

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE – VICTIM’S RIGHTS AND INFORMATION ADVISORY**

The following information is provided to assist members of the College community with understanding the rights, protections and services available to victims of sexual violence.

**What is Sexual Violence?** - Sexual violence is defined under the Board of Higher Education/Massachusetts Community Colleges’ Policy on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity & Diversity (“Policy on Affirmative Action”). Sexual violence refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (*e.g.*, due to the person’s age or use of drugs or alcohol, or because an intellectual or other disability prevents the person from having the capacity to give consent). A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, aiding in the commission of sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual battery and sexual coercion. Sexual violence can be perpetrated by employees, students, or third parties. All acts of sexual violence are forms of sex discrimination and are prohibited under Title IX of the Educational Amendment Act of 1972, state law and the Policy on Affirmative Action.

**Reporting Complaints of Sexual Violence** - A victim of sexual violence has the right to file (or not file) an Affirmative Action Discrimination Complaint Form with the College. The process for filing a complaint is outlined under the Policy on Affirmative Action’s Complaint Procedure. For more information or assistance with filing a complaint, please contact the College’s Title IX Coordinator. If the Title IX Coordinator is the subject of a complaint, the President shall designate another College official to administer the Complaint Procedures. A victim may also choose to file a criminal complaint, in which case the Title IX Coordinator and/or Campus Police can assist the victim with that process. Reporting the incident to the Title IX Coordinator or Campus Police does not obligate the victim to file criminal charges.

**College’s Investigation** - The College is obligated to investigate all allegations of sexual violence, even if the alleged victim chooses not to file a formal complaint and/or participate in the investigation. Additionally, a complaint filed in another forum, including a criminal or civil complaint, shall not delay the College’s investigation of a complaint of sexual violence. The College shall promptly and thoroughly investigate all such allegations in accordance with the Policy on Affirmative Action’s Complaint Procedure and shall provide the victim with periodic updates on the status of the investigation. A person found to have committed an act of sexual violence shall be subject to disciplinary action ranging from mandatory counseling and/or training, verbal or written warnings, suspension, expulsion from the College or termination from employment, as well as criminal prosecution.

**Victim Identification** - Personal identifiable information about a victim will be treated as confidential and only shared with persons with a specific need to know and/or who are investigating and/or adjudicating the complaint, delivering resources or support services to the victim or as public safety requires. The College does not publish the names or other identifiable information of victims in the campus police department’s Daily Crime Log, in any Timely Warnings issued or online. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a victim may request that no directory information maintained by the College be released absent his/her prior, written consent.

**Prohibition on Retaliation** - The College prohibits retaliation against any person who presents a formal or informal complaint of sexual violence or who testifies or offers evidence connected with a complaint. Retaliation is a violation of the Policy on Affirmative Action and could result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or termination from the College.

**Amnesty** - Students may be hesitant to report sexual violence out of concern that they, or witnesses, might be charged with violations of the College's drug/alcohol policies. While the College does not condone such behavior, it places a priority on addressing allegations of sexual violence. Accordingly, the College may elect not to pursue discipline against a student who, in good faith, reports, witnesses or possesses personal knowledge of an incident of sexual violence.

**Interim Protective Measures** - Title IX requires the College to take reasonable steps to ensure equal access to its educational programs and activities and protect individuals from acts of sexual violence, including taking interim protective measures before the final outcome of an investigation. The College shall take these steps promptly once it has notice of an allegation of sexual violence. Examples of interim protective measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- access to counseling services and assistance in scheduling an appointment, on or off campus;
- imposition of an interim suspension or on-campus "no-contact" order;
- rescheduling of exams and assignments;
- providing alternative course completion options;
- changing class schedules, including withdrawing from a course without penalty;
- changing work schedules or job assignments;
- limiting access to certain College facilities or activities pending resolution of the matter;
- voluntary leave of absence;
- providing an escort to ensure safe movement between classes and activities; and/or
- providing academic support services, such as tutoring.

The specific interim measures implemented will vary depending on the facts of each case. The College will consider a number of factors in determining what interim measures to take, including, for example, the specific needs expressed by the victim; the severity or pervasiveness of the allegations; any continuing effects on the victim; whether the victim and respondent share the same classes, dining hall schedule, transportation, or job location; and whether other judicial measures have been taken to protect the victim (e.g., civil protection orders).

In general, when taking interim protective measures, the College shall minimize the burden on the victim. To the extent permitted by law, the victim shall be notified of any interim measures taken by the College concerning the respondent. Even under those circumstances where a victim does not wish to pursue a complaint and requests confidentiality, the College must take immediate action to protect the victim while keeping her or his identity confidential.

**Protections for Victims of Sexual Violence** – A person subjected to sexual violence shall:

- Be provided with a copy of the College's *Sexual Violence – Victim's Rights and Information Advisory*, which shall include information concerning counseling, health, and mental health services, victim advocacy and support, law enforcement assistance, and other services available on and off campus;

- Have the right to pursue, or not pursue, assistance from campus administration officials or campus law enforcement;
- Not be discouraged by College officials from reporting an incident to both on-campus and off-campus authorities;
- Be provided assistance in contacting local law enforcement if requested and have the full and prompt assistance and cooperation of campus personnel should a civil and/or criminal complaint be pursued;
- Be free from any suggestion that they somehow contributed to or had a shared responsibility in the violent act;
- Receive the same level of support at any proceeding before College officials as is permitted to the accused party, including the presence of a personal advisor during any disciplinary proceeding and the right to be notified in a timely manner of the outcome of such proceedings and any appeal right available;
- Receive full and prompt cooperation from College personnel in obtaining and securing evidence (including medical evidence) necessary for any potential criminal proceedings;
- Have access to existing College counseling and medical professionals, victim support services, and to obtain referrals to off-campus counseling and support services if desired;
- Be permitted to attend classes, work and participate in College activities free from unwanted contact or proximity to the respondent insofar as the College is permitted and able;
- Be permitted to request changes to an academic schedule if such changes are requested by the victim and are reasonably available; and
- Be informed of any no-contact or no-trespass orders issued to the respondent by the College and the College's commitment to honor any court-issued restraining or protective orders, to the extent permitted by law.

**Recommended Procedures for a Victim of Sexual Violence** - For a person subjected to an act of sexual violence, there can be time-sensitive decisions to make about sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and collecting physical evidence in the event of prosecution. Therefore, victims of sexual violence are advised as follows:

- **Protect Yourself and Get Medical Attention** – Find a safe place as soon as possible and seek medical attention immediately. Injuries and exposure to disease may not be immediately apparent. A medical examination can provide necessary treatment and collect important evidence. It is recommended that a physical exam be conducted within 72 hours of the incident. Submitting to a physical exam does not mean that a victim is required to press charges. This action merely preserves the option to do so. Designated College personnel can assist in providing transportation to the hospital.
- **Preserve Evidence** - It is important to preserve all physical evidence following an act of sexual violence. Physical evidence may be necessary in the event criminal prosecution is pursued. If

possible, a victim should be advised not to wash, eat, drink, douche, clean, use the bathroom, or change clothes. If clothes are changed, all clothes that were worn at the time of the incident should not be cleaned and should be placed into a clean paper bag.

- **Health and Support Services** - Various health and support services are available on and off campus for victims of sexual violence. For information about such services, including counseling, please contact the Affirmative Action and/or Title IX Coordinator.

**Rape Crisis Center Contact Information** - The following is a list of Rape Crisis Centers in Massachusetts. As the following contact information may be subject to change, current contact information on rape crisis centers in Massachusetts can be found at the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Health and Human Services' Website under "Consumer" information at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/>.

- **Greater Boston Area**  
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Cambridge, 617-492-7273 Hotline, 617-492-6434
- **Northeastern Massachusetts**  
North Shore Rape Crisis Center, Beverly, 800-922-8772 Hotline, 978-921-8729  
Rape Crisis Services of Greater Lowell, 800-542-5212 Hotline, 978-452-8723  
YWCA of Greater Lawrence, 877-509-9922 SA Hotline, 978-686-8840
- **Central Massachusetts**  
Rape Crisis Center of Central Mass., Worcester, 800-870-5905 Hotline, 508-852-7600  
Rape Crisis Center of Central Mass., Fitchburg, 800-870-5905  
Wayside Victim Services, Milford, 800-511-5070 Hotline, 508-478-4205  
Voices Against Violence, Framingham, 800-593-1125 Hotline, 508-626-8686
- **Southeastern Massachusetts**  
A Safe Place, Nantucket, 508-228-2111 Hotline, 508-228-0561  
Independence House, Hyannis, 800-439-6507 Hotline, 508-778-6782  
Women Support Services, Vineyard Haven, 508-696-7233  
Greater New Bedford Women Center, New Bedford, 888-839-6636 Hotline  
New Hope, Attleboro, 800-323-4673 Hotline/TTY  
Stanley Street Women Center, Fall River, 508-675-0087 Hotline, 508-673-3328  
Womansplace Crisis Center, Brockton, 508-588-8255 SA Hotline, 508-894-2869
- **Western Massachusetts**  
Elizabeth Freeman Center, Pittsfield, 413-443-0089 Hotline, 413-499-2425  
Everywoman Center, Amherst, 413-545-0800 Hotline, 888-337-0800  
NELCWIT, Greenfield, 413-772-0806 Hotline  
YWCA, Springfield, 800-796-8711  
YWCA of Western Mass, Westfield, 800-479-6245 Hotline