



Sexual Assault Response Protocol

UGA's Sexual Assault Response (SAR) Protocol

July 2015

The University of Georgia's Sexual Assault Response (SAR) Protocol is intended to coordinate and assist UGA employees in delivering the highest quality of services to victims/survivors of sexual assault. This SAR Protocol is also intended to insure compliance with the University's legal obligations under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"), the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act ("Clery Act"), and the relevant implementing regulations of each statute. The University service providers who had input into this SAR Protocol are: the Equal Opportunity Office/Title IX Coordinator (EOO), UGA Police Department, the Dean of Students Office, the Office of Student Conduct, the University Health Center including the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) office, the University Ombudspersons, the University Athletic Association, University Housing and the Office of Legal Affairs.

The steps of the SAR Protocol are, in a nutshell:

- Affirm the disclosure of sexual assault
- Explain no confidentiality
- Ask about safety and medical concerns
- Provide options for reporting to Police or EOO
- Offer a bridge to support resources
- Fulfill your reporting obligations by contacting EOO

AFFIRM THE DISCLOSURE

Listen respectfully and let the victim/survivor know that you care. In your own words, thank the survivor for telling you. Express to the survivor that you are sorry s/he has had such an experience.

Try to avoid doing the following:

Asking for specifics, details, or "why?" You do not want to investigate (leave that to law enforcement or the EOO) or seem as though you are "blaming," judging, or do not believe the survivor.

Defining the experience for the survivor. Use the same words the survivor is using to describe the experience (e.g., "hurt," "taken advantage of"). The survivor may not be ready to call what happened "rape" or "sexual assault."

Overly expressing your own feelings (e.g., “That’s outrageous!” “I can’t believe this happened to you!” “I am so angry someone would do that to you!”). This may make the survivor feel worse or become concerned about having upset you and feel s/he needs to take care of you.

Touching the survivor unless initiated by the survivor. Unwanted touching may make the survivor feel worse.

Exhibiting distraction. Be present when the survivor is with you – don’t check your watch, phone, email, answer in-coming calls, etc.

EXPLAIN NO CONFIDENTIALITY

Only a few employees at UGA have confidentiality. They are:

- Counseling & Psychiatric Services (CAPS) at the UGA Health Center
- UGA Health Center medical clinicians
- Counselors at UGA’s Aspire Clinic, Center for Counseling & Personal Evaluation, and Psychology Clinic
- Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) employees at UGA’s Health Center
- Student Support Services in the Dean of Students Office
- UGA Ombudspersons

All other UGA employees must report all information known about the sexual assault to the EOO/Title IX Coordinator. This includes relaying any request by the survivor for confidentiality or no-investigation to the EOO when you make the report. The EOO/Title IX Coordinator will usually honor such requests absent a threat to the future safety of the survivor or the University community (e.g., multiple reports against same alleged perpetrator, more than one alleged perpetrator, a weapon was involved, etc.). Where a survivor requests confidentiality or no-investigation, the EOO will submit an anonymous data form to the UGA Police that does not contain any identifying information about the survivor. This is for purposes of federally mandated reporting by universities of statistical crime data under the Clery Act. A report to the EOO/Title IX Coordinator can be made via [email \(mailto:ugaeoo@uga.edu\)](mailto:ugaeoo@uga.edu) or over the phone (706.542.7912) or in person (119 Holmes-Hunter Bldg, on North campus right behind the Arch).

MEDICAL & SAFETY CONCERNS

Inquire about immediate safety concerns (e.g., does survivor live with or have to interact with the alleged perpetrator; has the alleged perpetrator threatened future harm to the survivor). If these concerns exist, contact law enforcement, the EOO/Title IX Coordinator, or UGA’s Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention office (706.542.SAFE) to develop a safety plan.

Inquire about the survivor’s need for medical treatment (e.g., physical injury, emergency contraception, treatment for possible sexually transmitted infections). Offer to help connect survivor with medical care providers. A list of medical providers in the Athens, Georgia area, which includes various clinics at the University Health Center as well as local hospitals is available on the [EOO website \(/node/128\)](#). If there is a medical emergency, call 911.

Inquire if the survivor is interested in a Sexual Assault Nurse Examination (SANE). This exam can be performed within 120 hours (5 days) of the assault to collect forensic evidence (rape kit). The survivor does not have to make a police report to have the exam conducted and the exam is free. The survivor can decide later if s/he wants the evidence processed. A SANE exam can be arranged by contacting any of the following: University Health Center, the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) office, The Cottage Sexual Assault Center, UGA Police, Athens-Clarke County Police, local hospitals (Athens Regional or St. Mary’s). Contact information for

these service providers is available on the [EOO website \(/node/128\)](#).

EXPLAIN REPORTING OPTIONS

Ask if the survivor wants to make a report to law enforcement and offer to assist or accompany the survivor to do so, or offer to arrange for an advocate from RSVP or The Cottage Sexual Assault Center to accompany the survivor. Reporting to law enforcement does not commit the survivor to having an investigation conducted or to pressing charges. Those decisions can be made at a later point. **It is the survivor's choice whether to report to law enforcement** UNLESS: (1) there is an immediate safety threat present, or (2) the survivor is under the age of 16.

Ask if the survivor wants to make a report to the EOO/Title IX Coordinator to initiate a Title IX investigation by the University to determine if there was a violation by a University community member of the University's [Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy \(/policies/non-discrimination-anti-harassment-policy\)](#), which prohibits non-consensual sexual activity. Offer to assist the survivor in making a report, which can be done via phone (706.542.7912), [email \(mailto:ugaeoo@uga.edu\)](mailto:ugaeoo@uga.edu) or in person (119 Holmes-Hunter Bldg, on North campus right behind the Arch). Explain that you will have to inform the EOO/Title IX Coordinator of the incident but allow the survivor the option of making a direct report. Explain that if the survivor wants to remain anonymous, or does want the EOO/Title IX Coordinator to conduct an investigation, you will relay this information when informing the EOO/Title IX Coordinator of the incident. The EOO will honor the survivor's preference unless the reported facts suggest a threat to the future safety of an individual University Community member or to the University Community as a whole which requires the EOO to investigate. Where the reported facts require an EOO investigation, the individual requesting confidentiality or no-investigation will be informed before investigative action is taken.

Reporting to law enforcement and the EOO/Title IX Coordinator are not mutually exclusive options. A survivor can report to one, both or neither. However, investigations conducted by law enforcement and the EOO/Title IX Coordinator are separate and independent of one another.

Caveats about EOO/Title IX investigations:

- The EOO is not an advocate for either the survivor or the alleged perpetrator.
- No information about the incident or investigation is shared with parents of students, or third parties unrelated to the investigation, absent written permission from the subject student (pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act - FERPA).
- Amnesty provided for underage drinking/drug use by students if reporting sexual assault or participating in an EOO investigation.
- Preponderance-of-the-evidence standard (i.e., "more likely than not") used as required by federal regulatory guidelines. This is a lower standard of proof than beyond-a-reasonable-doubt, used in the criminal context.
- Single investigator model used. The EOO investigator decides whether there has been a policy violation based on all the information obtained. There is no hearing or "trial."
- Consequences can be significant if a policy violation is found – typically suspension or expulsion for non-consensual sexual activity.

OFFER A BRIDGE TO SUPPORT RESOURCES

Always provide referrals to counseling and support resources, even if the incident occurred in the past (even years ago). Resources available on the Athens, Georgia campus and in the local Athens area are available on the [EOO website \(/node/128\)](#). UGA's [Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Office \(RSVP\)](#) (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/rsvp/>) will endeavor to provide support to University community members

outside of Athens who have experienced sexual or relationship violence via email, telephone and or Skype. RSVP can be reached at (706) 542-7233.

Also, for remote locations, consult with your program director or administrator, human resources personnel or student support professional to identify local support resources.

FULFILL YOUR REPORTING OBLIGATION

Make a timely report to the EOO/Title IX Coordinator by:

- Phone – (706) 542-7912;
- Email – ugaeoo@uga.edu (<mailto:ugaeoo@uga.edu>); OR
- In-Person – 119 Holmes-Hunter Bldg. (on North campus behind the Arch)

Disclose all known information about the sexual assault and relay any requests for confidentiality or no-investigation.

Where a survivor has requested confidentiality and there is no immediate safety threat, you are not required to disclose information about the survivor's identity to any other UGA office or official (apart from the EOO/Title IX Coordinator), or to any third party, without the survivor's consent.

If you have questions about this SAR Protocol, please contact the EOO/Title IX Coordinator at (706) 542-7912 or ugaeoo@uga.edu (<mailto:ugaeoo@uga.edu>).

[The University of Georgia](#) | [Equal Opportunity Office](#)

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