



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.
- **Contact Survivor Advocacy Services.** [Survivor Advocacy Services](#) provides student survivors with confidential, individualized emotional support, safety planning, academic advocacy, information and support navigating medical, legal, and reporting options. SAS can connect you with campus and area resources as well as support groups. Call the Survivor Advocacy Services Coordinator, Deidre Evans, at (360) 650-7982 or Deidre.Evans@wwu.edu. You will be asked to leave your name and phone. The Survivor Advocacy Services Coordinator will reach out to you to set up an appointment.
- **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 employee 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/Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance (Old Main 345, 360-650-3307, crtc@wwu.edu) to report or file a formal 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 Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance 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.

- Formal complaints made to the Title IX Coordinator are processed under the University's [Title IX Grievance Procedure PRO-U1600.04A](#) or general [Discrimination Complaint Procedure](#) depending on the jurisdiction. Investigations are conducted using the preponderance of evidence standard (meaning is it more likely than not that the allegations occurred). The complainant and respondent 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. Processes for appeals as well as sanctions and remedies are provided in these procedures.