



The Well for  
Health Promotion

CAMPUS HEALTH

# a Tulane parent guide for Talking with Your Student About Sexual Violence

*You can make a difference.*

## SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

According to a 2017 sexual misconduct climate survey of Tulane students, 41% of undergraduate women and 18% of undergraduate men reported experiencing sexual assault\* since enrolling at Tulane.<sup>2</sup>

- ▶ In most incidents of sexual assault\* (73%), the perpetrator is someone known to the victim, such as a friend or romantic partner.<sup>2</sup>

\*Sexual assault is defined broadly as nonconsensual sexual activity, including unwanted sexual contact, attempted rape, and rape.

To learn more about the climate survey results, visit [climatestudy.tulane.edu](https://climatestudy.tulane.edu).

You have likely heard a lot about sexual assault on college campuses in recent years. While this topic can bring up a variety of feelings, including fear, anger, and discomfort, it is important for all members of our Tulane community, including parents, to be educated about sexual misconduct and how each of us contribute to creating a safe learning environment for all students to grow and succeed.

Tulane is committed to ending sexual violence on our campus. In our effort to institutionalize sexual respect and community norms that protect individuals from and condemn acts of violence, we invite you to use this guide to begin or continue conversations with your student about consent, sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, stalking, and the resources available at Tulane.

# Defining Sexual Violence

A critical step in ending sexual violence is prioritizing primary prevention. **Primary prevention** is about stopping violence before it happens, and this begins with equipping all Tulane community members with shared language and definitions to talk about sexual violence.

**Consent** is an agreement between people to engage in sexual activity. This agreement is:

- Freely and actively given using mutually understandable words and actions.
- Free of threats and coercion.
- Ongoing and can be withdrawn at any time.
- Students who are incapacitated from alcohol and/or other drugs cannot give consent.

**Sexual Violence** refers collectively to sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, and intimate partner violence.

**Sexual Misconduct** is how the Code of Student Conduct refers to acts of sexual violence when they are committed by students against any person, whether the conduct occurs on-campus or off-campus.

**Sexual Assault** is sexual contact or sexual intercourse without affirmative consent. Sexual contact is intentional sexual touching with any object or body part by a person on another person.

**Intimate Partner Violence**, including dating violence and domestic violence, is any act of violence or threatened act of violence that occurs between individuals who are involved or have been involved in a sexual, dating, spousal, domestic, or other intimate relationship.

**Sexual Exploitation** is purposely or knowingly doing any of the following: causing the incapacitation of another person for the purpose of compromising that person's ability to give affirmative consent; allowing third parties to observe private sexual activity; engaging in voyeurism without the consent; recording or photographing private sexual activity without consent; disseminating or posting images of private sexual activity and/or a person's intimate parts without consent; prostituting another person; or exposing another person to a sexually transmitted infection or virus without the other's knowledge.

**Sexual Harassment** is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, graphic, or physical.

**Stalking** occurs when a person engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person under circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury or to experience substantial emotional distress.

To learn more about these definitions and policies, refer to the Code of Student Conduct: [conduct.tulane.edu/resources/code-student-conduct](https://conduct.tulane.edu/resources/code-student-conduct).



# Be Part of the Solution

Talking with young people about sex and sexual violence is something that many parents feel uncomfortable with or intimidated by, which is why if you feel this way, you're not alone. While talking with your young person about sex may feel difficult, we believe parents are the most important sex educators for their children. We also know that early education on sexuality, consent, reproductive health, and sexual violence is an important component of violence prevention. We encourage parents of Tulane students to have these challenging conversations with their young people before arriving at Tulane University and to continue the conversation throughout their tenure here. It is critical that young adults receive consistent and accurate information from adults they trust.

**A NATIONAL STUDY of 18 to 25-year-olds found that 87% of survey respondents reported that at some point in their lives they had been the victim of some form of sexual harassment. In the same study, 76% of survey respondents—72% of men and 80% of women— reported that they had never had a conversation with their parents about how to avoid sexually harassing others.<sup>3</sup>**

Although it may not be easy having these conversations, and sometimes you may not feel heard, this humbling statistic highlights the importance of having honest and supportive dialogue with young adults about what sexual respect looks like.

**These conversations will help both you and your student feel more confident in their ability to navigate the challenges that they will inevitably face in their social and romantic encounters during their college years and beyond.**

## Conversation Tips

Not sure where to begin? Here are some tips to help you approach and reinforce messages that endorse sexual respect.

### **TALK ABOUT CONSENT.**

Consent is often defined through the context of sex but the principles of giving and receiving consent apply to a variety of interpersonal interactions. To better understand the definition and elements of consent, watch “Consent is Like a Cup of Tea” (Online at: [campushealth.tulane.edu/cup-of-tea](https://campushealth.tulane.edu/cup-of-tea)) with your student. This video is a simple, funny approach to understanding consent.

### **NORMALIZE COMMUNICATION ABOUT SEX.**

Students often share that they feel awkward in sexual interactions. They struggle with how to communicate what they want in a situation where they are vulnerable and fear “ruining the moment.” Encourage your student to consider how they can realistically ask for consent and articulate their own boundaries and desires to a partner. It's also important to talk about how to gracefully respond to rejection. Your conversations could help them understand that communication is a normal, healthy, and integral part of intimacy.

### **TALK ABOUT CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.**

Talk to your student about examples of relationships among the couples you both know, examples from the media, or both. Which examples are healthy? Which ones are harmful? How would they define a relationship? These questions can help them identify signs of healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

For more tips and conversation starters regarding healthy relationships, refer to:

[The Talk: How Adults Can Promote Young People's Healthy Relationships and Prevent Misogyny and Sexual Harassment<sup>2</sup>](https://www.thetalk.org/)

Online at: [mcc.gse.harvard.edu/thetalk](https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/thetalk)

## TALK ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER OF THE TULANE COMMUNITY.

Our university motto is “Not for one’s self but for one’s own.” This means that Tulane expects our community members to look out for one another. How can this principle apply to a risky situation that could potentially lead to a sexual assault? Talk with your student about how to be an **active bystander**:

### **Intervene directly.**

If you notice someone else is being harmed or at risk of being harmed, you can directly intervene with the parties involved.

### **Create a distraction.**

You can create a distraction to provide an opportunity for the potential victim to get away or to diffuse the harmful situation. The goal of distraction is to interrupt the harmful behavior, not necessarily to confront the behavior.

### **Ask for help.**

Get a friend to intervene, call TUPD, or involve someone who can interrupt the situation.

Encourage your student to attend a One Wave bystander intervention training that provides practical skills in identifying high risk situations and diffusing harm safely. To learn more, visit [campushealth.tulane.edu/onewave](http://campushealth.tulane.edu/onewave).

## ENCOURAGE SEXUAL HEALTH FOR STUDENTS AND SEXUAL LITERACY FOR STUDENTS

This summer, your student will receive two online sexual wellness modules. These modules act as sexual violence prevention tools by empowering students with basic information about their sexual health, consent, boundaries, healthy relationships, and available campus resources and health services at Tulane University. Encourage your student to actively participate in these two required trainings.

## TALK ABOUT THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALCOHOL AND SEX.

While alcohol and drug use do not cause or excuse sexual assault or make an assault the victim’s fault, these substances increase the risk for perpetration and victimization. Intoxication inhibits people’s ability to communicate their wants and boundaries as well as interpret that of others. Research also suggests that perpetrators are more likely to target individuals who are intoxicated.

**74% of women and 87% of men who experienced sexual assault\* reported they were incapacitated by alcohol at the time of assault.<sup>2</sup>**

*\*Defined broadly as nonconsensual sexual activity, including unwanted sexual contact, attempted rape, and rape.*

Prior to New Student Orientation educational programs, all first-year students complete two online programs, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Sexual Misconduct for Students. These programs aim to reduce the risk of drug and alcohol misuse and abuse, and sexual violence among students. Ask your student what they learned from these programs and use them as an opportunity to talk about the complexities of substance use, sex, and consent.

## TELL THEM YOU CARE AND TALK THROUGH THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

Let your student know that sexual violence is never the fault of the victim and reassure them that they can expect support from you and others should they ever be impacted by sexual violence.

**23% of Tulane undergraduate male victims and 42% of undergraduate female victims (of sexual assault, harassment by faculty, stalking or dating violence) told someone about the incident; Less than 2% of male victims and 18% of female victims told their parents.<sup>1</sup>**

Review with your student the response resources listed on the next page. Make sure they know where to turn if they need support for themselves or a friend.

# Survivor Support

# Disclosing & Reporting

Fewer than half of undergraduate women (42%) and a quarter of men (23%) who experienced sexual misconduct\* reported disclosing their experiences to anyone.<sup>2</sup>

*\*Refers collectively to sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, and sexual violence*

## HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT

While it is hard to think about your student being the victim of violence, it is important to consider how you can respond supportively to such a disclosure. Being believed and supported by family and friends can positively impact a survivor's recovery. Here are some pointers for showing your support.

### **Believe**

Let them know that you believe them and that you are glad they felt comfortable sharing this with you.

### **Assure**

Self-blame and self-doubt are common reactions of victims of sexual violence. Assure and reassure them that what happened was not their fault.

### **Listen**

Let them decide what and how much information they want to share with you. Listen actively and non-judgmentally. Try to avoid asking too many questions, particularly "why" questions, which can imply blame.

### **Empower**

Allow them to make their own decisions about whether to report and what resources to access. You can empower their decision-making by sharing information about resources and options.

### **Check-in**

Check-in with your student regularly and remind them that you love and support them.

### **Get support**

Reach out for help for yourself, if needed. Support resources at Tulane are available to provide you with information, and you may also consider connecting with a counselor or therapist locally.

84% of Tulane students reported that Tulane did or would provide them with needed support and valued them.<sup>2</sup>

As a parent, you may have questions about campus policies, procedures, and reporting options. At Tulane, we encourage students to make the best decision for themselves, which may or may not include reporting. Someone may choose to report for a variety of reasons, including:

- To ensure that their experience is recognized.
- To get the support they need to feel safe and healthy.
- To hold the perpetrator accountable for their behavior.

There are two types of resources, Confidential and Private. **Confidential Resources** will not share a victim's disclosure of sexual assault unless the victim gives explicit permission. **Private Resources** will only share the victim's disclosure of sexual assault with other Tulane staff to ensure that the victim receives the support they need.

Your student can reach out to any of the resources listed directly below or use our reporting form at [tulane.edu/concerns](https://tulane.edu/concerns). Anyone (including parents) can use the concern form to report any type of concern, including those related to sexual violence. Reports may be made anonymously.

### **Case Management & Victim Support Services**

504-314-2160  
srss@tulane.edu

### **Tulane Title IX Coordinator**

Title IX Office  
504-865-5611  
titleix@tulane.edu

# Tulane University Resources & Services

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU DISCLOSE TO TULANE

The report is sent to Case Management and Victim Support Services, who will reach out to the student to offer support. They will explain the Tulane conduct process and connect the student to the Office of Student Conduct and the police, if desired. The student will then choose whether to proceed forward with a conduct case or a criminal case. The report also goes to the Title IX Coordinator, who is responsible for ensuring that every report receives a response and then collects data on incidents of violence so that we can track where, when, and who these incidents impact.

There are some instances where the information shared is so serious that the university needs to move forward without the student's participation because there is a threat to the community. The student will be told about this decision, and they can make choices about what they would like to share or not.

For a more complete listing of resources and options available to survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking, visit [allin.tulane.edu](http://allin.tulane.edu).

## REFERENCES

1. Lisak, D. (2011). Understanding the predatory nature of sexual violence. *Sexual Assault Report*, 14(4), 49-57.
2. Tulane University Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Misconduct. Retrieved from [tulane.edu/wave-of-change/climate-assessment](http://tulane.edu/wave-of-change/climate-assessment)
3. Weissbourd, R., Anderson, T. R., Cashin, A., & McIntyre, J. (2017). The Talk: How adults can promote young people's healthy relationships and prevent misogyny and sexual harassment. Making Caring Common Project.

The Tulane and New Orleans communities have many student resources and support services.

## CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES

### The Student Health Center

[campushealth.tulane.edu/emergency/sexual-assault](http://campushealth.tulane.edu/emergency/sexual-assault)  
504-865-5255

### The Counseling Center

[campushealth.tulane.edu/emergency/sexual-assault](http://campushealth.tulane.edu/emergency/sexual-assault)  
504-314-2277

### The Line

[campushealth.tulane.edu/caps/crisis-support](http://campushealth.tulane.edu/caps/crisis-support)  
504-264-6074

### Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education

Student-run, 24/7 during fall and spring semesters  
504-654-9543

## PRIVATE RESOURCES

### Case Management and Victim Support Services

[cmvss.tulane.edu](http://cmvss.tulane.edu)  
504-314-2160  
504-920-9900 (24/7 on-call)  
[srss@tulane.edu](mailto:srss@tulane.edu)

### Tulane University Police Department

[publicsafety.tulane.edu](http://publicsafety.tulane.edu)  
504- 865-5911

### Title IX Coordinator

Title IX Office  
504-865-5611  
[titleix@tulane.edu](mailto:titleix@tulane.edu)