

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

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”) and includes rape, acquaintance rape and sexual assault. Sexual violence may also include “intimate partner violence” such as stalking, dating violence, or domestic violence. Sexual violence is 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 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. The college may also institute protective measures, such as a no-trespass order, restricted access to campus, adjusted class or work schedule, or a leave of absence, during the investigative process and/or upon completion of the disciplinary process. A person found to have committed an act of sexual violence shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion or termination from the college, 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.

## **Protections for Victims of Sexual Violence**

**A victim of sexual violence shall:**

- Have the right to, or not to, seek assistance from campus administration 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 representative 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 with the accused individual(s) insofar as the College is permitted and able;
- Be permitted to request changes to an academic schedule if such changes are requested by the alleged victim and are reasonably available; and
- Be informed of any no-contact or no-trespass orders issued to the accused 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 to:

- **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 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 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

Holyoke Community College  
WellConnect Student Assistance Program  
800-326-6142