

PROTOCOL FOR THE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED STUDENT

Sexual assault includes any kind of unwanted sexual behavior. Sexual assault does not provide sexual pleasure to the victim. Instead, it is an aggressive act in which one person exerts power over another. Rape or attempted rape constitutes an enormous loss of control over life. It is not an event that can be ignored or forgotten. Shock, guilt, confusion, anger, fear, helplessness, and depression are common responses to rape. A student may have difficulty concentrating on lectures. She/he may withdraw from class discussion and interaction with peers or may cease coming to class entirely. Some students may experience flashback experiences while in class.

DO:

- Assess whether the student has received medical attention (i.e., injuries, internal bleeding, pregnancy, and STDs are possible).
- If medical attention is needed, refer the student to the Emergency Room at San Juan Hospital, the student's personal physician, or call 911.
- *It is important to connect with Sexual Assault Services of Northwest New Mexico within 5 days of a rape. (325-2805 or 326-4700 Hotline)*
- If the student goes for medical attention or reports to the police, encourage her/him to have an advocate/support person accompany her/him.
 - The support person could be you, a friend, a roommate, someone from the Counseling Center staff, or someone from Sexual Assault Services of Northwest New Mexico.
- Encourage the victim to contact Public Safety (3333). Reporting the assault does not require that charges be filed.
- If there is no immediate medical need, focus on the victim's emotional needs:
 - Ask how you can be most helpful.
 - Listen to and believe the person.
 - Self-blame is common. Help the person to see that no behavior on her/his part deserves the response of rape.
 - Encourage the person to get counseling immediately. Counseling can help the person deal with her/his reaction to the rape and to feel positive about herself/himself again.
 - If there has been another contact from the perpetrator or a friend of the perpetrator (by phone or in person), encourage the victim to contact Public Safety (3333) or the Advising and Counseling Center (3526).
 - Occasionally the perpetrator is in the victim's class. If this is the case, the victim may need to make arrangements to meet independently with you for class credit, to change classes, etc. The victim may not be comfortable identifying the perpetrator to you. Thus, it may be helpful to ask her/him if the perpetrator is in the same class, while giving assurance that this person does not have to be identified.

PROTOCOL FOR THE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED STUDENT (Continued)

**BE SURE TO COMPLETE A BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION REPORT FORM ONLINE
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

www.sanjuancollege.edu/bit

DON'T:

- Take control since the victim already feels a great loss of control.
- Believe rape myths (e.g., she/he was asking to be raped if he/she wore particular clothes, went to the perpetrator's room, was drinking, walked home alone). This can result in blaming the victim.
- Let your own feelings about the perpetrator override those of the victim. If you get too angry or make threats against the perpetrator, the victim may not share further feelings in an attempt to keep you from getting into trouble.
- If you know the perpetrator and you state that it is difficult for you to believe that such a person would be a rapist, you may communicate disbelief to the victim.