

Title IX and Gender-Based Misconduct

A Toolkit for Employees

The
University
of Akron

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Reporting Obligations

Your Responsibility to Report Certain Conduct

As an employee at UA, you are a “responsible employee,” as that term is defined through guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education. As a responsible employee, **you have an affirmative duty to report certain prohibited sex-based conduct that you learn about.** You and/or UA could face severe consequences if you become aware of prohibited conduct and fail to report it to a Title IX coordinator.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, sexual misconduct, stalking, gender-based harassment, or retaliation against someone reporting misconduct.

Whom to notify or to call with questions or to report a concern:

Chelsea Polly Title IX Coordinator 330-972-7276 cpolly@uakron.edu	
Emily Lenke Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Employees 330-972-6195 emf22@uakron.edu	Michael Strong Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students 330-972-6048 mstrong@uakron.edu
Gordon Holly Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Regional Campuses 330-972-8900 gholly@uakron.edu	Jacklin Wallgren Senior Associate Athletic Director for Institutional Services 330-972-6280 jwallgren@uakron.edu

Conduct may also be reported through the Title IX webpage at <https://www.uakron.edu/title-ix/report/>.

Conduct That Must Be Reported

The type of conduct that is required to be reported includes but is not limited to:

- Sexual misconduct, which includes any sexual act directed against another person without their consent, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and indecent exposure.
- Intimate partner violence or interpersonal violence (dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, battery).

- Sexual harassment (quid pro quo, hostile environment, retaliation).
- Gender-based discrimination.
- Retaliation against any individual for reporting conduct under Title IX, participating in an investigation under Title IX or acting as a witness in a Title IX investigation or proceeding.

What to Do If You Have A Concern

Contact a Deputy Title IX Coordinator to discuss your situation. You can contact them by phone, email, in person or by submitting an [online report](#) through the Title IX webpage. A Deputy Title IX Coordinator can discuss your concerns, connect you to resources and support options, and discuss options for proceeding with your concerns. Reporting does not obligate you to file a complaint or request an investigation.

What to Do When A Student Comes Forward with Information About Prohibited Conduct

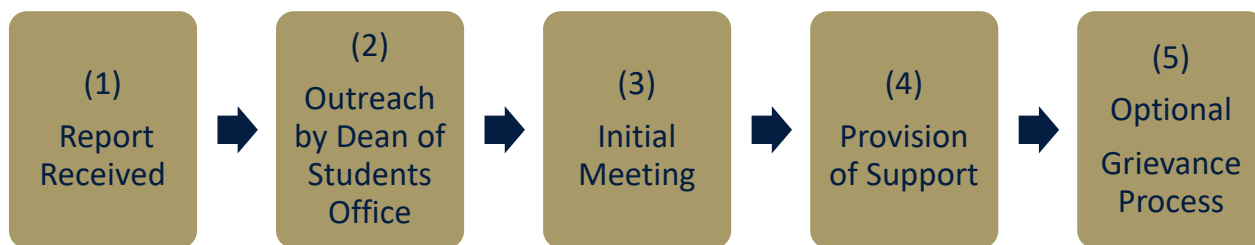
Your duty as a “responsible employee” requires you to notify a Title IX coordinator on campus. You are not able to keep the disclosure confidential. While you are required to report the disclosure, your report does not obligate the individual you are referring to file a complaint or request an investigation.

You could say, “Thank you for sharing this. I’m sure that was difficult. I must tell you before you go on that I am required to report what you tell me to a Title IX coordinator on campus. He/she will determine what action is needed to keep you and the rest of campus safe. If you would prefer to keep this information confidential, there are others with whom you should talk.” You then could refer to the student to a confidential employee.

Your duty as a “responsible employee” requires you to notify a Title IX coordinator on campus.

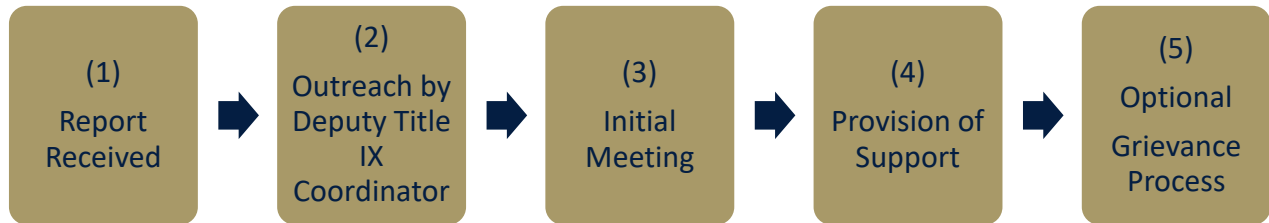
Learn more at www.uakron.edu/confidential. For victims of sexual misconduct, this page offers guidance and resources: www.uakron.edu/help.

Title IX Process for Student Concerns



- (1) A report of potential conduct prohibited by the Gender-Based Misconduct protocol is received by the Title IX staff either in person, by email or through the online reporting form.
- (2) The Dean of Students Office initiates contact with the student who may have been subjected to this conduct. The student may choose whether to respond to the outreach.
- (3) If the student wishes, they meet with the Dean of Students Office to discuss the impact of the conduct. The Office assists with safety planning, discusses options for support, including counseling, or academic accommodations. The Office will also discuss formal complaint procedures or steps the University may take to ensure the behavior does not happen again.
- (4) The Dean of Students Office will arrange for the necessary support to be provided. Details of the reported conduct are not released. Continuing support is always available and not dependent on participation in investigations or the resolution of formal complaints.
- (5) The student may choose to file a formal complaint. Options for resolving a formal complaint may include an informal process or an investigation and hearing. If the other person involved is a student, the investigation will be conducted by the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards. If the other person involved is an employee or visitor to the campus, the investigation will be conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office. Criminal investigations will be conducted by the University of Akron Police Department, or other appropriate law enforcement agency.

Title IX Process for Employee Concerns



- (1) A report of potential conduct prohibited by the Gender-Based Misconduct protocol is received by the Title IX staff either in person, by email or through the online reporting form.
- (2) The Deputy Title IX Coordinator for employees will contact the impacted employee. The employee chooses whether to respond.
- (3) If the employee wishes, they meet with the Deputy Title IX Coordinator to discuss the impact of the conduct. The Deputy Coordinator will assist with safety planning, discuss available options for support, and complaint procedures or steps the University may take to address the concerns.
- (4) The Deputy Title IX Coordinator will arrange for the necessary support to be provided. Details of the reported conduct are not released. Continuing support is always available and not dependent on participation in investigations or the resolution formal complaints.
- (5) The employee may choose to file a formal complaint. Options for resolving a formal complaint may include an informal process or an investigation and hearing. If the other person involved is a student, the investigation will be conducted by the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards. If the other person involved is an employee or visitor to the campus, the investigation will be conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office. Criminal investigations will be conducted by the University of Akron Police Department, or other appropriate law enforcement agency.

Frequently Asked Questions about Gender-Based Misconduct

Why am I required to report?

In 2019, the University conducted a survey to determine the experiences of its students during their time at the University. A total of 837 students responded, providing the following information:

- 12% stated they had been stalked;
- 16% stated they had been subjected to non-consensual sexual contact;
- 6% stated they had been subjected to non-consensual sexual intercourse; and
- 8% stated they had been subjected to interpersonal violence.

Knowing that our students, faculty and staff have experienced such behaviors requires steps to provide help, support and access to a grievance process. The University cannot take these actions without knowing of the concerns. We rely on employees, students and community members to share information regarding these concerns so that we are able to respond.

If I file a report, am I saying this conduct happened?

No. A report only states that you have information about a situation that may fall under the Interim Title IX & Gender-Based Misconduct Policy and Protocols. It does not require you to state that the conduct definitely occurred or that it would constitute a policy violation. It simply reports the information relayed to you, or which you observed, without inclusion of your personal thoughts, speculation or judgment.

What happens after I file a report?

After a report is received, the appropriate Deputy Title IX Coordinator will contact the individual that may have experienced the behavior to arrange an initial meeting. During this meeting, the Deputy Title IX Coordinator will assess the individual's safety and conduct safety planning, discuss and evaluate supportive measures to enable ongoing access to and participation in University classes and activities, and coordinate access to professional services including medical and mental health services. This meeting will also include a discussion of the Title IX grievance process to allow an individual to understand options through the University to formally address their concerns and permit them to make an informed decision on how they wish to proceed.

While a Deputy Title IX Coordinator will call that individual, they have full control over whether they wish to speak with the Deputy Title IX Coordinator and what steps they would like the University to take.

Am I forcing someone to go through a process they may not want?

No. While a Deputy Title IX Coordinator will call that individual, they have full control over whether they wish to speak with the Deputy Title IX Coordinator and what steps they would like the University to take. Supportive services and investigations are always offered, but no individual is required to respond or accept any or all of those offers.

Do I hear anything about the outcome?

Outcomes of Title IX proceedings are shared only with the parties involved. If you are a party to the proceedings, you will have the opportunity to participate in the process and be notified of the outcome of the process. If you are reporting on behalf of another individual, you will be contacted to confirm that the report has been received but you will not be notified of the outcome. You may be contacted by the appropriate Deputy Title IX Coordinator if there are steps that you can take to help support the individual with a specific concern or issue.

Can I follow up with the individual who told me about the situation?

Experiencing sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking can leave the individual feeling as though they are powerless or have lost control. It is important to allow that individual to regain that feeling of being in control. Individuals can also feel judged or ashamed of their choices or behavior, making follow up questions about a disclosure uncomfortable or awkward. To help, we recommend that you allow the individual space to decide whether, where and when to discuss the incident. A kind word or greeting when you see them can be meaningful and helpful. Please see the Toolkit section on “Tips for Discussions with Students” for additional guidance on how to navigate these difficult conversations.

If you notice a marked change or decline in their behavior, please contact the appropriate Deputy Title IX Coordinator so additional outreach or follow up can be done. Some changes to look for include:

- Deterioration in quality of work and classroom performance;
- Drop in grades;
- Repeated requests for extensions;
- Missed assignments;
- Repeated absences;
- Disorganized or erratic performances;
- Creative work or writing with themes of extreme hopelessness, isolation, rage, fear or despair;

- Direct statements about distress because of problems with family, friends or boyfriend/girlfriend;
- Unprovoked anger or hostility;
- Exaggerated or uncharacteristic personality traits – suddenly withdrawn or more animated than usual;
- Excessive dependency;
- Tearfulness;
- Expressing hopelessness, fear, worthlessness;
- Classmates expressing concern about student;
- Deterioration in physical appearance;
- Lack of personal hygiene;
- Excessive fatigue; or
- Visible weight changes.

If I know the person that is being accused of this behavior, can I say something to them about the report?

It is preferable not to tell the other person and allow the individual raising the concern the space to determine how to proceed, as well as allow the Title IX team the opportunity to address the concerns. If the behavior negatively impacts the classroom (for example, completing group work assignments or someone making disruptive or inappropriate comments) or the workplace (for example the two individuals work closely together), contact the appropriate Deputy Title IX Coordinator for guidance on how best to proceed.

In interacting with someone against whom a complaint has been filed, it is important to remember that they may also be experiencing stress, discomfort and anxiety. They should be offered the same support and considerations offered to those who have raised the concern. Decisions on whether behavior violates policies are only made after an investigation and hearing. Even then, it is the responsibility of a hearing officer and the Title IX Coordinator to determine appropriate sanctions and remedies for the behavior.

Can I get more training on these issues?

Yes! Training is offered yearly to all employees through an online interactive webinar hosted on Brightspace. Live, in person training sessions can also be scheduled. Contact the Dean of Students Office for training aimed towards students. Contact the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity for training aimed towards employees. These Offices

are also happy to talk individually to address any specific questions, concerns or feedback you may have.

I am interested in being more involved. Is there a way to do so?

The University's Sexual Assault and Violence Education Team (or SAVE Team) is a group of employees, students and community members who work together to create an inclusive, diverse, and healthy campus community free from sexual violence. They take steps to empower a community response through evidence-based education, support, and training to prevent and reduce the impact of gender-based misconduct, including sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment for all those at the University of Akron. For more information about the SAVE Team, including how to join, contact Kelsea Daniluk at kld67@uakron.edu or visit the SAVE's Team's website at <https://www.uakron.edu/save-team/>.

Who can I call for more information or questions?

The Title IX Team welcomes questions, comments or feedback and is happy to talk through any situations or concerns that you may have. You may contact the Title IX Team members at:

- Chelsea Polly, Title IX Coordinator; 330-972-7276 or cpolly@uakron.edu
- Michael Strong, Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students; 330-972-6048 or mstrong@uakron.edu
- Emily Lenke, Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Employees; 330-972-6195 or emf22@uakron.edu
- Jacklin Wallgren, Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Athletics; 330-972-6280 or jwallgren@uakron.edu
- Gordon Holly, Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Regional Campuses; 330-972-8900 or gholly@uakron.edu

Tips for Having Disclosure Discussions

- As soon as prudent, inform them that while your conversation will be private, it will not be confidential, given your status as a Responsible Employee. The University takes these matters very seriously and after your conversation, you will be calling the appropriate Deputy Title IX Coordinator.
- Listen without judgment and offer your support. "Thank you for telling me. I'm sure that was difficult. Can I direct you to some resources?"
- Address any safety or medical concerns. Inform them of the importance of preserving evidence. A person does not need to make a report or press charges to receive medical care.
- Report all concerns that are brought to you as concerns of sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, sexual harassment, gender discrimination or retaliation. You do not have to agree with the student's characterization of the conduct. By making a report, you are not stating that there was in fact a violation of this policy. Rather, you are alerting those that review these matters to contact involved persons and follow up.
- The Dean of Students Office will offer support and accommodations to students. Support is individually tailored to each student's needs. The Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Employees will offer support and accommodations to employees. Options may include counseling, no-contact directives, schedule changes, financial assistance and adjustments to work or living situations.
- Explain what will happen after the conversation: that you will contact the Deputy Title IX Coordinator, offer to call after they leave or while they sit with you, and the Deputy Title IX Coordinator will contact them directly. They will have choices moving forward about whether to respond to outreach or seek assistance with the Deputy Title IX Coordinator or any other offices – that will be completely up to them.
- Encourage the individual to report the misconduct directly to both police, where appropriate, and the Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

Listen without judgment and offer your support.

- After you have reported to the Deputy Title IX Coordinator these situations should be kept on a "need to know" basis to protect the parties' privacy and the integrity of any investigations.

- You may want to follow up with the individual to see how they are doing or if they are getting the assistance they need. It is typically best to allow them to maintain control of the process and ask them about the situation only if they bring it up to you first.

From <https://www.uakron.edu/title-ix/give-help/faculty>

Tips for Introducing Sensitive Topics

It can be difficult to initiate conversation about sensitive topics. Below are some helpful tips and resources to assist.

Be prepared.

- Prepare a list of contacts and resources ahead of time so that they are easily accessible when they are needed. Keep them with you and in your office so someone can quickly and discretely receive resources in the moment.
- If you are initiating the conversation, write down 2 or 3 things that you want to communicate during the discussion to keep your thoughts organized and focused.
- Proactively work on improving active listening skills:
<https://psychcentral.com/lib/become-a-better-listener-active-listening/>
 - **Restating** - show you are listening, repeat every so often what you think the person said — not by parroting, but by paraphrasing what you heard in your own words. For example, “Let’s see if I’m clear about this. . .”
 - **Summarizing** - Bring together the facts and pieces of the problem to check understanding — for example, “So it sounds to me as if . . .” Or, “Is that it?”
 - **Minimal encouragers** - Use brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and show you are listening — for example, “umm-hmmm,” “Oh?” “I understand,” “Then?” “And?”
 - **Reflecting** - Instead of just repeating, reflect the speaker’s words in terms of feelings — for example, “This seems really important to you. . .”
 - **Giving feedback** - Let the person know what your initial thoughts are on the situation. Share pertinent information, observations, insights, and experiences. Then listen carefully to confirm.
 - **Emotion labeling** - Putting feelings into words will often help a person to see things more objectively. To help the person begin, use “door openers” — for example, “I’m sensing that you’re feeling frustrated. . . worried. . . anxious. . .”

- **Validation** - Acknowledge the individual's problems, issues, and feelings. Listen openly and with empathy, and respond in an interested way — for example, "I appreciate your willingness to talk about such a difficult issue. . ."
- **Effective pause** - Deliberately pause at key points for emphasis. This will tell the person you are saying something that is very important to them.
- **Silence** - Allow for comfortable silences to slow down the exchange. Give a person time to think as well as talk. Silence can also be very helpful in diffusing an unproductive interaction.
- **"I" messages** - By using "I" in your statements, you focus on the problem not the person. An I-message lets the person know what you feel and why — for example, "I know you have a lot to say, but I need to. . ." Be cautious of "you" or "but" which can feel accusatory or contradictory and lead to a defensive response. Phrases like "you may not want to hear this," "I'm just being honest" or "don't take this the wrong way" can also be counterproductive to an open discussion.
- **Redirecting** - If someone is showing signs of being overly aggressive, agitated, or angry, this is the time to shift the discussion to another topic.

Allow space for one person to speak without being interrupted.

- Allow space for one person to speak without being interrupted. Once they have shared the information that they wish to share, you can follow the steps outlined above for reflecting, validating and asking any questions needed to understand what assistance the person is seeking.
- Don't make promises you can't keep. Resist the urge to promise that the situation will be kept secret or immediately resolved.

Create a safe environment:

- Make individuals aware that they can come to you with difficult issues and that you are available to help.

- Create boundaries to make it clear that hurtful or offensive comments will not be tolerated.
- Make clear that conversations will be kept private, but not confidential as all matters involving sexual misconduct must be reported to a Deputy Title IX Coordinator.
- Foster an environment where individuals feel safe to express their views with you.
- Affirm the courage it took for the person to talk about the topic.
- Never dismiss or belittle allegations.

Offer support:

- Thank the person for their trust and offer what help you can.
 - Responses like “I am so sorry,” “what happened wasn’t your fault,” and “how can I support you?” help promote healing and let them know that they are not alone.
 - If you are initiating the conversation, frame it from a place of concern. Try “I’m concerned about you because I’ve noticed....;” “I’ve noticed a change in your work lately. Help me understand what happened;” or “I have noticed you’ve been missing a lot of [class][work] lately, and I was worried. I wanted to check in to see if everything is ok.”
- Do not ask the person for details about what happened. Allow the person to share what they are comfortable sharing.
- Provide resources, ask what you can do that would be most helpful, ascertain if the individual needs medical attention.
- Respond calmly and compassionately, without shock or judgement, keep personal views and opinions to yourself.
- Trauma can affect cognitive function and memory, can changes be made to help the person at this time?
- Ask the individual if they are okay with you following up with them after a set time or let them know you are available to talk again if needed.

Be neutral:

- You may find yourself in a situation where the individual accused of misconduct is contacting you, or you hear from a third-party that behavior occurred. All individuals involved in these circumstances may feel confused and overwhelmed and the process can be stressful and complicated.
- Offer support to both individuals involved equally. The same guidance above applies regardless of the individual's role in the process.
- The Dean of Students Office can provide supportive measures, help individuals understand their rights in the process and respond to questions that a student may have about the process. The Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Employees can similarly provide supportive measures, help employees understand their rights in the process and respond to questions that employees may have about the process.
- The filing of a report or complaint does not mean the individual accused has violated the University's policy. The filing of a report or complaint initiates the outreach and support process and provides information to an impacted individual about the options available to have the University review the conduct. Policy violations are only determined after an investigation and hearing.

Offer support to both individuals involved equally.

- Listening, offering referrals to resources that can provide help or providing support to an individual does not mean that you are approving of the actions or choices of any person

involved in the situation. It means that you are recognizing that an individual is currently struggling and are taking steps to put that individual into contact with those that can best help.

Additional Resources:

Preventing and Responding to Educator Sexual Misconduct:

<https://www.nais.org/articles/pages/resources-on-preventing-and-responding-to-educator-sexual-misconduct/>

Diversity Considerations

There are many things about us that make us unique. At its core, diversity celebrates the many ways we are each unique and the broad life experiences and perceptions we have to offer. Some of the ways we are diverse may be visible. Others can only be learned after getting to know someone. As no two people have the same life experiences, considering the myriad of ways in which we are diverse can help us navigate these sensitive topics with those around you.

The following tips may help you navigate having these sensitive discussions from those with other backgrounds. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather intended solely to provide some guideposts and points of consideration.

Create An “Open Door” Policy.

Visiting a faculty member at their office may not be a comfortable or approachable option for students of color, international students, students with disabilities or LGBTQ+ students. Some students may come from backgrounds where it is unacceptable for a student to approach a professor or where it is acceptable for a student to drop by any time to speak with the professor. At the beginning of the semester, make certain to discuss your availability, your willingness to meet directly with students and invite students to come see you during your office hours.

Create A Safe Environment.

Position yourself as someone with whom individuals can speak. Create boundaries and make it clear that hurtful or offensive comments will not be tolerated. Evaluate your own practices in interacting with individuals of color, individuals from different countries, individuals with disabilities or members of the LGBTQ+ population – are you providing equal opportunity for them to participate in meaningful ways? Are you seeing them as an individual and not as a representative of their identities?

**Are you providing equal opportunity for everyone to participate in meaningful ways?
Are you seeing them as an individual and not as a representative of their identities?**

Tolerating an environment that feels hostile towards someone makes it less likely that individuals will see you as a person who will take their report seriously or treat all involved persons fairly during the reporting process. Individuals are less likely to disclose if they fear future discrimination or differing treatment because of their identity.

Recognize Additional Barriers.

Individuals may face additional barriers based on their identities. Individuals may not have been treated fairly in previous encounters with reporting systems or authority figures. They may be afraid of perpetuating stereotypes by making a report, or afraid of what may happen to the other person as a result of the report. Individuals with disabilities may have a history of not being believed or may hesitate to discuss specific issues regarding their disability. In some cultures, discussing sexual assault or any type of sexual experience can be taboo.

Some individuals in the LGBTQ+ community may not be open with others about their identity or may still be gaining an understanding of their own identity. For these individuals, disclosures about what they are experiencing in their personal lives may feel like a forced disclosure of those identities. Other individuals may be comfortable with their identities, but unsure of how you may react.

Telling someone you have been subjected to sexual misconduct is hard for anyone. It requires additional strength if you're also now sharing information that you have otherwise kept private, where there is a history of not being believed or where there is a fear of reprisal. Respect that difficulty and approach the matter gently.

Listen to how someone identifies and use that as guide.

Use Chosen Names and Pronouns.

An individual may go by a name other than their birth name, or use pronouns associated with a different gender or that are gender neutral. Just as you

would not want someone referring to you by the wrong name or pronouns, neither do others. Use the individual's chosen name and pronouns when referring to them. It is okay to respectfully ask the individual their chosen name or pronouns if you are not sure. This could be as simple as "could you please share with me what pronouns you use?" or "how would you like me to refer to you?" It can also be helpful to introduce yourself using your name and pronouns. For example, "I am _____, my pronouns are _____."

Be Careful of Terms.

Listen to how someone identifies and use that as guide. In interacting with individuals with disabilities, put the individual first. They are not a "disabled person." They are not their disability. Rather, they are an individual with a disability or someone who is autistic.

Gender identity refers to someone's internal deeply held sense of gender. This could be male, female, somewhere between the two or something else entirely. How someone dresses, acts, looks, their name or pronouns are types of gender expression.

Someone's gender identity may or may not match their gender expression. Gender identity is not synonymous with sexual orientation. Individuals of all gender identities may identify with any sexual orientation.

An individual whose gender identity differs from the sex that they were assigned at birth is a transgender person, or gender non-conforming. Transgender is an adjective, not a noun and should not be used as a name for someone. Descriptors such as "biologically," "genetically" or "born a" should not be used.

Someone's physical, romantic or emotional attractions are their sexual orientation, not a sexual preference. Depending on their sexual orientation, a person may identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or asexual. Use the term the person would use to describe themselves. Avoid the use of homosexual or queer unless the person specifically identifies this way.

Focus on the Concern.

This individual has sought your assistance for help with a problem or a situation that occurred. This is not the time or occasion to ask them to teach you about their identities, discuss cultural stereotypes or share your personal views on their identities.

Keep an Open Mind and Respond Without Judgment.

You are being asked by a person for help and support with a sensitive and personal problem. Respond calmly and compassionately, without shock or judgment, keep personal views and opinions to yourself.

Do Not Dismiss A Concern Simply Because You Don't Understand.

Cultures and identities have their own unique gestures, speech patterns and symbols. Do not dismiss someone who reports a concern of gender-based misconduct simply because you do not understand why the behavior would be offensive. Dismissing or appearing dismissive of these concerns can cause delays in getting support services or result in the individual deciding not to seek support.

Ask Respectfully to Help You Identify the Next Appropriate Steps.

As a mandated reporter, you should inform the individual of your duty to report any gender-based misconduct and provide them the opportunity to disclose to a confidential resource if they prefer. This situation may not be clear if the incidents involve culturally specific behaviors. To help you understand if this situation falls under the gender-based misconduct, you can state "University policy requires me to report instances of gender-based misconduct. I can refer you to a confidential resource that would not be required

to report your concerns but can help you understand your options for proceeding. To help me understand if that referral may help, can you please help me understand your concern about the behavior?”

Have A Variety of Referral Resources Available.

Individuals have a wide variety of preferences about support resources. For example, some individuals will not utilize mental health services and prefer to use the guidance of spiritual leaders. Other individuals prefer to speak with trusted elders or community members. Make sure to have a variety of options available. If you are not certain of what would be helpful, you can ask the individual how you can help.

- The Counseling and Testing Center is trained to provide culturally appropriate care to students from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- For employees, the Employee Assistance Program can help identify appropriate care providers. The EAP can be accessed:
 - Online at <https://myassistanceprogram.com/impact-solutions/>
 - Username: uakron
 - By telephone at 1-800-227-6007
 - For more information, you can contact the [Benefits Department](#) at x. 7090.
- The Steve Fund can provide crisis services to students of color. Students can text STEVE to 741741. More information is available at <https://www.stevelfund.org/crisistextline/>.
- The Trevor Project can provide support for LGBTQ+ youth in crisis. Students can text START to 678678. More information and additional ways to connect are available at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.
- Hope and Healing serves all populations in Summit and Medina Counties who are impacted by sexual assault, dating violence or domestic violence. Hope and Healing can be contacted 24/7 at 330-434-7273. OneEighty serves all populations in Wayne County who are impacted by sexual assault, dating violence or domestic violence. OneEighty can be contacted 24/7 at 1-800-686-1122.
- Many international students at The University of Akron receive health insurance through LowerMark. LowerMark works with Morneau Shepell to offer culturally appropriate counseling resources 24/7 at no cost to the student. Morneau Shepell is available:

- Through the My SSP app, available for Apple and Android;
- Online at us.myissp.com; or
- By telephone at 1-866-743-7732

Provide the Direct Name of the Resource, Not Just the Name of the Department or Office.

Seeking help can seem intimidating and may feel inaccessible to students depending on their backgrounds. Providing a specific name of someone to contact or a resource may increase the likelihood that the individual will reach out. For example, referring a student to the Dean of Students Office may not result in the student calling for their assistance. However, referring a student to speak with Mike or Riley at the Dean of Students Office may provide a welcome to the student such that they are willing to seek the assistance they need.

Have Options for How Material Is Presented.

If possible, present the resources in a variety of ways. Rather than just saying a name, provide a brochure, write down the contact information, email the name or a link to the provider's website. Presenting the resources in a variety of ways allows someone to process that material in a way that is best for them.

Be Cautious of the Language You Use.

Responding to a question that "I would go and speak with _____ as they could answer that question" can be understood by a non-native English speaker as indicating that you will go on their behalf to speak with that person. A better phrase is "You should speak with _____ as they could answer that question."

Classroom Assignment Ideas

Here is a list of suggestions for incorporating learning about gender-based misconduct into your class. These assignments will help students to learn more about the conduct addressed by Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act as well as learn ways that they can use their skills and interests to help.

For purposes of the below assignments:

Interpersonal violence means crimes of a sexual nature, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.

Gender violence includes hate crimes based on gender or failure to conform to a gender stereotype.

Gender-based misconduct includes interpersonal violence, gender violence, and gender-based or sexual harassment.

- For introductory courses, have students research the location of relevant offices and reporting options under the University's Gender Based Misconduct Protocols, including the Dean of Student's Office, the Counseling and Testing Center, and Hope and Healing (formerly the Rape Crisis Center);
- History of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA);
- Legislation related to gender-based misconduct;
- How crimes of interpersonal violence are treated in the criminal justice system and how that treatment has changed over the years;
- Possible treatment programs for sexual offenders;
- Possible legal consequences for committing interpersonal or gender violence;
- How popular culture, media and/or art have used or perpetuated rape myths;
- Portrayal of interpersonal violence in the media;
- Possible psychological effects, both short-term and long-term, from interpersonal or gender violence;
- Possible physical effects, both short-term and long-term, from interpersonal or gender violence;
- The neurobiological impact of trauma;
- How gender socialization perpetuates interpersonal violence;
- Rates and impact of male victimization;
- Considerations for interviewing or investigating individuals following interpersonal or gender violence;
- How technological advances have impacted stalking and gender-based misconduct;
- How building security and security cameras can impact interpersonal violence;
- Analyzing and designing building security as a preventative factor to interpersonal violence;

- Economic impact of interpersonal violence;
- Cost-benefit analysis of the Violence Against Women Act;
- Workplace impact of gender-based misconduct;
- Workplace employee training for gender-based misconduct prevention;
- Workplace safety protections and prevention for interpersonal violence;
- Effects on children of witnessing interpersonal violence;
- Art therapy as a means of supporting individuals following interpersonal or gender violence;
- Social marketing campaigns for gender-based misconduct prevention;
- Use of the socio-ecological model in comprehensive violence prevention;
- Applying the public health model to interpersonal violence prevention;
- Interpersonal violence prevention across the life span;
- Statistical impact of prevention and training programs on interpersonal violence;
- Impact of community supports on gender-based misconduct;
- Neighborhood collective efficacy as a protective factor against interpersonal violence;
- How different cultures respond to interpersonal violence;
- How culture may impact treatment and response options for interpersonal violence;
- Designing effective community prevention programs for different cultures;
- How interpersonal violence has impacted the sports industry;
- Research barriers for bystander intervention;
- Interpersonal violence in the LGBTQ+ community; and
- Diffusion of innovation as it applies to gender-based misconduct and changing of social norms.

Quiz

1. Which of the following is not a step to developing active listening skills?
 - a. Silence
 - b. Restating
 - c. Redirecting
 - d. Dismissing

Correct Answer: D. Dismissing. Dismissing someone's statements shows a disregard for the information that they are sharing. This does not convey that you are actively listening to their words. For more information, review the section on **Tips for Introducing Sensitive Topics.**

2. Which of the following should you do after a student informs you of a sexual harassment situation?
 - a. Tell the student they must make a report
 - b. Try to identify causes why this situation must have occurred
 - c. Have the student receive medical care if it is needed
 - d. Tell the student that you will decide the next course of action

Correct Answer: C. Have the student receive medical care if it is needed. The student is not required to file a report. It is also not your role to identify what caused the situation or determine the next course of action. Ensure the student has received any necessary medical care, then report the disclosure to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. For more information, review the section on **Tips for Having Disclosure Discussions.**

3. Which of the following statements offer support to survivors?
 - a. What happened wasn't your fault.
 - b. How can I support you?
 - c. I am so sorry.
 - d. All of the above

Correct Answer: D. All of the above. Each of these statements can convey a sense of support to a survivor. For more information, review the section on **Tips for Introducing Sensitive Topics.**

4. A student tells you about domestic violence occurring in their relationship. What should you do?
- Tell the student you will keep the information private
 - Report the incident to a Title IX coordinator
 - Tell the student you are not the person to talk to about these incidents and that they should seek counseling
 - Report the incident to the police

Correct Answer: B. Report the incident to a Title IX coordinator. As a mandatory reporter, you are required to report any incidents of conduct which fall under the University's Title IX and Gender-Based Misconduct Policy and Protocol. For more information, review the section **Reporting Obligations.**

5. What does it mean to be a "responsible employee" as defined by the U.S. Department of Education?
- You should show up to work on time
 - You should teach your classes in a professional manner
 - You are accountable for everything students do in your classroom
 - You have a duty to report certain prohibited sex-based conduct that you learn about

Correct Answer: D. You have a duty to report certain prohibited sex-based conduct that you learn about. For more information, review the section **Reporting Obligations.**

6. A student informs you that another student made a hand gesture which the student found offensive. In describing the gesture, you feel that it may have been juvenile but do not understand why this student is so upset about it. Do you:
- Tell the student that they will have to learn to tolerate discomfort and should not allow this to bother them.
 - Tell the student that you are happy to help with academic questions, but the students will need to determine how to work together in a group and should resolve their own problems.
 - Ask the student to provide additional information on what about this hand gesture was offensive to them, perhaps there is something you're missing.
 - Tell the student you will call the other student in immediately to resolve the concern.

Correct Answer: C. Ask the student to provide additional information on what about this hand gesture was offensive to them, perhaps there is something here that you're

missing. Different cultures have different ways and styles of communicating. While the gesture may not seem offensive to you, it could have a different meaning within this context. For more information, review the section **Diversity Considerations.**

7. A student comes to you with a concern. Which of the follow shouldn't you do?
 - a. Tell them that the conversation will be confidential
 - b. Listen without judgement
 - c. Offer Support
 - d. Address any safety or medical concerns

Correct Answer: A. Tell them that the conversation will be confidential. As a mandated reporter, you must report any incident regarding potential gender-based misconduct of which you become aware. For more information, see the section **Reporting Obligations.**

8. A student requests an extension on an assignment, citing difficulties this semester with a bad relationship. The student introduces themselves as Sam. You are confused as there is no Sam listed on your roster for that class. How do you respond?
 - a. Tell the student that they must be mistaken as you have no Sam in your class.
 - b. Ask the student for their last name so you can note the extension request to avoid any confusion.
 - c. Grant the extension and figure you will sort it out when someone turns their assignment in late.
 - d. Tell the student that you don't have anyone named Sam registered for your class and ask them their real name.

Correct Answer: B. Ask the student for their last name so you can note the extension request to avoid any confusion. This is the quickest way to ensure you have the appropriate student while being respectful of this student's identity. For more information, see the section **Diversity Considerations.**

9. Once Sam gives you their last name, you find the registration and note that they prefer to be called Sam. You tell Sam that you can grant the extension and that you are required to report the disclosure to the Title IX Coordinator on campus. You tell Sam that someone will be contacting them, but that it's up to Sam whether to speak with that person. How do you complete the report?
 - a. File the report using Sam's preferred name.

- b. File the report using Sam's legal name.
- c. File the report using both Sam's preferred and legal names.
- d. File the report using only Sam's last name.

Correct Answer: A. File the report using Sam's preferred name. This respects Sam's identity. It can also facilitate the outreach for the Deputy Title IX Coordinator who will be able to use Sam's preferred name during the process. For more information, review the section **Diversity Considerations.**

10. How can you help create a safe environment?

- a. Promise that all conversations will be kept confidential.
- b. Question allegations.
- c. Affirm the courage it takes to talk about difficult topics.
- d. Allow all comments, even if they could be offensive to some.

Correct Answer: C. Affirm the course it takes to talk about difficult topics. This language reassures the person that you understand how hard it can be to speak about this. For more information, review the section **Tips for Introducing Sensitive Topics.**

11. What steps can you take to create a supportive environment within your classroom or workspace?

- a. Speak up when you hear negative comments being made about race, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- b. Provide an opportunity for individuals of various backgrounds to meaningfully contribute to classroom discussions or work projects.
- c. Highlight the achievements and contributions made by individuals of diverse backgrounds.
- d. All of the above.

Correct Answer: D. All of the above. Each of these actions can help encourage an environment where individuals feel welcome and accepted for who they are. In turn, this can increase the likelihood that someone feels comfortable coming to you with any concerns they are having. For more information, review the section **Diversity Considerations.**