



Action Items to Improve Campus Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

The following is a comprehensive list of action items to help improve campus sexual assault prevention, incident response, and partner engagement. While many of these action items relate to improving incident response, remember that prevention is key to building and maintaining a healthy campus environment.

Build Your Campus Team

- Create a statement of goals for the team, noting the benefits.
- Identify your team: Assign roles as decision-makers, service providers, and first responders to students. Identify who provides gap services and 24/7 response.

On Campus

- Campus security or public safety
- Health services
- Counseling services
- Specific sexual assault services (if separate)
- Health promotion/Sexual assault prevention
- Title IX
- Behavioral Intervention Team
- Student Conduct
- Legal/compliance
- Residential Life
- Campus Life
- Athletics

Off Campus

- Local police department(s)
- Local hospital and emergency department
- Health department/social service providers
- Shelters
- Advocacy centers

- Recruit team members with diverse lived and work experiences to capture a range of valuable perspectives.

Prevention and Response

- Conduct a regular needs assessment for the sexual assault prevention and response program. Assess: available resources (e.g., funding, staff, time), processes, partners, and other assets to identify gaps or areas of unmet need.
- Communicate regularly with team members. Meet monthly at a minimum to develop or review response protocols to address gaps and needs. Meet monthly to review prevention plans and consistently, following prevention activities, to debrief.
- Establish clear written protocols for a chain of command among team members including after-hours responses and notifications among on- and off-campus partners.
- Provide faculty and staff with training on trauma-informed approaches, including but not limited to the following:
 - Trauma-informed responses
 - Implicit bias
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Accessibility (DEIJA) topics
 - Documenting incidents (including Clery) and campus climate data
- Staff training should also be provided to faculty and non-traditional partners such as housekeeping, dining, groundskeeping, and special event security staff.

- Host ongoing incident response trainings (recommended quarterly):
 - Facilitate mock scenarios
 - Hold after-action debriefs to assess response and include discussion of potential emotional responses from staff

Engage the Campus

- Maintain a regular presence on campus by attending and hosting events to connect with students and broaden visibility of sexual assault prevention and response services.
- Partner with student and campus organizations to co-host events, collaborate on material development, and share resources and information.
- Engage with diverse campus groups including EMS, peer counselors, peer educators, resident assistants, teaching assistants, student mental health clubs, medical professional students, Greek life, Deans' offices, housing, athletic programs, LGBTQIA+ groups, ethnic/cultural groups, career services, international students, financial aid, IT, and others.
- Disseminate a comprehensive list of campus and community resources via multiple platforms (e.g., websites, social media, printouts).
- Provide consistent messaging about campus sexual assault prevention and response teams and services through promotional materials (e.g., social media, magnets).
- Regularly update campus sexual assault prevention and response websites and other resources with information about support services, policies, reporting options, victim advocacy, health and mental health resources.

Engage Off-Campus Partners

- Find and proactively engage off-campus partners. Build mutual goals or motivations to do sexual assault prevention and response work together.
- Partner with various types of external organizations:
 - SANE nurses and/or rape crisis centers
 - Local and campus hospitals
 - Local and state police units
 - Community agencies, advocacy groups, local businesses (e.g., bars)
- Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with off-campus partners.
- Share resources bi-directionally with off-campus partners, when possible.
- Explore potential resources and staff availability for engaging partners to help with incident response (e.g., hotline, off-campus investigators).
- Conduct regular trainings with response staff and partners (e.g., ResLife) to review the incident response process.

Actively Communicate with Campus Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

- Build personal rapport and trust with team members to improve collaboration.
- Maintain a phone tree including personal and work numbers and emails to facilitate rapid, seamless communication.
- Convene the team through regular meetings to stay updated and coordinated.

- Appoint one individual to convene and coordinate the team regarding prevention efforts. Appoint one individual to ensure smooth response operations. In smaller schools, may be the same individual.
- Prepare and share a clear agenda before every meeting; share meeting notes that highlight important updates and decisions with the team afterward.
- Designate a point person to address specific tasks – clearly communicate who is responsible.
- Respect role boundaries, especially when collaborating with staff who are confidential resources or liaising with off-campus partners.
- Print and distribute information to students to increase awareness of prevention and response resources.

Update Campus Policies

- Share campus policies publicly in accordance with Clery Act federal regulations.
- Appoint someone to review and communicate policy and regulation changes to the team.
- Ensure onboarding and training protocols are inclusive of local, state, and federal sexual assault response and reporting policies as part of the annual Clery Act review.

Implement Prevention Initiatives

- Prevention education is required for all employees and students. Programs must be culturally relevant and inclusive.

Core components to programs should include:

- A statement that the school prohibits the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking
- Definitions of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in the applicable jurisdiction
- Definition of consent in relation to sexual activity in the applicable jurisdiction
- Description of safe and positive options for bystander intervention
- Information on risk reduction
- Information on the school's policies/procedures after a sex offense occurs

Respond to Incidents

- Prioritize the physical, mental, and emotional safety of students during an incident response.
- Incorporate a regularly updated phone tree of response staff and relevant partners (e.g., local police, rape crisis center) in incident protocol material.
- Standardize the information collection process and language used during incident response.
- Use a reporting system (e.g., Maxient) to share information and coordinate communication effectively.
- Develop clear protocols with local, city, and state police for handling off-campus incidents. Policies should draw clear jurisdictional lines, define roles and responsibilities for all team members, and establish an information sharing process from incident investigations.
- Develop a plan for providing available resources to students during an incident response. Steps should be clear for students to follow and include a comprehensive list of available on- and off-campus resources. Ensure these materials are regularly updated.
- Develop protocol for warm handoffs when supporting students.
- Regularly review and communicate mandatory reporter protocol with faculty and staff under Title IX and Clery.
- Review the incident response process as a team and with partners (e.g., ResLife) after incidents to assess how the process works and identify steps to improve coordination and response.

Incorporate Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

- Incorporate trauma-informed care principles into campus sexual assault prevention activities, incidence response processes and protocols.
- Provide role-based, tailored training on trauma-informed care practices to campus faculty, staff, and on- and off-campus partners. ([Learn more from SAMHSA and CDC](#) and [American College Health Association](#))
- Identify opportunities to reduce a students' need to repeat their story to multiple faculty, staff, or partners while still adhering to confidentiality and privacy rules.
- Understand the cultural diversity of your campus and be responsive to diverse needs during sexual assault prevention and response discussions.
- Practice having conversations that are respectful of students' culture, gender identity, and past experience with sexual assault.

Cultivate Staff Well-being

- Regularly assess staff workload, responsibilities, training needs and vicarious/compassion fatigue to combat burnout.
- Routinely check-in with prevention and response staff about mental health, work-life balance, and the need for additional resources.
- Identify opportunities for refining roles and responsibilities, bringing in support staff, and incorporating breaks and social connections to address fatigue and burnout.
- Compensate staff through competitive salaries and benefits, professional growth opportunities, and flexible work options to increase staff retention and reduce turnover.
- Recognize and praise staff contributions and efforts related to prevention and incidence response.

Obtain Funding and Resources

- Explore and include campus leadership in discussions about potential grant funding, university funding, etc. to support campus sexual assault prevention and response efforts.
- Explore opportunities for resource sharing with local and off-campus partners.



Role-Specific Action Items

The following list of role-based action items can help individuals, teams, departments, and partners identify and assign critical steps for establishing and improving their campus sexual assault prevention and response efforts.

Title IX

- Standardize the incident investigation process by developing trauma-informed scripts and key phrases for Title IX staff to use and templates for information collection and reporting.
- Ensure the Title IX office, including the coordinator, deputy coordinator, and advocates have a regular and visible presence on campus.
- Clearly define the roles and expectations of Title IX, police, and others during the investigation and information collection process.
- Regularly train investigators, hearing boards, and other decision makers on key topics:
 - Trauma-informed interview techniques
 - Prevention of retraumatization
 - Implicit bias
 - DEIJA to intersections of violence
 - Impacts of alcohol and other drugs on memory and incapacitation
 - Victim blaming
 - Retaliation
 - False reporting

Health and Wellness

- Clarify confidential versus non-confidential reporter status to students reporting an incident.
- Provide a standardized list of resources for students reporting an incident: Steps should be clear and include a comprehensive list of on- and off-campus resources.
- Standardize the information collected during an incident report and language used during response to avoid re-traumatization.
 - Develop a trauma screening protocol
 - Implement trauma assessment as part of intake process
- Establish protocols for making direct referrals to partners:
 - Advocates
 - Counseling
 - DEIJA Office
 - Emergency services, forensic nurse examiner
 - Public safety
 - Title IX
 - Legal
- Ensure training to all health and wellness staff:
 - Title IX and Clery reporting
 - Incident response protocols
 - Trauma-informed, evidence-based, culturally responsive treatments

Safety and Security

- Regularly patrol on campus to ensure student safety, raise student awareness of the resources available, and build trust among students through visibility.
- Standardize the incident investigation process by developing trauma-informed scripts for responders and investigators to use and templates for information collection and reporting.
- Establish steps and channels for coordinating with partners:
 - Coordinate warm hand-offs and information exchange with on- and off-campus health services.
 - Develop MOUs and share information bi-directionally with off-campus local and state police.

Dean's Office

- Appoint someone to review and communicate policy/regulation changes to the team.
- Ensure campus assault and reporting policies are updated annually.
- Provide housing, counseling, and academic resources for students reporting incidents, including housing changes and informing professors of student circumstances.
- Mandate additional trauma-informed care training to campus faculty, staff, and external partners.
- Ensure the Dean, Associate Dean, or office administrative staff regularly attend on-campus events to maintain visibility as a resource for students.
- Collaborate with other campus departments and explore potential for grant funding or support other campus department grant applications with a letter of endorsement.

About This Checklist

This checklist was developed through the research partnership of NORC at the University of Chicago, the American College Health Association (ACHA), and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Agencies (IACLEA). A nationally representative sample of 7 campuses contributed to this work through the [Campus Sexual Assault and Response](#) project. This research was supported by Grant No. 2019-VA-CX-K001 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Guidance in this document does not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

