

# Responding to Disclosures

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YOUR GUIDE TO SUPPORTING SOMEONE IMPACTED BY  
SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

"...YOU MAY BE THE LIGHTHOUSE  
IN SOMEONE ELSE'S STORM"  
- unknown

From the office of the Sexual Violence  
Prevention & Response Advocate



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to help staff and faculty respond with confidence, compassion and understanding when someone shares an experience of sexualized violence. Inside you will find tips on responding supportively, information on formal disclosing and reporting options, and a list of support services available on and off campus.

## SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

Is an umbrella term used to describe any act targeting a person's sexuality, gender or gender expression that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without that person's consent. It can include things like: unwanted kissing or touching; sharing of intimate images; coercion; sexual harassment and assault.

## INTERSECTIONALITY

It's important to use an intersectional lens when responding to disclosures. Intersectionality recognizes the integrative nature of social identities and social oppressions, including various forms of violence. An intersectional approach to Sexualized Violence considers the fact that the impact of Sexualized Violence can overlap and intersect with experiences of sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, classism, ableism and other forms of oppression.

## WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

### **Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Advocate**

t. 902-867-5601

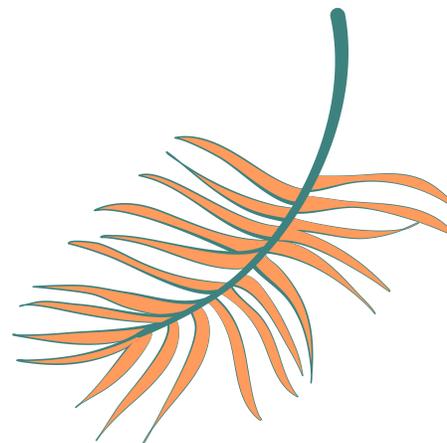
e. [hblackbu@stfx.ca](mailto:hblackbu@stfx.ca)

o. 313D Bloomfield Centre

<http://www2.mystfx.ca/visible-at-x/>

### **Nova Scotia Sexual Violence Strategy**

[www.breakthesilencens.ca](http://www.breakthesilencens.ca)



Adapted with permission from Dalhousie University

# RESPONDING

TIPS TO HELP YOU FOSTER CARING AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL RESPONSES WHEN SOMEONE SHARES AN EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

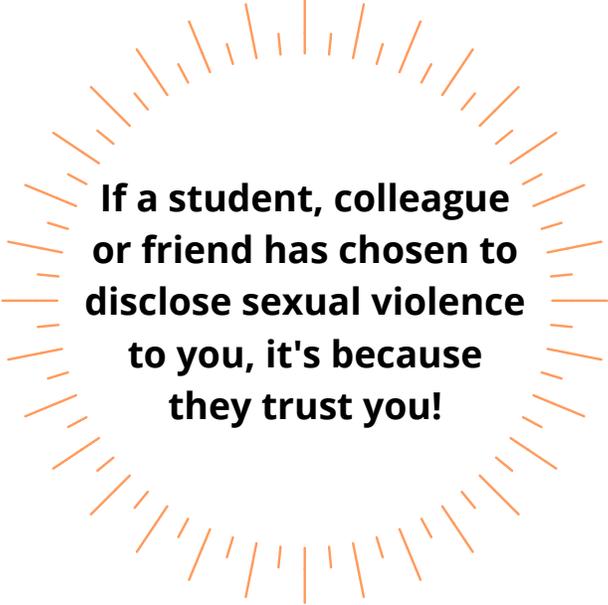
## 1. Listen

Listening without trying to “fix” the situation is a great way to show your support. Let the person tell you their story in their own words and at their own pace.

- try to be comfortable with silence
- allow the person to decide what they want to share
- do not press for more details than what is offered

## 3. Empower

Be transparent about limitations to confidentiality at the outset so the person knows what to expect before they provide details. Respect individual choice when possible. It's OK to not have all the answers. Get permission before referring to other services and supports.



**If a student, colleague or friend has chosen to disclose sexual violence to you, it's because they trust you!**

## 2. Believe

Many people worry that they will not be believed when they disclose. Remember, it is not your role to “prove” or “disprove” their story. It is important to validate their feelings and remind them that sexualized violence is never the fault of the person subjected to it!

# RESPONDING

WHEN SOMEONE SHARES AN EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: DO'S AND DON'TS

## WHAT TO SAY:

*"Thank you for sharing your experience with me. You are not alone. I believe you."*

- It's OK to express concern
- Explain any limits to your confidentiality  
e.g., violence perpetrated by staff/faculty must be reported to human resources.

*"What do you want to happen next?"  
"What do you need to feel supported?"*

- Offer choice and respect their decisions about which supports feel right
- See the back page for a list of local services and supports

*"Would you like to talk about some of the supports and resources available on campus and in the community?"*

- A disclosure to the Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Advocate (SVPR) allows for specialized advice, access to accommodations, reporting options, and support navigation
- A disclosure or report to the SVPR does not initiate a report to police, unless obligated by law

## WHAT NOT TO SAY:

*"Why were you there?" "Why didn't you leave?"  
"Why were you drinking?"*

- These statements are victim blaming
- The responsibility of sexualized violence lies with the perpetrator

*"You need to report this to the police so it doesn't happen to anyone else."*

- Restoring choice is an important part of the healing journey.
- The investigation and prosecution of sexualized violence can itself be traumatic.

*"It could have been worse." "Try to let it go." "Boys will be boys."*

- Minimizing the experience and harm of sexualized violence
- This normalizes and excuses sexualized violence

**There is no "right" or "wrong" way for a person to react after experiencing sexualized violence!**

# REFFERALS



SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF LOCAL RESOURCES

## If the individual is interested in on-campus support:

The **Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Advocate (SVPRA)** is a single point of contact, support, and liaison for Members of the StFX Community who have experienced sexual violence. The SVPRA can offer confidential support, crisis intervention, possible accommodations and reporting options, referrals to other services as needed, and ongoing support.

*"Would you like someone to reach out to you?  
I can help connect you"*

## If the individual refuses a referral: Respect their decision.

- Don't force the issue or trick them into going
- Try and leave the door open for later consideration

*"I respect your decision. I hope you will  
keep these options in mind. My door is always  
open."*

### Did you know?

The StFX Sexual Violence Policy requires that staff and faculty provide information about the SVPRA when someone shares an experience of Sexualized Violence.

### ARE THEY IN DANGER?

**Did the assault occur within 7 days?**

**Do they need medical attention?**

**Are they unsafe on campus?**

If they answered 'yes' to any of the above, you can suggest these first-response services:

**StFX Safety & Security**

**902.867.4444**

**Off-campus emergency services**

**911**

**SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner)**

**1.877.880.7263**

# REPORTING@ X

READ THE STFX SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY [HERE](#)

## DISCLOSURE

Disclosure refers to the sharing of information by an individual with the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Advocate (SVPRA) about an experience of sexualized violence that does not result in a formal investigation (Section 4 of the Sexual Violence Policy).



## REPORT

A formal Report is the sharing of information by the person who is reporting sexual violence to the SVPRA for the purpose of initiating an investigation that could result in disciplinary action being imposed on another member of the StFX Community (Section 10 of the Sexual Violence Policy).

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Disclosures and Reports of Sexualized Violence will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible, within the limitations described in the Sexualized Violence Policy.



# DISCLOSING AND REPORTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT STFX

## FOR STUDENTS

The Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Advocate (SVPR) coordinates formal disclosures, reports and referrals for support services on and off campus. These services are available to students, faculty and staff. To contact your SVPR email [hblackbu@stfx.ca](mailto:hblackbu@stfx.ca) or call 902-867-5601.

### PATHWAY TO SUPPORT

#### • DISCLOSURE •

INFORMING STFX FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

Does not result in an investigation.

A STUDENT CAN DECIDE TO TURN A DISCLOSURE INTO A REPORT AT ANY TIME

#### SUPPORTS

AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS:

- Health & Counselling Centre
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program
- Academic & diversity engagement advisors
- Mental health crisis line
- Good2Talk NS
- Residence life coordinators
- Human Rights & Equity
- RCMP
- Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association
- The Naomi Society
- Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia



#### IMMEDIATE MEASURES

AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

- Safety Planning
- Academic accommodation
- Residence re-location
- No contact orders
- Residence ban
- Suspension from varsity athletics
- Campus ban

#### • FORMAL REPORT •

INFORMING STFX FOR THE PURPOSES OF AN INVESTIGATION

- SVPR contacts VP Students who assigns investigator
- Investigator interviews all parties & collects relevant evidence
- Investigator submits detailed report of process, findings and potential outcomes to VP Students
- VP Students imposes outcomes if respondent found in violation of the policy

CHOOSING TO REPORT/DISCLOSE ON CAMPUS  
DOES NOT PREVENT YOU FROM REPORTING TO POLICE



# DISCLOSING AND REPORTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT STFX

## FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

The **Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Advocate (SVPR)** coordinates formal disclosures, reports and referrals for support services on and off campus. These services are available to students, faculty and staff. To contact your SVPR email [hblackbu@stfx.ca](mailto:hblackbu@stfx.ca) or call **902-867-5601**.

### PATHWAY TO SUPPORT

#### • DISCLOSURE •

INFORMING STFX FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

**Faculty and staff** are required to report incidences of sexual violence perpetrated by faculty/staff to the director of Human Resources or the responsible authority.

**A DISCLOSURE CAN BE CONVERTED TO A REPORT AT ANY TIME**

#### SUPPORTS

AVAILABLE TO STAFF/FACULTY:

- StFX Employee Assistance Program
- Human Rights & Equity
- Mental health crisis line
- RCMP
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program
- Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association
- The Naomi Society
- Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia



#### IMMEDIATE MEASURES

AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

- Safety Planning
- No contact/communication orders
- Change to work schedules or assignments
- Campus restrictions
- Campus ban
- Suspension

#### • FORMAL REPORT •

INFORMING STFX FOR THE PURPOSES OF AN INVESTIGATION

- SVPR contacts the responsible authority who assigns investigator
  - Investigative processes will comply with applicable collective agreements
- Investigator interviews all parties & collects relevant evidence
- Investigator submits detailed report of process, findings and potential outcomes to Responsible Authority
- Responsible authority imposes outcomes if respondent found in violation of the policy

CHOOSING TO REPORT/DISCLOSE ON CAMPUS DOES NOT PREVENT YOU FROM REPORTING TO POLICE

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES: VP Finance & Administration – for employees | Academic VP & Provost – for faculty/teaching staff

# CAMPUS RESOURCES

## **Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Advocate**

t. 902-867-5601  
e. hblackbu@stfx.ca  
o. 313D Bloomfield Centre

## **Health & Counselling Center**

t. 902-867-2263  
o. 305 Bloomfield Centre  
w. [www2.mystfx.ca/health-and-counselling/](http://www2.mystfx.ca/health-and-counselling/)

## **Human Rights and Equity Advisor**

t. 902-867-5306  
e. mfogarty@stfx.ca  
o. 434 Bloomfield Center

## **Sexual and Gender Diversity Student Advising**

t. 902-867-3870  
e. cgoering@stfx.ca  
o. 431 Bloomfield Centre

## **African Descent Student Advising**

t. 902-867-5455  
e.  
o. 433 Bloomfield Center

## **Indigenous Student Advising**

t. 902-867-3934  
e. tfrancis@stfx.ca  
o. 105 Coady West (Markin Complex)

## **International Student Advising**

t. 902-867-3678  
e. drasmuss@stfx.ca  
o. 109 Nicholson Tower

## **Student Life Office**

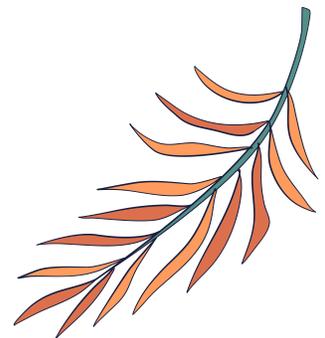
t. 902-867-3934  
o. 306A Bloomfield Center  
w.

## **Peer Support Program**

e. peersupportprogram@stfx.ca  
o. 417 Bloomfield Centre  
w. [facebook.com/StFXPSP/](https://facebook.com/StFXPSP/)

## **Chaplaincy**

t. 902-867-2320  
e. mmcintyr@stfx.ca  
o. 403 Bloomfield Centre



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## **Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association**

Suite 204, 219 Main Street Antigonish  
p. 902-863-6221  
e. [info@awrcsasa.ca](mailto:info@awrcsasa.ca)  
w. [www.awrcsasa.ca](http://www.awrcsasa.ca)

## **RCMP Antigonish**

4 Fairview Street, Antigonish  
p. 902-863-6500 (911 for emergencies)  
w. [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/detach/en/d/368](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/detach/en/d/368)

## **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE)**

p. 1-877-880-7263  
e. [info@awrcsasa.ca](mailto:info@awrcsasa.ca)  
w. [www.awrcsasa.ca/sexual-assault-services/sane-program/](http://www.awrcsasa.ca/sexual-assault-services/sane-program/)

## **Lindsay's Health Centre for Women**

p. 902-863-6221  
e. [info@awrcsasa.ca](mailto:info@awrcsasa.ca)  
w. [www.awrcsasa.ca](http://www.awrcsasa.ca)

## **Naomi Society**

Unit 103 - 133 Church St Antigonish  
p. 902-863-3807  
e. [info@naomisociety.ca](mailto:info@naomisociety.ca)  
w. [www.naomisociety.ca](http://www.naomisociety.ca)

## **Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia**

p. 1-866-330-5952  
w. [www.ensfamilyservice.ca](http://www.ensfamilyservice.ca)

## **Men's Health Center**

275 Main Street, Suite 203 Antigonish  
p. 902-863-2358  
w. [ensfamilyservice.ca/programs/mens-health-centre/](http://ensfamilyservice.ca/programs/mens-health-centre/)

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

[www.breakthesilencens.ca/training](http://www.breakthesilencens.ca/training)

**NSMental Health Crisis Line: 1-888-429-8167**

**Good2TalkNS: 1-833-292-3698**

**Crisis Text Line: text "GOOD2TALKNS" to 686868**

## **Legal Advice for Sexual Assault Survivors**

p. 211 to register  
w. [novascotia.ca/sexualassaultlegaladvice/](http://novascotia.ca/sexualassaultlegaladvice/)

