



## What You Can Do If You Have Experienced Sexual Violence

The list below offers possible next steps for anyone who has experienced an unwanted sexual encounter. If you have experienced sexual violence, it is important for you to know it is not your fault. Western's primary concern is your safety, and we encourage you to utilize any or all of the suggestions below.

- **Go to a safe place.** This could be your home, a friend's home, a locked car, or a busy public place. If you do not feel safe, please contact Bellingham Police (911) or University Police (360-650-3911) for assistance.
- **Seek support.** Contact a close friend or other trusted person who can help you clarify what you want to do next. Trained confidential support services are available through [Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services of Whatcom County \(DVSAS\)](#). DVASAS services include a 24-hour help line at (360) 715-1563 or (877) 715-1563, as well as walk-in services weekdays from 9am to 5pm, support groups, emergency shelter, and legal, medical and social services advocacy.
- **Preserve evidence.** In case you choose to report the incident, preserve all physical evidence available to document a sexual assault or rape. This includes **not** laundering clothes/bedding and/or **not** showering until you've had a medical examination. If the incident location is accessible to you, disturb it as little as possible.
- **Consider obtaining a medical examination.** Even if you choose not to report the incident, you can still seek a medical exam to check for physical injury and the possibility of sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Utilize campus resources.** People who experience sexual violence can request assistance such as modifications in their working arrangements, help with safety planning, no-contact orders, and confidential consultation through the Employee Assistant Program, (877) 313-4455. Such assistance is available whether or not an employee chooses to make a report to the police. The [Title IX Coordinator](#) (360-650-3307) can help with these arrangements.
- **Report the incident.** If you choose to report the assault, you have several options. These options include Campus Police (Campus Services Building, 360-650-3911) or Bellingham Police (911) to make a criminal report; and the Title IX Coordinator/Equal Opportunity Office (Old Main 345, 360-650-3307) to make a discrimination complaint. The Title IX Coordinator is available to assist you in understanding how each reporting option works so you can be informed on which option(s) you would like to pursue.

An [online reporting form](#) is also available. These forms can be filled out anonymously; however, if you choose to remain anonymous, please know that the Equal Opportunity Office may not be able to look into your situation or investigate without further information. If you or someone you

know has experienced discrimination, there are many reporting options and confidential support services available.

- Discrimination complaints made to the Title IX Coordinator are processed under the University's [Discrimination Complaint Procedure](#). Investigations are conducted using the preponderance of evidence standard (meaning is it more likely than not that the allegations occurred). The person complaining and the person complained about are provided with the same opportunities to have others present during the proceedings. The University will not limit either party's choice of an advisor or support person who attends meetings related to the complaint, but may limit such a person's participation. Results of investigations or disciplinary proceedings under these processes are made simultaneously and in writing to both parties. Findings under the Discrimination Complaint Procedure may not be appealed; discipline imposed may be appealed as provided in the Procedure.