

Responding to disclosures of sexual harm

Student Leader Guide



University of
South Australia

What is sexual harm?

Sexual harm is the overarching term used at UniSA for any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. Sexual harm includes sexual assault and sexual harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS:

- An **unwelcome** sexual advance or request for sexual favours, or **unwelcome** conduct of a sexual nature, which makes another person feel **offended, humiliated or intimidated**.

It can be written, verbal or physical, and can happen in-person or online. Examples include: sexual jokes; leering; obscene gestures; unwanted requests for dates or for requests for sex; promise of a 'reward' for sexual favours; unwanted physical contact; sexually explicit images and videos; and sexually offensive communications.

SEXUAL ASSAULT IS:

- Any type of **unwanted** sexual act inflicted on a person that they have not freely and voluntarily consented to, have withdrawn consent to, or occurs in circumstances where they are incapable of giving free and voluntary consent.

It can include a variety of unwanted sexual behaviours ranging from unwanted sexualised touching through to sexual intercourse without consent. Sexual assault can include behaviours that involve the use of force, threats, coercion or control towards a person and often involves exploitation, betrayal of trust and misuse of positional power.

What to do if someone discloses sexual harm to you?

01



LISTEN. BELIEVE.

02



SUPPORT. REFER.

1. LISTEN & BELIEVE



Before you sit with someone, check in with yourself:

- Do you have time to listen right now?
- Do you feel emotionally able to hear someone's story?
- If not, make a time to follow up with the student later (within the same day). *"I'm a little busy right now, can I call you in half an hour?"* If you're unable to do this, move straight to step 2.

LISTEN without judgement:

- Consider moving to a private space if necessary to ensure confidentiality.
- Focus on their emotional reactions and needs (not your own feelings about what happened).
- Let them tell their story at their own pace.

Remember:

- It's ok to take your time to respond.
- Remain calm.
- Do not attempt to 'fix'.

BELIEVE

- Take the person disclosing seriously and recognise the courage it takes to disclose.

"Thank you for telling me."

"I'm sorry that happened to you."

"That sounds really hard."

2. SUPPORT & REFER

If there seems to be immediate risks to someone's safety:

- Call **Campus Security (24/7) - 1800 500 911** or **88888** from internal UniSA phone
- Call **OOO**

Remember:

If a student is over 18 you cannot force them to report to Police or seek medical or other support.

Consider asking the person:

- "What do you need right now?"
- "Do you feel safe right now?"
- "Do you need support?"
- "The University takes these issues really seriously and I want to make sure you get the best information and support."

If no immediate risk you can provide students with contact information about the following UniSA services:

UniSA Designated First Responders – Campus Security Officers, Counselling staff, Access & Inclusion staff, Wurringka staff.

UniSA Counselling Service – Free and confidential counselling for all enrolled students with in-person, online or phone appointments available:

- Book online (unisa.edu.au/counselling) or call **1300 301 703** (business hours)
- Triage and Specialist Counsellor: **8302 1055** or counsellors@unisa.edu.au
- Out-of-Hours Crisis Line: call **1300 107 441** or text **0488 884 163**

UniSA Medical Clinic – Located at City East and City West campuses with minimal gap fees.

- Book online (unisamedical.com.au) or call **1300 172 996**



You can also:

- Direct them to UniSA's sexual harm website (unisa.edu.au/SASH) for information about support services and reporting options.
- Make them aware they can choose to notify the University about the incident via the online reporting form.



What to avoid:

- Making assumptions.
- Interrogating the person/attempting to investigate the incident(s).
- Blaming the person or minimising the behaviour:
"It's just a compliment."
"He's always like that, don't take it personally."
- Acting without consent of the person disclosing (unless there is a risk of further harm).
- Breaching confidentiality by sharing details of disclosures with other peers.

Remember:

As a peer you are there to **listen, believe, support** and **refer** to other services that will do the rest. You do not need to be a counsellor and it is not your responsibility to fix this situation.

SUPPORT FOR YOU

Offering support to a survivor of sexual harm can be emotionally distressing and you may find that you need support yourself. It is recommended that you look after your own mental health and talk to a trained counsellor if you need additional support.

When seeking support for yourself please maintain the confidentiality of those involved by utilising services such as the UniSA Counselling Service. The Specialist Counsellor is available on **8302 1055** or by emailing counsellors@unisa.edu.au

Confidential advice on managing a disclosure can be provided during business hours by contacting the UniSA SASH team on **8302 1057** or emailing respect@unisa.edu.au

External support options

1800RESPECT - 1800 737 732 – 24/7 telephone counselling for people who have experienced domestic, family or sexual violence.

YARROW PLACE - 1800 817 421 – 24/7 crisis support for a recent sexual assault, as well as therapeutic counselling and support for people who have experienced a sexual assault (who were 16 years and over at time of assault).

LIFELINE - 13 11 14 or text 0477 13 11 14 or online – 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention for any person experiencing emotional distress.

13YARN – 13 92 76 – 24/7 crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

QLIFE - 1800 184 527 or webchat (3pm-midnight every day) – Anonymous LGBTQIA+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

SHINE SA - 8300 5300 – Sexual health and relationship wellbeing service providing clinical and counselling (in-person/online) support. Inclusive of LGBTQIA+, First Nations, CALD, people with lived experience of disability, and young people (25 and under).