how consent works. What might seem comfortable and natural to one person may not be okay for somebody else. Asking permission before touching shows respect for others and is crucial in all relationships.

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite.

Jake assumed that because he’s known Eva for some time and has hugged her before, that he no longer needed to ask before hugging her again. But that’s not how consent works. What

might seem comfortable and natural to one person may not be okay for somebody else. Asking permission before touching shows respect for others and is crucial in all relationships.

Ben and Dai

Video Script:

Ben and Dai.

Watch the video and then respond to the question that follows.

Narrator: As their friendship evolved, Jake thought that because he knew Eva better, a hug without asking would be OK. Relying on assumptions, including body language, is risky because it can lead to misunderstandings. Asking before touching is respectful and the right choice.

Ben and Dai.

Ben: Do you want to go back to my place and have sex?

Dai: Yeah, for sure.

Ben: Whoa! (Dai slips). Gotcha there. You almost took a nosedive. On second thought, let's do that when we're both more sober and we can really enjoy ourselves.

Dai: No, I really want to know. Come on. I'm not even that drunk.

Ben: You know, I think I would rather wait.

Dai: Fine, but... I'm making some food then. You in?

Ben: Sounds good.

What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Text:

[Question-Text]:

Dai initially asked for and received consent from Ben. Does it matter that Dai has been drinking and appeared to be incapacitated?

[Options]:

Yes

No

[Answer]:

Yes

[Feedback]:

That's Right!

Dai is stumbling and slurring his words. He appears to be incapacitated, and therefore is likely unable to give consent or understand when consent has been given. Whenever someone has been drinking and is considering having sex, the safest and most respectful decision is to wait. If you choose to combine alcohol and sexual activity, it is very important to make sure that no one involved is impaired before proceeding.

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite.

Dai is stumbling and slurring his words. He appears to be incapacitated, and therefore is likely unable to give consent or understand when consent has been given. Whenever someone has been drinking and is considering having sex, the safest and most respectful decision is to wait. If you choose to combine alcohol and sexual activity, it is very important to make sure that no one involved is impaired before proceeding.

Defining Coercion

Interactivity Audio Script:

Defining Coercion.

Coercion takes many forms as it relates to unhealthy relationships. Generally, coercion is the act of pressuring another person into doing something against their will. Sexual coercion can involve using physical force, intimidating behavior, and/or the use of alcohol or other drugs to make someone engage in unwanted sexual activity. It's an abuse of power and/or a way of trying to leverage control over someone.

Sexual assault is a severe form of sexual harassment prohibited by Title IX that involves sexual contact or activity without a person's consent, including the use of force, threats, intimidation, or other means of coercion that cause fear or duress. Check your institution's policies for definitions of consent and coercion.

Coercion Comes in Many Forms

Interactivity Audio Script:

Coercion Comes in Many Forms.

It's important to understand that coercion as it relates to healthy relationships does not only happen in one clear way.

Take a moment to read through various types of coercion and examples of how each might occur.

Select the expandable panels to learn more about the topic. You must open all the panels to continue.

Interactivity Text:

[Tab 1]: Guilt.

Making a person feel like they owe someone sexual activity or anything else is a form of subtle intimidation. This might sound like, "You're not in the mood? But we were fooling around ...". If the pressure escalates and causes someone to engage in sexual activity against their will it may be considered a coercive behavior.

[Tab 2]: Pressure.

Repeatedly asking someone to engage in sexual activity after they've said "no" or indicated they weren't interested is disrespectful. Such as, "Come oooooon ... If you really loved me ...". If the pressure becomes intimidating or threatening after being told "no," it could cross the line into coercive tactics.

[Tab 3]: Incapacitation.

Using drugs or alcohol to make someone more vulnerable compromises their ability to give consent, and engaging in sexual activity with someone who is unable to consent (i.e., incapacitated or asleep) may violate institutional policies, criminal laws, or both.

[Tab 4]: Threats.

Using threats to force someone into unwanted sexual activity: for example, "As your advisor, I have a lot of influence over next semester's grant funding for your research ...". Making someone fear what would happen if they refuse their advances is an example of coercive behavior.

[Tab 5]: Manipulation.

Seeking to punish someone emotionally because they have declined sexual activity is a form of subtle intimidation that may be a warning sign of coercive intent. For example, "You're never in the mood. Just don't talk to me."

[Tab 6]: Rationalization.

Placing blame on the other person, external factors, or outside circumstances might sound like, "You got me too turned on to stop now ...". This is also a form of intimidation that could be a sign of intent to force someone to act against their will.

Hannah and Jaime

Video Script:

Hannah and Jaime.

Narrator: Dai asks Ben if he wanted to engage in sexual activity, and it's his responsibility to obtain consent as the person initiating. However, even though Ben initially said yes, he reassessed and decided it was not a good idea and withdrew his consent. Dai respected Ben's choice.

Hannah: Let's do that thing I wanted to do with you last weekend.

Jamie: Do we have to decide that right now? I'm honestly so stressed with this project that I can't even think about that. We can talk about it later.

Hannah: Well, no, because you're always obsessed with coursework. It's obvious to me that you're not able to handle school and a relationship. Lots of relationships just fall apart because people become totally consumed with their program.

Jamie: Let's talk about this later, please.

Hannah: OK fine. Just know that my salary is going to your next tuition payment. So, think about that next time you treat me like this. I thought we had a give and take agreement, but all I'm experiencing is the take.

Jamie: Wait, treat you like what? What do you want me to do? I thought we agreed about tuition a long time ago.

What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Text:

[Question-Text]:

Is this conversation an example of how to ask for consent?

[Options]:

Yes

No

[Answer]:

No

[Feedback]:

That's Right!

Hannah is using manipulation to suggest that her financial support obligates Jamie to agree to her sexual wants — so no, this is not an example of healthy communication about consent. No one should ever manipulate someone else into consenting by making them feel guilty or obligated; that's called "sexual coercion."

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite.

Hannah is using manipulation to suggest that her financial support obligates Jamie to agree to her sexual wants — so no, this is not an example of healthy communication about consent. No one should ever manipulate someone else into consenting by making them feel guilty or obligated; that's called "sexual coercion."

Hannah and Jaime

Video Script:

Hannah and Jaime.

Narrator: Good choice. No one should ever try to talk someone into sexual activity or use money or anything else as justification for convincing someone to do something that they don't want to do. That's called "sexual coercion."

Hannah: We did talk about tuition. And remember? You said how grateful you were and asked if you could do anything for me. So yeah, now I want you to do that thing that we talked about last weekend. We've been together forever, and you totally owe me more "us" time. Besides, it will make you feel less stressed. You'll thank me.

Jamie: This is really not a good time. Ugh. OK, OK. I know you won't be happy until we do.

What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Text:

[Question-Text]:

Did Jamie give his consent?

[Options]:

Yes

No

[Answer]:

No

[Feedback]:

That's Right!

Although Jamie eventually said "OK," he did so because he felt obligated. Hannah didn't respect Jamie's choice and made him feel guilty, suggesting her financial support obligated him to agree to what she wanted. This is an example of someone using guilt to pressure someone into sexual activity.

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite.

Although Jamie eventually said "OK," he did so because he felt obligated. Hannah didn't respect Jamie's choice and made him feel guilty, suggesting her financial support obligated him to agree to what she wanted. This is an example of someone using guilt to pressure someone into sexual activity.

The Impact of Alcohol

Interactivity Audio Script:

The Impact of Alcohol.

Though alcohol use and sexual assault can be correlated, this does not mean that alcohol use causes sexual assault. However, sexually aggressive individuals often use alcohol to create conditions in which it's easier for them to take advantage of another person.

Alcohol reduces a person's ability to communicate clearly, including situations that involve obtaining consent or identifying a lack of consent. It also adversely affects judgment and motor functions, which can keep someone from being able to recognize or react to a risky situation.

Being drunk is never an excuse for someone to commit sexual violence, and it is never the survivor's fault for having been assaulted, regardless of whether or not they were drinking.

State Laws: Consent

Interactivity Audio Script:

State Laws: Consent.

It's important to be aware of state laws defining consent.

Explore state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

Review your state's laws

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

Dropdown: View your state's laws

Federal and State Laws: Sexual Assault

Interactivity Audio Script:

Federal and State Laws: Sexual Assault.

It's important to be aware of federal and state laws defining sexual assault.

Explore federal and state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

Review your state's laws

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

Dropdown: View your state's laws

Explore federal law definitions using the dropdown below.

Dropdown: View federal laws

Taking Action

Interactivity Audio Script:

Taking Action.

Contributing to a supportive community includes recognizing and taking action when you see something inappropriate, risky, or potentially dangerous. While taking action may feel uncomfortable or even dangerous if you don't know what to do, arming yourself with strategies may give you the opportunity to safely support someone who is in a potentially harmful situation. One way to think of these strategies is as the "four Ds" — Direct, Distract, Delegate, and Delay.

Use the arrows to read about each of the four Ds of taking action.

Interactivity Text:

[Carousel 1]: Direct.

Direct.

If you feel confident in the environment and it appears to be safe to do so, direct intervention is the most immediate way to take action. This involves offering to help the person who seems uncomfortable or at risk or interrupting the person who is creating the situation.

Even a simple, direct question can let someone know that you're aware they're uncomfortable and you're available to help. An example of this approach might sound like: "Hey, is everything OK?" You could also opt to interrupt the person whose behavior is making someone else uncomfortable by asking, "What's going on here?" or "Can I talk to you for a minute?" This lets them know that you've noticed the situation and are willing to intervene.

[Carousel 2]: Distract.

Distract.

Distraction may be a good choice if you're in an unfamiliar environment, if you don't know those involved in the situation very well, if the person causing harm has more authority or power, or if you're simply less comfortable with a direct approach. The goal of this strategy is to either help the person who is being targeted to leave the situation or to distract the person who is creating the problem.

An example might sound like: "I can't find my phone; can you help me?" or you could text or call one of the people involved. These approaches provide an opportunity to disrupt the situation and can allow the person who is experiencing the harm to leave.

[Carousel 3]: Delegate.

If your position or status in comparison to those involved in a situation makes you feel unable to intervene directly, you could enlist help from others. *If you're concerned, it's likely others are as well.* Delegating can mean notifying someone who has more authority (like a group leader, bar staff, internship supervisor, or conference organizer) or, if the person who is creating the problem is a faculty or staff member, talking to a confidential resource who can help identify options for sharing your concern.

An example of delegation might be, "It looks like she is making him really uncomfortable and I wanted to reach out to you because I know you're friends with her." This strategy lets others know that you're concerned and allows you to take action without being directly involved.

[Carousel 4]: Delay.

A delayed response is appropriate if you had concerns about a situation, but weren't able to take action to help *at the time*. This is also a good strategy if you hear of a harmful incident after

it's occurred. In these circumstances, you still have an important role to play in contributing to a supportive community.

For example, checking in and giving the person who experienced harm emotional support and/or offering resources can be helpful ways to reduce the negative impact of the incident. It might sound like, "Hey, I saw what that woman said to you. I'm sorry she did that. Are you OK?" It could also mean telling the person who committed the harm that you heard about what happened and are concerned.

Summary

Video Script:

Summary.

We've just explored the value of healthy communication in all kinds of relationships, as well as strategies for taking action when you observe a problematic situation.

Key Takeaways

- **Consent is Key**

Consent is an integral part of healthy and respectful communication and is critical to developing and sustaining meaningful friendships, professional connections, and intimate relationships.

- **Coercion Comes In Many Forms**

Accepting others' decisions, especially when it comes to choices about intimacy, is a key part of showing someone that you respect them. Threatening, pressuring, or intimidating someone into unwanted sexual behavior are coercive tactics.

- **Take Action Safely**

There are many effective ways to assist if someone needs help or appears to be harming someone else. One way to remember these strategies is to think of them as the "four Ds" — Direct, Distract, Delegate, and Delay.

Reporting and Responding

Change Is Possible

Video Script:

Change Is Possible.

Research shows that knowing how to intervene and knowing how to support someone who has experienced harm both play an important role in reducing sexual harassment and sexual violence, and creating a supportive environment for survivors.

In this section, you'll learn how to:

- Identify and share effective ways of showing a survivor that you care.
- Identify and share options (like confidential resources) that are available to all students on campus, including graduate students.

Reporting and Responding

Interactivity Audio Script:

Reporting and Responding.

Everyone deserves to live, learn, and work in a safe and supportive environment. Knowing how to respond if someone discloses a harmful experience to you is important because it can play a valuable role in their healing process. A supportive response can make a real difference.

Use the arrows to learn more about reporting and responding to sexual and relationship violence.

Interactivity Text:

[Carousel 1]: Carousel 1.

Create a Safe Environment.

When survivors are part of a supportive community, they are more likely to tell someone about their experiences, which can open up opportunities for them to access care. When survivors report incidents — or they choose to disclose to a confidential resource — this can lead to increased institutional response and accountability. For some survivors, choosing to report may be helpful for healing, can hold those responsible for harm accountable, and may prevent future harm.

[Carousel 2]: Carousel 2.

You Can Make a Difference.

If someone comes to you for help, you're in a position to make a positive impact on their recovery process. Research shows that when survivors disclose to someone and receive a positive response, they experience "healing, faster recovery, and fewer PTSD symptoms." By understanding the behaviors and attitudes that create a safe, supportive environment for those who have experienced harm, you can make a difference in someone's recovery and also help them make the decision that's best for them.

[Carousel 3]: Carousel 3.

Statistics Support Reporting.

- Over 92% of students report they would take action themselves, or respect someone else who took action, to prevent a sexual assault.
- Over 93% of students say that they would reach out to offer support to a friend they suspect is in an abusive relationship.
- About 20% of people who have experienced harm don't disclose what happened to them to anyone; those who do usually tell a close friend.
- Over 90% of students say they would never place blame on a person who disclosed a sexual assault to them.

Student Engagement

Interactivity Audio Script:

Student Engagement.

Would you like our school to contact you about getting more involved in sexual assault prevention and education on campus?

Interactivity Text:

By selecting "Yes," you are authorizing this course to share the name and email address you used to log in with our school exclusively for the purpose of contacting you about such opportunities. Our school or organization may or may not contact you, even if you authorize us to do so. Please note that your survey responses will remain completely confidential.

[Question-Text]:

Would you like our school to contact you about getting more involved in sexual assault prevention and education?

[Options]:

Yes

No

The Impact of Trauma

Interactivity Audio Script:

The Impact of Trauma.

Understanding some of the ways researchers have identified that the brain and body may react to trauma can help you respond to situations regarding sexual assault with empathy and support. It may also help you to process your own experiences. The effects of trauma may occur when someone has witnessed violence, survived violent crimes, experienced social injustice, been involved in accidents, or has had combat experience.

Use the arrows to read about the science behind the effects of trauma.

Interactivity Text:

[Carousel 1]: Memory.

Memory.

Trauma can trigger the release of hormones that impact memory. A person who experiences trauma may recall the event hesitantly or remember very specific sensory details. They may also have accurate but fragmented memories of the event and experience difficulty recalling what happened in a linear fashion.

[Carousel 2]: Emotions.

Emotions.

In reaction to trauma, a person's body may release chemicals to block physical and emotional pain, which can result in neurobiological effects that can't be predicted or controlled. This may contribute to unexpected emotional reactions — for example, remaining emotionally flat or experiencing extreme emotional swings while recalling an incident.

[Carousel 3]: Physical Response.

Physical Response.

A person's physical response to trauma can also be significantly impacted by neurobiological factors. Tonic immobility (or trauma-induced paralysis) is an autonomic hormonal response that causes the body to freeze in situations that provoke extreme fear. Resisting or escaping is not possible for someone experiencing this, because they do not have control over their muscle response.

Survivor Support

Interactivity Audio Script:

Survivor Support.

The recovery processes for survivors of sexual assault are as unique as their experiences. The process is influenced by multiple factors, such as their identities and their familiarity with or relation to the person who harmed them. Despite these unique elements, there are common reactions that many survivors share.

Select each response to learn more about how you can support survivors.

Interactivity Text:

[Carousel 1]: Shame and Guilt.

Shame and Guilt.

Survivors may have feelings of shame and guilt. Remind them that the only person responsible for the assault is the person who harmed them, and that what happened to them, regardless of the circumstances, is in no way their fault.

[Carousel 2]: Fear of Retaliation.

Fear of Retaliation.

Offer information about confidential resources who can help survivors understand their options for seeking support. If appropriate, remind the survivor that there are protections against retaliation, including when faculty and/or staff are involved.

[Carousel 3]: Depression and Anxiety.

Depression and Anxiety.

Empower the survivor to make their own decisions. Healing can be a long-term process. Encourage a survivor to care for themselves and remind them of their strength. Offer to connect them to professional resources for additional support.

Responding To a Student's Disclosure

Video Script:

Responding To a Student's Disclosure.

As a graduate student, you may find yourself in a position of responding to someone who reaches out for support because of a harmful experience. When someone chooses to disclose to you, it's because they trust you, and the way you respond can have a significant impact on their healing process.

Here are a few key points to keep in mind:

- If you are a staff member (a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant), check with your school's Title IX office about any institutional expectations or responsibilities related to reporting disclosures of possible sexual harassment.

- Be sure to listen to them and let them know that they are not to blame for what happened (regardless of the circumstances).
- Don't question or investigate what happened or attempt to problem-solve.
- Offer to connect them with resources, including confidential resources, who can explain their options.

Supporting A Friend: Rachel's Story

Video Script:

Supporting A Friend: Rachel's Story.

You and Rachel have been in the Engineering program together for about two years, so you know her pretty well at this point. She's always been ambitious, focused, and energetic, but over the past two weeks, you've noticed a change. She seems distracted, sad, and quiet. She's not participating in class as much and you sense something is "off." You're not sure whether she's stressed about research and teaching, or whether there's something else going on. As you're walking out of class one night, you catch up with her and quietly say, "Hey, just asking as a friend ... do you want to talk? I'm wondering if something's bothering you."

Rachel: Hey, thanks. Yeah, maybe. Something's kind of been bothering me. But I'm not sure I should be worried about it. It's probably nothing. But you obviously know Dr. Wiley, my advisor. While we were meeting yesterday to go over my manuscript, he said that since it was getting late, we should finish talking about revisions over dinner and drinks at Cantina. That place right off campus. So, we did. And after we ate, we headed back to campus.

And he walked me to my office. And then gave me a really long, close hug. It definitely felt uncomfortable, if you know what I mean. And now I feel weird and almost guilty when I see him. And I don't know why. Maybe I was being flirty over dinner. One of my guy friends said that if I have a glass of wine, I can be that way. When I think about it, I probably brought this on myself by going off campus and having dinner with him.

Supporting a Friend: What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

Supporting a Friend: What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Text:

[Question-Text]:

What could you say to Rachel?

[Options]:

1. I feel like that stuff happens when you work closely with someone. I once had a professor put his hand on my leg while we were talking about my research, so this doesn't seem like anything to worry about.
2. I understand, but you shouldn't feel guilty; you aren't responsible for what he did, and his behavior was unprofessional. Can I do anything to help — maybe help you find someone to talk to, confidentially?
3. You should go to the Chair to talk to her about this — I've heard about him doing that same thing to other students we know, and he shouldn't be able to just get away with it. Want me to go with you to report it?

[Answer]:

I understand, but you shouldn't feel guilty; you aren't responsible for what he did, and his behavior was unprofessional. Can I do anything to help — maybe help you find someone to talk to, confidentially?

[Feedback]:

That's Right!

When someone discloses a concerning or harmful experience to you, remember to listen to them and validate their concern — even if you believe you wouldn't feel the same way, or you think you could easily resolve the situation. Instead, respond helpfully by reinforcing your friend's concern and reflect what she's told you. Offering to help connect her with a confidential resource is also a great way of providing her with support.

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite.

When someone discloses a concerning or harmful experience to you, remember to listen to them and validate their concern — even if you believe you wouldn't feel the same way, or you think you could easily resolve the situation. Instead, respond helpfully by reinforcing your friend's concern and reflect what she's told you. Offering to help connect her with a confidential resource is also a great way of providing her with support.

Supporting a Friend: Rachel's Story

Video Script:

Supporting A Friend: Rachel's Story.

Dismissing someone's concern by suggesting that what happened to them isn't significant, or telling them what they should do, isn't showing them that you support them and want to help them. Support them and validate their experience.

Select play to watch the video and then respond to the question that follows.

Rachel Video 2

<https://lawroom.wistia.com/medias/rktmt3hxzq>

Narrator: Good choice. Reinforcing your friend's concern and reflecting what she's told you are helpful, supporting responses. Offering to help connect her with a confidential resource is also a great way of providing her with support.

Rachel: Thanks. Well, I don't want to do anything yet. I'm waiting for him to sign off on my grant application, so I can't really say anything to him that would make the relationship awkward or make it seem like I'm accusing him of anything. I probably just need to stop thinking about it and move on.

Supporting a Friend: What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

Supporting a Friend: What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Text:

[Question-Text]:

What could you say?

[Options]:

I understand that, but if you don't report it, he'll do it to someone else — you don't want to be responsible for anyone else going through what you're feeling right now. Speaking up is the right thing to do.

That's probably the best choice. Maybe you can find a way to keep a little space from him, or at least just avoid getting drunk again, until you get your grant application filed. You'll be fine.

OK, well, remember that you shouldn't have to feel uncomfortable for any reason. I'm always here if you decide you want to talk about this again, or if you want to talk to a confidential resource.

[Answer]:

OK, well, remember that you shouldn't have to feel uncomfortable for any reason. I'm always here if you decide you want to talk about this again, or if you want to talk to a confidential resource.

Feedback correct:

That's Right!

It seems like Rachel is unsure about how to respond to what has happened and is even feeling like she may be responsible for her advisor's behavior. Pressuring her to report what she's

experienced or dismissing the issue entirely, are not supportive ways of responding to her. Pressuring her could increase her feelings of guilt, and dismissing her concern and advising her to tolerate feeling uncomfortable around her advisor isn't very supportive, either. Remember to encourage, support, and validate your friend — and always direct them to helpful resources that exist on and off campus.

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite.

It seems like Rachel is unsure about how to respond to what has happened and is even feeling like she may be responsible for her advisor's behavior. Pressuring her to report what she's experienced or dismissing the issue entirely, are not supportive ways of responding to her. Pressuring her could increase her feelings of guilt, and dismissing her concern and advising her to tolerate feeling uncomfortable around her advisor isn't very supportive, either. Remember to encourage, support, and validate your friend — and always direct them to helpful resources that exist on and off campus.

Supporting A Friend: Rachel's Story

Video Script:

Supporting A Friend: Rachel's Story.

Situations like this are complex and nuanced to navigate. It's important to remain empathetic and understand the trust your friend is putting in you to share their experience with you.

Select play to watch the video and then respond to the question that follows.

Rachel Video 3

<https://lawroom.wistia.com/medias/aas5a8sioi>

Narrator: Rachel missed the next class, so you texted her to make sure everything was OK. She didn't respond right away, but when she did, she asked you to meet her near the library.

Rachel: He's started texting me. Like, he starts by asking to talk about the grant or my research deadlines, but then he turns the conversations into something personal. Like, telling me he likes what I wore that day, or what he's doing that night. And then in a meeting the other day with other faculty members there, he stood behind me and rubbed my shoulders and whispered to the people around him that I was his favorite. Most everyone laughed, and I know I turned bright red.

I'm so worried that other people might think something's going on between us. Later that night, he texted me to ask if I wanted to go to a conference with him next month. He said he would get the conference organizer to waive my registration fee, and I could stay in the extra bed in his room to save money. I don't know what to do.

Supporting a Friend: What Do You Think?

Interactivity Audio Script:

Supporting a Friend: What Do You Think?

Choose an answer here.

Interactivity Text:

[Question-Text]:

What could you say to Rachel?

[Options]:

1. I'm glad you reached out to talk. It sounds like he is doing a lot of things that are unprofessional and unethical. Do you want to think about discussing your options with someone — like a confidential resource?
2. Well, is there anything going on? I haven't seen you in a while and you seem really flustered. Did something else happen that you're not telling me?
3. At least you're on his good side — maybe you could use things like the conference to your advantage. Just ignore his texts, keep your conversations professional, and don't worry about things you can't control.

[Correct Answer]:

I'm glad you reached out to talk. It sounds like he is doing a lot of things that are unprofessional and unethical. Do you want to think about discussing your options with someone — like a confidential resource?

[Correct Feedback]:

That's Right!

Rachel is nervous, embarrassed, and unsure of what to do. She should not have to feel uncomfortable or as though she has to tolerate inappropriate behavior from her advisor in order to be successful in her program. The best way to respond would be for you to validate her feelings, reinforce to her that you support her, and remind her that there are confidential resources who can help.

[Incorrect Feedback]:

Not Quite.

Rachel is nervous, embarrassed, and unsure of what to do. She should not have to feel uncomfortable or as though she has to tolerate inappropriate behavior from her advisor in order to be successful in her program. The best way to respond would be for you to validate her feelings, reinforce to her that you support her, and remind her that there are confidential resources who can help.

Supporting A Friend: Rachel's Story

Video Script:

Supporting A Friend: Rachel's Story.

One major way to be supportive to your friends in situations similar to Rachel's is to avoid being judgmental.

Narrator: Good choice. You didn't judge Rachel or tell her what to do. You simply reminded her that she can discuss what's happening with a confidential resource. That's a helpful and supportive way to respond.

Rachel: I really don't want to. I'm so worried that if I do anything, I'll sabotage all of the work and time I've invested with him. I mean, he's the reason I chose this program. I can't start over now. But I have to do something, because I just can't take this kind of stress anymore. Are you sure I could talk to someone and he won't find out?

Interactivity Text:

Confidential Resources.

Information shared with a confidential resource, such as a pastoral or professional mental health counselor, cannot be shared with campus officials without your consent, except under certain circumstances. Consulting with a confidential resource allows you an opportunity to discuss your options, learn about additional resources, and address any questions or concerns before making a decision about next steps. Prior to sharing information, you may want to confirm the extent to which the resource is able to keep your conversation confidential.

National Resources

Interactivity Audio Script:

National Resources.

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted or is in an abusive relationship, help is available. In addition to the resources on your campus, the following organizations provide information, support, and resources to survivors of sexual and relationship violence, as well as those who want to help them.

Select an organization to learn more about available resources

Interactivity Text:

National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Visit Resource

Office for Civil Rights

Visit Resource

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Visit Resource

National Sexual Assault Hotline

Visit Resource

Protection Orders

Visit Resource

Victim Rights Law Center

Visit Resource

Men Stopping Violence

Visit Resource

Changing Our Campus

Visit Resource

myPlan

Visit Resource

FORGE

Visit Resource

Stalking Resource Center

Visit Resource

Men Can Stop Rape

Visit Resource

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Visit Resource

National Women's Law Center

Visit Resource

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Visit Resource

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Visit Resource

JED Foundation: Mental Health Resource Center

Visit Resource

How To Report

Interactivity Audio Script:

How To Report.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual or relationship violence, harassment, abuse, or stalking, there are a number of different reporting options available.

Review each tab to learn more.

Interactivity Text:

[Tab 1]: Preserve Evidence.

Even if you are undecided about filing a report, it's important to consider preserving evidence, in case you decide to report in the future. Evidence can also be helpful in obtaining a protection order and ensuring that you have as much information about what happened as possible.

If a sexual assault occurred, this can mean saving clothing that was worn or having a forensic medical exam, which may be offered at a local hospital or a campus clinic or health center, but does not require someone to file a police report. In all types of violence and harassment, be sure to save any communication with the offender, such as emails and texts, or any written material. If there are witnesses, it could be useful to record their names in case you decide that you want to provide this information to investigators.

[Alt-text]:

[Tab 2]: Notify Title IX Personnel.

When someone reports an incident of sexual harassment to the Title IX coordinator or a designated "official with authority" at our institution, the first step is to discuss and provide available supportive measures that the person reporting sexual harassment ("complainant") may need (e.g., changing your academic, living, transportation, and/or working situations), regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed. Check your school's policies or contact the Title IX office to find out what other steps may be taken after a report is made.

[Alt-text]:

[Tab 3]: Notify Law Enforcement.

If you have experienced sexual assault, stalking, or relationship violence or abuse, you have the right to:

Notify law enforcement and/or campus officials

Be assisted by campus authorities (if you want their help) in notifying law enforcement

Decline to notify law enforcement

Reporting Options and Processes

Interactivity Audio Script:

Reporting Options and Processes.

When sexual harassment — including sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking — is reported to our Title IX coordinator or other designated campus official, in addition to providing supportive measures, they will explain how to file a formal complaint and the investigation and grievance process that follows, as required by Title IX. Our school's policies provide more detailed information on our grievance process.

Select the expandable panels to learn more about the topic. You must open all the panels to continue.

Interactivity Text:

[Accordion1]:

Employees with Title IX Responsibilities.

Below are types of campus employees and general information about their Title IX obligations and duties of confidentiality.

Title IX Coordinators

- Are responsible for coordinating an institution's efforts to comply with its Title IX responsibilities, including the institution's Title IX grievance process to investigate and resolve complaints

Officials With Authority

- Are employees who have authority to take corrective measures to address all types of sexual harassment, such as providing supportive measures or initiating investigations

When a report is made to the Title IX Coordinator or an Official with Authority, we will provide information to both the reporting and responding parties on a number of details, including:

- Available services (counseling, health, etc.) and accommodation options (like changes to academic, living, transportation, and working situations)
- Protection against retaliation

- Information about the institution's responsibilities regarding orders of protection, including no-contact orders and restraining orders
- How our school will protect both parties' confidentiality in any publicly available recordkeeping, protective measures taken, and grievance process

[Accordion 2]:

Other Employees and Resources.

Confidential Employees or Resources

- Are employees or other persons who have a professional duty of confidentiality and can explain your options for reporting sexual harassment and seeking academic, living, or work accommodations

Depending on state laws and licensing requirements, confidential employees may include:

- Licensed mental-health counselors
- Pastoral counselors
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Some health center employees

Other Employees

- May be required to report sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator, or may need to follow other reporting or response procedures required by the institution

Anonymous reporting options:

- May be available
- Which require that the report include the type of offense, but may not need to include identifying information for the persons involved

When a member of a profession (such as a faculty member) engages in misconduct, they may also be in violation of the professional standards and ethical guidelines of their profession. In seeking help, you may also want to explore the option of reporting the abuser to their professional association or credentialing organization.

[Accordion 3]: The Grievance Process.

If a formal complaint is filed by a person alleging sexual harassment (the "complainant") or signed by a Title IX Coordinator, the proceedings will:

- Include a reasonably prompt, fair, and impartial process
- Be conducted by officials who are trained on investigating and resolving these issues
- Provide both the complainant and the person accused of committing sexual harassment (the "respondent") equal opportunities to access information that will be used at formal

and informal meetings or hearings, and review any evidence obtained during the investigation, as well as present witnesses and other evidence

- Provide both the complainant and the respondent equal opportunities to have an advisor (who may be an attorney) or other support person present during the grievance process; and allow advisors to cross-examine witnesses and parties, and either party to request that they be in separate rooms with technology enabling them to see and hear a witness or party answer questions

Both parties may agree to a temporary delay of the formal hearing to participate in an informal resolution process, except when the allegations involve an employee sexually harassing a student.

The complainant and respondent will receive simultaneous notification of:

- A statement of, and rationale for, the result of the proceedings and any disciplinary sanction imposed against the respondent
- Information on how to exercise the right to appeal the result
- Any change to the result
- When the result becomes final

[Accordion 4]: Office for Civil Rights.

The Department of Education's [Office for Civil Rights](#) (OCR) enforces federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. Contact the OCR with questions or complaints regarding Title IX rights or violations.

State Laws: Legal Protections for Survivors

Interactivity Audio Script:

State Laws: Legal Protections for Survivors.

It's important to be aware of state laws defining protections for survivors.

Explore state law definitions below.

Interactivity Text:

Review your state's laws

You must view your state's laws before continuing, using the dropdown below. If you are interested, you can compare it to other states by selecting another state from the dropdown menu.

Dropdown: View your state's laws

Summary

Video Script:

Summary.

Making a commitment to supporting those who have experienced harm is an important part of contributing to a learning environment where everyone feels safe to learn and work.

Key Takeaways

Trauma Has an Impact

Knowing how the brain and body may respond to trauma can help you understand how to compassionately support those who have had traumatic or harmful experiences.

Support Is Available

Offering information about confidential resources who can help survivors understand their options can aid survivors in making informed decisions.

Your Response Is Important

The way that you respond to someone who has had a harmful experience can play an important role in their recovery. Show that you care by empowering them to make decisions and connecting them to resources.

Course Conclusion

Video Script:

Course Conclusion.

We hope that this learning experience has provided you with an opportunity to reflect on your values and the types of relationships that you have, or want to have, with others. We also hope that you feel more knowledgeable about recognizing and addressing unhealthy relationships and responding to a friend who may need your help.

We all have a role to play in creating a safe and supportive community. Be sure to use your experiences, perspectives, and values to make a positive impact wherever you live, work, and learn.