

Information for Friends and Supporters of the Respondent

If someone you know is reported to have committed an act of sexual misconduct, it is likely that you have questions and may be struggling to understand what has happened. You may be experiencing a range of emotions such as helplessness, anger, confusion or betrayal. If your friend has told you that they have been reported to have committed an act of sexual violence, they may be turning to you for help and support.

Tips you can use to help your friend through this experience:

- Connect your friend to resources. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibility – Ombuds Services can and will help a Respondent understand their rights, resources and what may happen next. Helping your friend access these resources is a great first step to take to provide support in what may be a confusing and emotional time for both of you.
- Encourage your friend seek counseling services to deal with their emotions. It may also be helpful for you to seek counseling to help you process any emotions and trauma you may be experiencing as a result of the situation.
- Gather as much information as you can on the issue of sexual misconduct. The information on this Web site can answer some of the questions you may have. If you are seeking additional information on sexual violence, please contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities – Student Conduct.
- Listen in a non-judgmental manner. They may not feel comfortable talking about the matter, but let your friend know you will listen.
- Familiarize yourself with the [Sexual Misconduct Policy 4216 Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, and Sexual Misconduct](#).

Being a good friend does NOT mean:

- Approving of your friend's actions and/or choices. You can help your friend without making a judgment as to whether or not an act of sexual misconduct occurred. Determining if a crime or policy violation took place is the responsibility of the legal system and/or campus administrators.
- Telling your friend what to do.
- Blaming the student who has brought the complaint.
- Telling others about what might have happened and violating their confidentiality and trust.
- Taking action. Violence or retaliation is not the answer to helping your friend. Remember, harassing and threatening behaviors are not helpful and could undermine any court or college proceeding taking place. It could also jeopardize your own standing at the college.