

Sexual Violence:

A Resource Guide for the
Catholic University Community

2021–2022

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA 

This booklet was designed to serve as a resource guide for the Catholic University community and is not meant to address all of our policies related to sexual violence. To read the full policies and more detailed information, please visit deanofstudents.catholic.edu.

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Catholic University Cares

The Catholic University of America defends the inherent dignity of each person and their right to live without fear of violence or harassment of any kind. The Church teaches that violence against another person, including sexual violence, is never justified for any reason.

We all share responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the safety and dignity of each person. No one deserves to experience sexual violence. When we are witness to acts that compromise the dignity of those in our community it is our responsibility to be empowered bystanders and take action.

At Catholic University we understand the seriousness of sexual violence and the impact it has on our community. If you or a friend are ever in need of support as a result of sexual violence or assault, know that we at Catholic care deeply about you. We are committed to connecting you with resources and support.

Whether you have already decided to file an official complaint to pursue disciplinary action, or you would like to make a report to better understand your options and gain access to University resources and support, we want you to know that you are not alone.

Your Support Options

Catholic University is committed to supporting students impacted by sexual violence no matter when or where an incident may have occurred. Your physical and emotional safety are important. The University offers a variety of resources for students, all of which are committed to listening to you, supporting you and providing you with options.

If you have experienced any form of sexual violence, your first priority should be to get to a **place of safety**, then consider seeking help.

Confidential Resources

The information you share with these individuals cannot be shared with others without your permission.

- **Counseling Center, 127 O'Boyle Hall, 202-319-5765**
After business hours a survivor can contact the Department of Public Safety to be connected to the Counseling Center's on-call counselor for crisis support.
- **Student Health Services, Eugene I. Kane Student Health and Fitness Center, 202-319-5744**
Physicians and licensed medical professionals
- **Campus Ministry, Caldwell Hall, Ground Floor, 202-319-5575**
Priests, acting in their professional capacity of giving spiritual advice
- **Off Campus Sexual Assault Counselors:**
DC Rape Crisis Center: 202-333-7273, Rape Abuse and Incest National Network: 800-656-4673

Non-Confidential Resources

These individuals are mandatory reporters and are required to report if you share details with them.

- **Residence Life Staff**
RAs and Community Directors
- **Dean of Students Staff: 202-319-5619**
- **Campus Ministry: 202-319-5575**
Lay Pastoral Staff and Student Ministers
- **Title IX Coordinator: 202-319-4177**

For more information about privacy and confidentiality, visit the Title IX Grievance Procedures and Sexual Offense Grievance Procedures located on the Dean of Students website at deanofstudents.catholic.edu.

Medical Care

Students can receive free, confidential medical treatment and testing through the DC Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) Program at **MedStar Washington Hospital Center: 800-641-4028**.

- You are encouraged not to bathe, change clothes, brush teeth or do anything that may interfere with the collection of evidence.
- A free Uber ride to the hospital is available through the UASK DC app or by calling 800-641-4028. At the time of this publication, evidence collection is **ONLY** done at MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

Preserve Information and Evidence

Recording the events of the assault, although emotionally difficult, can be helpful in preserving details and can serve as a valuable resource in any legal action you might decide to take. Include the date, time and chronology. If there are witnesses or people who have information about the assault, write down their names. Try to preserve any harassing letters, text messages, or emails as evidence.

Additional Support Options

The Office of the Dean of Students can help connect you to appropriate resources on and off campus. We can also support you with the following:

- Orders of no contact
(if the incident involved another Catholic University student)
- Housing relocation
- Class schedule changes
- Academic support
- Ongoing support
- Pastoral support (through the Office of Campus Ministry)

You do not need to file a complaint to receive support from the Office of the Dean of Students.

Reporting Options

Amnesty

Catholic University cares about you and wants to remove all barriers to reporting. If you report an incident of sexual violence but were involved in a lesser policy violation (like underage drinking or visitation) or a prior sexual relationship, you will receive amnesty and won't get in trouble as long as that behavior didn't cause harm to others.

Where to Make a Report

An individual may report a Title IX violation to the Title IX Coordinator, a Deputy Title IX Coordinator, the Dean of Students, or the Department of Public Safety. The Deputy Title IX Coordinators, Dean of Students, and Department of Public Safety will notify the Title IX Coordinator of any reports. The following is the contact information for those individuals:

- **Jonathan Sawyer, Dean of Students**
353 Pryzbyla Center
202-319-5619, sawyerj@cua.edu
- **Frank Vinik, Title IX Coordinator (Office of Human Resources)**
170 Leahy Hall
202-319-4177, vinik@cua.edu
- **Department of Public Safety**
121 Leahy Hall
202-319-5111 (DPS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Deputy Title IX Coordinators

- **Kim Gregory, Department of Public Safety**
271 Leahy Hall
202-319-6062, gregoryk@cua.edu
- **Amy Love, Office of the Dean of Students**
353 Pryzbyla Center
202-319-5619, lovea@cua.edu
- **Heidi Zeich, Office of the Dean of Students**
353 Pryzbyla Center
202-319-5619, zeich@cua.edu
- **Amy Kerr, Office of the Dean of Students**
353 Pryzbyla Center
202-319-5619, kerra@cua.edu
- **Kathryn Jennings, Office of the Dean of Students**
353 Pryzbyla Center
202-319-5619, jenningsk@cua.edu

You can also make a report directly to the local police. DPS can assist with this process. You can pursue both a University and criminal process simultaneously.

What can you expect when you report?

- Your information will remain private and will only be shared with those who absolutely need to know.
- You will be connected with a trained resource person in the Office of the Dean of Students to help you navigate support systems and offer options for moving forward.
- You will be able to connect with services such as counseling, academic support, pastoral care, and medical treatment, and you will learn more about the disciplinary process.
- Reporting an assault does not automatically trigger an investigation except in rare situations where a perpetrator is a threat to the community, such as when the University received a previous report that the same person assaulted someone else. In those cases, the University has an obligation to investigate, but you are not required to take part in the process.

Where to File a Complaint

By filing a complaint, the University's disciplinary process will be pursued. To file a University complaint, you can contact:

- **the Dean of Students**
- **the Title IX Coordinator**
- **the Department of Public Safety**

You can also make a report directly to the local police. DPS can assist with this process. You can pursue both a University and criminal process simultaneously.

What can you expect when you file a complaint?

- The University will take your complaint seriously.
- The Deputy Title IX Coordinator will conduct an investigation.
- If the case is referred to the University disciplinary process, there are many options that are available.
- A Dean of Students staff member will help you navigate this process.

If you do not wish to file a complaint, you can still meet with a member of the Office of the Dean of Students for support. Staff members can help you access services like academic support, class schedule changes, housing relocation, and orders of no contact.

Requesting No Investigation or Disciplinary Action

If you disclose an incident to a mandatory reporter, but would like to request confidentiality or that no investigation or conduct process be pursued, the Title IX Coordinator will weigh this request against the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for all students.

Requesting Informal Resolution

Some cases may be resolved by informal resolution. This option does not involve a disciplinary process and may include mediated conversations between both parties, facilitated by Office of the Dean of Students staff. Informal resolution is designed to provide students another option for moving forward after an incident and is not intended to discourage students from filing a complaint. To participate in this option, both students involved must agree to an outcome that also meets the expectations of the Dean of Students.

Informal resolution is generally not available for situations involving violence or non-consensual sexual intercourse.

For more information about these options, visit the Title IX Grievance Procedures and Sexual Offense Grievance Procedures located on the Dean of Students website at deanofstudents.catholic.edu.

Medical Support Options

After a sexual assault, you may wish to seek medical attention to treat any possible injuries and to check for injuries you may not be able to see.

Student Health Services (SHS) is open from Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. during the academic year and is equipped to provide confidential and professional medical care. SHS can be reached in the Kane Health and Fitness Center or at 202-319-5744. While the SHS staff is unable to collect evidence for the purposes of pursuing criminal prosecution, they can provide assistance and support if you request or require transportation to the hospital. SHS also offers testing for sexually transmitted infections.

In addition to receiving medical attention, you may wish to have a sexual assault forensic exam, sometimes called a “rape kit.” The DC Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) Program at **MedStar Washington Hospital Center (WHC)** provides comprehensive nursing care, medical testing, forensic evidence collection, and support services within four days (96 hours) of the assault, and even beyond. If you are unsure if evidence collection is still possible, call the SANE on-call nurse at 800-641-4028. The office is open 24/7.

The exam is provided at no cost and without proof of insurance.

To maximize potential for DNA evidence collection, try not to:

- Shower
- Douche
- Use the restroom
- Brush teeth
- Change clothes
- Eat or drink

A police report is not required to access SANE services. Emergency Room staff may ask if you wish to speak to the police; this decision is up to you. The SANE Program will hold evidence collected for 90 days should you choose to file a report with MPD within that time. The Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC) will send an advocate to the hospital to assist throughout the process.

If you go to a hospital other than WHC, you can request to be transported to WHC for evidence collection and a free physical exam. If you choose not to go through with evidence collection, you are encouraged to make an appointment at SHS or any local hospital for follow-up care.

How to Support a Friend

When someone has experienced sexual violence, chances are they will turn to a friend for help or support first. How you respond to your friend is very important. Consider the following ways of showing support:

- Thank them for coming to you — this takes a great deal of courage and strength.
- Listen without judgment.
- Let them know what happened is not their fault.
- Don't press your friend for details — allow them to share information when they are ready.
- Help connect your friend with University and /or community resources.
- Offer to go with them to MedStar Washington Hospital Center, to make a report, or go with them to the Counseling Center.
- Be patient. It may take your friend some time to process the events of the incident and to decide how to proceed.
- Consider going to a counselor yourself — it can be difficult supporting a friend through a traumatic experience.

Healthy Relationships

During your time at Catholic University, you will engage in many different types of relationships. Whether it be with friends, roommates, or romantic partners, healthy relationships share many of the same core characteristics. Consider the following when thinking about your own relationships:

Mutual respect — Both people appreciate the other for who they are. They honor each other's limits and boundaries and do not demean the other's values. They listen to each other and accept each other as they are, without arguing or trying to change core traits and values.

Trust — In healthy relationships, both people ultimately trust each other. Romantic partners do not accuse each other of cheating, lying, or hiding something without cause. If mistrust or doubts frequently arise, partners discuss this with each other in a respectful way and try to discover why this is happening.

Communication — Both people say what they mean and mean what they say. They speak openly and honestly about their reactions and experiences and express their boundaries and limits. If someone needs time to process, think, or cool down before talking, they are given the space and time to do that.

Honesty — Friends, roommates, and romantic partners are honest with each other and make every attempt not to lie. If the truth is difficult or painful, it is presented in the most respectful and compassionate way possible. True trust cannot exist in a relationship without both parties being honest.

Fairness — Balancing responsibilities and compromises is important in relationships. Both people contribute to making decisions, such as which friends to hang out with or where to go out. Partners do not aim to exert power over the other or deprive the other from having their voice heard.

Separate Identities — In a healthy relationship, both people retain their unique identities. This can mean having separate friends, hobbies, or interests. Individual identities are not sacrificed in order to conform to somebody else.

Support — In both difficult moments and times of celebration, friends, roommates, and romantic partners support each other. They communicate and discuss what kind of support they expect and what kind of support they feel capable of giving.

Warning Signs of Unhealthy or Abusive Relationships

It's important to listen to your gut when you feel that something isn't right in your relationship. If you are not sure if your relationship is healthy, ask yourself if you are experiencing any of these warning signs:

Consistently disrespecting boundaries — When a partner repeatedly disregards the other's personal limits, this creates a hostile, unsafe relationship.

Blaming for one's emotional state — It's inappropriate for a partner to blame the other for inducing a particular state or action. Typically, unhealthy and manipulative statements are dramatic, extreme in their emotional content, and blame the partner for behaviors that the original person is actually responsible for.

Unrealistic dependency — If a relationship is consistently imbalanced in terms of who is expected to provide emotional support v. who receives support, this could be a sign of an unhealthy dynamic.

Accusations or excessive requests for reassurance — When a partner accuses the other of things like cheating, being emotionally unfaithful, or not caring about the partner, this also contributes to an unhealthy relationship. Likewise, requests for reassurance that the other is still attracted to the partner, that the other would never cheat on the partner, and that the other is worthwhile can also create an imbalanced dynamic.

Threats — Threatening harm to anyone should not be tolerated. It is never acceptable to threaten to harm one's self, one's partner, a pet, or a loved one. This behavior is clear manipulation and a very concerning warning sign of an abusive relationship.

Aggression or violence — When someone acts out in aggressive ways (screaming at a partner, shoving or grabbing, throwing objects, slapping or hitting, driving at unsafe speeds), this creates a genuine risk to safety. If this is occurring, the relationship is no longer balanced, healthy, or safe.

Supporting a Friend Experiencing an Unhealthy Relationship

It can be difficult and frustrating to see a friend being hurt in a relationship. If a friend comes to you, you don't need to have all the answers, but below are some guidelines of how to approach the conversation:

Be sensitive. Let your friend know you are concerned and that you want to offer support.

Believe them. Many survivors are afraid to come forward because they feel others won't believe their story.

Help your friend recognize the red flags. Physical or emotional abuse is not normal and it is not your friend's fault.

Help your friend develop a safety plan. Having a plan can help your friend avoid dangerous situations. Encourage your friend to identify resources that can assist in this process.

Encourage your friend to seek out resources. There are many resources on campus, both confidential and private, that can support your friend. Offer to help them set up an appointment.

Honor your limits. Supporting a friend can be difficult, so make sure you are practicing self-care.

Are you an Empowered Bystander?

We are called as members of the Catholic University community to look out for each other. If you see someone in a risky situation, there are many different ways to step in and make a difference. This is known as **“bystander intervention.”** How you intervene can vary based on the situation and your comfort level. Having this knowledge on hand can give you the confidence to take action when your gut tells you something isn’t right. Stepping in can make all the difference, but you should never put your own safety at risk.

3Ds: Direct • Delegate • Distract

Here are three different strategies you can use to step up and take action:

Direct

If you are comfortable you can directly approach either or both parties involved. Let them know your concerns and why you are intervening. Not sure if a friend is in trouble? Just ask! Send a text or step in and say, “Are you OK right now?”

Delegate

Sometimes you may not feel that you are the best person to directly intervene in a situation. Maybe you do not know the person, do not feel safe, or just feel someone else would be more effective. That is OK. Find friends of either party and encourage them to intervene. If you feel the situation is too serious for you to get involved or you are simply unsure, find someone in a position of authority. You can call a Resident Assistant or the Department of Public Safety.

Distract

Use a distraction to divert attention and redirect the focus somewhere else. A distraction can give the person at risk the chance to get to a safe place. You can diffuse the situation without directly confronting anyone. Step in and change the subject, tell your friend you need to talk to him or her, or commit a party foul.

Frequently Asked Questions:

I was sexually assaulted in the past. Can the University still support me?

Whether an assault occurred recently, in the past, or you are dealing with continued sexual or relationship violence, Catholic University has many support services to offer you. Confidential resources like the Counseling Center, clergy, and doctors and licensed medical professionals in Student Health Services can offer support. If you are ready to report you can contact the Office of the Dean of Students, the Title IX Coordinator, or DPS. Dean of Students staff can help you access support services like academic support, housing relocation, class schedule changes, or issue orders of no contact. Above all else, we want you to know that we care about you and you are not alone.

I was underage and drinking at the time of the assault. Will I receive amnesty?

Our primary concerns are your well-being and offering you support. We want to create an environment where you feel comfortable coming forward and reporting, and we hope to remove any barriers that may prevent you from seeking assistance and support. Therefore, if you are involved in underage drinking, provided that the violation did not pose harm to others, you will receive amnesty and will not be charged through the University conduct process. The University may offer you resources and support based on your alcohol use, but you will not get in trouble.

Will anyone contact my parents without my permission?

If you are 18 years or older, the University will not inform your parents unless there is a medical emergency or concern for your emotional well-being. We strongly encourage you to contact your parents and can offer support and help you find ways to have the conversation. If you are under age 18, the University will notify authorities under the mandatory reporter law if required to do so, and your parents or guardians will also be notified unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. In either case, your parents or guardians may be notified if you are hospitalized for serious physical injuries resulting from the assault.

Will the medical exam be reported to my parent's health insurance?

The DC Forensic Sexual Assault Nurse (SANE) Program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center is free. You will not be required to provide health insurance information for the forensic medical exam completed during your visit. If you use your parents' health insurance at an emergency room or doctor's visit unrelated to the SANE Program, it will be listed on your parents' insurance summary.

Will my peers and others on campus find out what happened?

University and law enforcement personnel will take reasonable steps to maintain your privacy. Given that peers sometimes have a difficult time keeping confidences, you should carefully consider the people you trust to maintain your privacy about what happened to you. You should feel comforted to know that University officials will share information about your situation only with those who have a clear need for such information. While campus safety and security staff cannot guarantee confidentiality, they can help you identify other people on campus who may offer confidential support.

What is an order of no contact? How can I obtain one?

An order of no contact is a University administrative action that the Office of the Dean of Students issues to direct two or more students to refrain from contact (in person, via phone, text, email, social media, or through friends or other third parties). No contact orders are always provided to both (or all) students equally. Violations of the order of no contact will be taken very seriously and appropriately addressed. If you have received an order of no contact, you are encouraged to only discuss this situation on an as-needed basis with confidential and trusted resources.

Can I report a sexual assault if it occurred off-campus?

Yes. Regardless of where the incident occurred, we want students to report and gain access to available support services. A student who makes a report of a sexual offense will be referred to the Dean of Students who will appoint a trained resource person to help explain and navigate the available support services. This includes information regarding counseling, educational support, pastoral care, medical treatment, and information about filing a complaint. Supportive measures can be accessed by students with or without filing a formal complaint.

For answers to more frequently asked questions, please visit title9.catholic.edu

The Scope of Sexual Violence

The spectrum of sexual violence includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Acquaintance assault
- Alcohol and drug-facilitated assault
- Allowing others to view consensual sexual activity
- Dating violence
- Domestic violence
- Indecent exposure
- Non-consensual video or audio recording of sexual activity
- Peeping or other voyeurism
- Prostitution or the solicitation or employment of a prostitute
- Sending unwanted sexual material and messages via communication systems
- Sexual assault
- Sexual exhibitionism
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking

For more information and detailed definitions visit deanofstudents.catholic.edu.

What is Consent?

Catholic University defines consent as informed, freely given, mutually understandable words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in sexual activity. Effective consent may never be obtained when there is a threat of force or violence, or any other form of coercion or intimidation. A current or previous dating or sexual relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent, and consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity. Consent cannot be obtained from someone legally prevented from giving consent by their age or from someone who is unable to understand or who cannot communicate a lack of consent. This includes someone who is incapacitated due to drugs, alcohol, or some other condition. Silence or lack of active resistance does not imply consent. Voluntary intoxication is not an excuse for failure to obtain consent.

Consent should be:

- A voluntary, informed, mutual agreement: consent indicates willingness to participate in sexual activity
- An active agreement: consent cannot be coerced
- A process, involving ongoing communication: consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity

Consent is not:

- The absence of “no”
- Silence
- Implied or assumed
- Based on a current or previous dating relationship
- If someone says no repeatedly and finally has been made to feel as if they must say yes
- If someone uses their position of power or authority to coerce or manipulate someone into saying yes

In what circumstances can a person not give consent by law?

- When the person is incapacitated or unconscious as a result of alcohol or drug use
- When the person is legally prevented from giving consent by their age or from someone who is unable to understand or who cannot communicate a lack of consent
- When the person is unconscious or asleep

What is Incapacitation?

Incapacitation means the inability, temporarily or permanently, to give consent, because an individual is mentally and/or physically helpless, asleep, unconscious, or unaware that sexual activity is occurring. The impact of alcohol and drugs and medications will vary from person to person. Warning signs that a person may be approaching incapacitation may include, but are not limited to, vomiting, incoherent speech, and difficulty walking or standing up. The perspective of a sober, reasonable person in the position of the respondent will be the basis for determining whether a respondent should have been aware that the complainant was incapacitated and therefore unable to consent.

Resources for Help

On Campus

Counseling Center

counseling.catholic.edu
202-319-5765

(Counselor on call 24 hours a day during the academic year.)

Campus Ministry

ministry.catholic.edu
202-319-5575

Office of the Dean of Students

deanofstudents.catholic.edu
202-319-5619

Department of Public Safety

publicsafety.catholic.edu
202-319-5111

(Available 24 hours a day.)

Student Health Services

health.catholic.edu
202-319-5744

Title IX Coordinator

title9.catholic.edu
202-319-4177

Off Campus

DC Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center

On Call Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner
800-641-4028

(Free transportation to/from MedStar Washington Hospital Center is available.)

DC Rape Crisis Center 24-Hour Hotline

dcrcc.org
202-333-RAPE (7273)

Metropolitan Police Department

202-727-9099

Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC)

nvrdc.org
202-742-1727

Rape Abuse & Incest National Network

rainn.org
Phone Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673)
Online Hotline: ohl.rainn.org/online

UASK DC [App]

uaskdc.org

For more information or to request additional copies, please call the Office of the Dean of Students at The Catholic University of America at 202-319-5619.

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The Catholic University of America admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, religion, or disability to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to students at the University.

