

Responding to Disclosures

Information and resources are available on [Safer Campuses](#).

If there is an immediate security or emergency matter, please contact or refer to:

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/essential-info/administration/emergency-and-security>

These guidelines are informed by CASA House recommendations.

A student may choose to disclose to a staff member for a variety of reasons:

- They feel a sense of trust with the staff member
- The situation is urgent, and they need to tell someone immediately
- The staff member is the person they have the most contact with or access to
- The staff member has (or appears to have) relevant decision-making or influencing power for the situation

The three most important things you can do are to:

- listen, without interruption or judgement
- believe and validate their experiences
- provide information that will support them to make their own choices (as much as possible) in what happens next.

You do not need to 'fix' the problem for them, give them solutions or provide counselling. But, depending on your role, you may be legally required to share the disclosure with other people if you believe there is an immediate risk of harm.

If you are receiving the disclosure in person or by phone:

LISTEN

- Actively listen without interruption.
- Show that you believe what they are disclosing to you.
- Remember to hold a non-judgemental attitude.
- Offer empathy rather than asking for details.
- Let them know that what they have told you is in confidence and that you will not share what has happened with anyone else without their consent.
- *If you believe there is a risk of harm to other students or staff, you can make a de-identified disclosure to Student Equity and Inclusion who will advise. (without using their name).*
- **Your supportive response is important to give the student the best possible support and options.**
 - **Useful phrases:**
 - 'Thank you for being so brave and sharing your experience.'
 - 'I can see this is very difficult for you to talk about.'
 - 'Take your time, I'm here.'

REFER

- Ask the person if it would be okay to connect them with Student Equity and Inclusion team, which provides students with support with any sexual harassment or sexual assault.
- Contact details: Student Equity and Inclusion: (03) 5327 8516; equity@federation.edu.au
- Provide contact details for the free and confidential counselling services:
 - University services:
 - FedUni Counselling, (03) 5327 9470; www.federation.edu.au/counselling
 - The Wellbeing Check In service 1300 687 399, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm
 - University Immediate Mental Health Support Line, available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Call 1300 758 109 or if you are outside Australia, SMS +61 480 089 177 and request a callback. This service is not available for students studying at partner locations (MIT/IIBIT/ATMC).
 - Community services:
 - 1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732, or <https://1800respect.org.au/>, 24 hours, 7 days a week.
 - Lifeline: 13 11 14, <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>, 24 hours, 7 days a week.
 - QLife: 1800 184 527, <https://qlife.org.au/>, 3pm – Midnight, 7 days a week.
 - MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78, <https://mensline.org.au/>, 24 hours, 7 days a week.
 - Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636, <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>, 24 hours, 7 days a week.
 - CASA house: <https://www.casahouse.com.au/contact-us>

SUPPORT

- Remember that people have a choice whether they wish to report or not.
- Your role as a first responder is to provide immediate emotional support and referral to appropriate services.
- Many people do not wish to go to the police or security.
- The Student Equity and Inclusion team can assist students if they wish.
- Do keep a confidential record of the conversation but do not share their story or their name without their consent. **This is a breach of privacy.**

If you are receiving the disclosure by email:

- Write back to thank the student (or referring staff-member) for sharing this with you, validate their experience and inquire about their safety.
- Affirm that it sounds like a difficult experience and that you are here to support them
- Let them know that you would like to connect them with the most appropriate supports
- Provide them the contact for counselling and the local CASA house, ask for permission to make an introduction to Student Equity and Inclusion as above.
- Do not forward their email to anyone without their agreement.
 - If you need to seek advice, contact Student Equity and Inclusion on (03) 5327 6461 or equity@federation.edu.au and give a general (not specific) indication of the situation but do not use the student's name without their permission.

Your Own Wellbeing:

- When someone is sharing their experience of abuse, you may experience a range of emotions, these feelings are a testament to your empathy and compassion for the person who has been hurt, for example:
 - be grateful for their trust and vulnerability
 - distressed by what they have endured
 - uncomfortable by the person's emotional state
 - worried about the nature and extent of the abuse
 - uncertain about what to do next
 - that need to 'fix it' feeling
 - afraid of letting the person down in their time of need
 - experiencing a range of emotions, including sadness, disappointment, and anger, towards the individual accused of the abuse
- You may also wish to contact the EAP services: 1300 OUR EAP: 1300 687 327
www.convergeinternational.com.au

CONTACTS AND WEBSITES

- Safer Campuses: www.federation.edu.au/safer-campuses
- Student Equity and Inclusion: (03) 5327 8516 <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/equity-and-inclusion>, equity@federation.edu.au
- CASA: <https://www.casahouse.com.au/contact-us>

For 24/7 security or emergency matters please contact or refer:

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/essential-info/administration/emergency-and-security>

Emergency (life-threatening)

- Ballarat - 1800 333 732 (1800 FED SEC)
- Berwick - extension 28555 or call 5122 8555
- Gippsland - extension 26662 or call 5122 6662
- Wimmera – 000

Dialling the numbers above allows us to enact campus-based safety protocols to direct emergency services to the exact scene of the incident and protect other members of the University Community. You may of course choose to call 000 directly but remember to advise the Security Team at your campus so internal resources can be sent to assist you and to direct emergency services.

For security assistance (non-emergency situations), including for escort services, wish to report an incident, or need some security advice:

- Ballarat campuses - extension 6333 or call 5327 6333
- Berwick Campus - extension 28555 or call 5122 8555
- Gippsland Campus - extension 26662 or call 5122 6662
- Wimmera Campus - call 5382 0560 or 0417 820 560