



## Responding effectively to disclosures

When students or staff are in immediate danger or require urgent medical attention, call emergency services on **000 (112 from mobile phones)** or if the incident occurred on campus, call the Campus Support Team on **1800 800 707 (x7777 from any University phone)**.



**SASH Responders** are a network of staff who have been trained to assist students and staff to understand their support and reporting options relating to sexual assault, sexual harassment and other personal violence including domestic and family violence. You can search for “SASH responder” in the Griffith phone book.



**Harassment & Discrimination Contact Officers** are a network of staff who have been trained to assist students and staff to understand the reporting and resolution options relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination at the University. You can search for “Contact officer” in the Griffith phone book.

### Responding to sexual assault or sexual harassment

### Responding to harassment, bullying or discrimination

#### Safe and supportive environment

Your role is to listen and offer immediate support options, not to investigate, or provide counselling.

- ✓ Provide the individual with your full attention
- ✓ Remain calm; remind them that this is not their fault and that support is available
- ✓ Focus on the person’s physical and emotional wellbeing.

#### Listen and believe

- ✓ Show empathy, respect and understanding
- ✓ Acknowledge their feelings
- ✓ **Do not display any signs of judgement or disbelief as this may further traumatise the individual**
- ✓ Allow them to guide the conversation
- ✓ Allow them to guide any follow up actions – remember that they may not wish to report the incident at this time.

#### Refer

- ✓ Only seek information that is necessary to facilitate access to support services.
- ✓ You can seek and provide information to, or about, support services anonymously at any time, but must have consent to identify an individual.

### Support and wellbeing options

- [Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention](#) for priority personal violence appointments (phone 5552 9600)
- [Staff](#) and [Student](#) counselling services
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- Targeted support for LGBTI+ or First Peoples students (see [Student Support](#))

### Reporting to Griffith University

- ✓ [Report a Concern Form](#)
  - Informal reporting (reporting an incident, seeking support)
  - Formal concerns (seeking investigation/resolution)
  - Formal and informal reports can be lodged anonymously
- ✓ Relevant staff e.g. Head of School, SASH Responder, Harassment & Discrimination Contact Officer, Advocacy (Student Associations)

### Other reporting/resolution options

- Police
- External agencies e.g. Anti- Discrimination Commission Queensland

#### Look after yourself

- ✓ Seek a confidential debrief (Supervisor; [Counsellor, Violence Response and Prevention](#))
- ✓ Students access support through [Counselling and Wellbeing](#)
- ✓ Staff access support through [Employee Assistance](#)



## Responding effectively to disclosures of sexual assault

It can be hard to know how to support someone who has been sexually assaulted. Each disclosure is of an individual's own experience, and therefore, no two disclosures will be the same. Because of this, there is no set way to respond, however you may find the following information helpful if someone tells you they have been sexually assaulted.



**Remember:** Griffith has a network of SASH responders who have been trained in receiving disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment and other personal violence and are able to assist staff and students with these conversations.

### Your words are important

- "I'm sorry this has happened to you"
- "You are not to blame"
- "What can I do to help?"
- "What can I do to support you with this?"
- "I believe you"
- "This is not your fault"
- "You are not alone"

Consider these words and the way they are heard by an individual.

### Be supportive in your initial response

#### Supportive actions

- ✓ Listen to them and allow them to talk
- ✓ Acknowledge their courage ("I'm so glad you told me")
- ✓ Comfort them that their reaction or emotions are a normal response to an abnormal incident or situation
- ✓ Let them know that they have options (legal, medical, support)
- ✓ Encourage them to speak to a Counsellor for support or information
- ✓ Let them make their own decisions
- ✓ Check into see what you can do for them ("let me know how I can best support you")
- ✓ Look after yourself (see over for options)

#### Not supportive (please avoid)

- ✗ Tell them what to do or take over
- ✗ Ask them 'why' questions (this is heard as blame & judgement)
- ✗ Judge or Criticise
- ✗ Get angry on their behalf (they have enough to deal with without worrying about you)
- ✗ Assume you know how they feel (everyone experiences things differently)
- ✗ Make promises you cannot keep or do not have control over

Encourage them to access counselling (now or in the future as needed).

### If the assault was recent

- Ensure that they are feeling safe now – if necessary, seek support from the [Campus Support Team](#) (on campus) or Police.
- Highlight the importance of seeking medical attention, including sexual health check-up or for the purposes of collection of forensic evidence to support a report to the police (please note that the opportunity to collect forensic evidence after a sexual assault is time-limited within a week).

Advise them that support is available to better understand their options –see [Safe Campuses](#) for more information

## Counselling and Support Contacts

Griffith Mental Wellbeing Support Line: Text +61 (0) 488 884 146 or Phone 1300 785 442  
 Personal violence priority appointments (Students): (07) 5552 9600  
 Counselling and Wellbeing:  
 (07) 3735 7299 (Brisbane/Logan) or (07) 5552 8734 (Gold Coast)

Staff Counselling/Employee Assistance Program 24/7:  
 1300 360 364 (Staff Domestic & Family Violence Support 1300 574 516)  
 External 24/7 Support Services:  
 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732 and DV CONNECT 1800 811 811