

# Comprehensive Policy Education Work Group Report

The University of Iowa 2021-2024 Anti-Violence Plan includes a strategy to “develop and implement comprehensive policy education for students, faculty, and staff to increase knowledge on the reporting and adjudication process.” The work group was charged with reviewing campus data to understand student policy needs, outlining learning outcomes for comprehensive policy education for students, conducting a peer comparison to understand policy education at other institutions, and making recommendations for format for policy education for students.

## Charge:

- Review campus data, such as the Speak Out Iowa Sexual Misconduct Survey data, to understand key policy areas where students need policy education.
- Conduct a peer comparison to understand policy education at other institutions.
- Outline learning outcomes for students that capture essential knowledge around the policy.
- Recommend a format to meet the educational needs of students as outlined by the learning outcomes.
- Connect with prevention specialists and stakeholders to ensure policy education aligns and complements primary prevention education.

## Work Group Members:

- Sara Feldmann, Title IX and Gender Equity
- Heidi Schmitt, University Counseling Service
- Drea Tinoco, Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement
- Leandra Jenkins, Residence Education
- Grace Aldrin, Student Advisory Committee on Sexual Misconduct
- Grant Hurt, Student Advisory Committee on Sexual Misconduct
- Samantha Cary, Iowa Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
- Armando Bryson, Iowa Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
- Teri Schnelle, Division of Student Life

## Process

The work group first reviewed campus data, including the Speak Out Iowa Sexual Misconduct Survey data, to understand key policy areas where students need policy education. Members of the work group conducted a peer comparison to understand policy education at other institutions. When reaching out to peers, work group members found that peer institutions were not implementing policy education for students beyond general policy notifications and basic consent education for incoming, new students. There was a difference among schools as to the extent to which their consent education mirrored the definition of consent in the school’s policy. The work group then engaged in conversation about learning outcomes for students. It was determined that asking students to understand the complexity of policy was not reasonable. The work group outlined five core outcomes for students and decided that those whom students interface with regularly, including student leaders, and mandated reporters, should better understand the complexities of the policy to support students as they reach out for help. After determining outcomes, the work group outlined criteria (i.e., what it looks like to meet the learning outcome) to expedite the content creation. Finally, the working group provided a variety of learning activity formats where students, student leaders, and faculty/staff could learn policy information.

### Learning Outcomes, Criteria, and Format

Learning outcomes, criteria (i.e., what it means to meet the learning outcome), and suggested format for policy education for students, employees who routinely interface with students and key student leaders, and mandated reporters are outlined in the table below.

As a result of policy education, **students** will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Criteria	Method
Locate information online if they or someone they know experiences sexual harassment, dating/domestic violence, stalking, or sexual misconduct	endingviolence.uiowa.edu diversity.uiowa.edu	Online education Choose session Video shared via social media and hosted on endingviolence.uiowa.edu and diversity.uiowa.edu Hawk Tools/app Other web resources students utilize (such as ICON)
Respond supportively to disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I hear you</li> <li>I care about what you're saying</li> <li>I want to get you the support you need and know (or will figure out) what the resources are</li> <li>Thank you for sharing this with me</li> </ul>	Video shared via social media and hosted on endingviolence.uiowa.edu and diversity.uiowa.edu  Shared with student organizations during training  Partner with Residence Education for inclusion in Hawk Talks
Explain where individuals can go to receive confidential help on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rape Victim Advocacy Program (RVAP)</li> <li>Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)</li> <li>Women's Resource and Action Center (WRAC)</li> <li>University Counseling Service</li> <li>Monsoon and Nisaa</li> <li>Office of the Ombudsperson</li> </ul>	Online education Choose session  Video shared via social media and hosted on endingviolence.uiowa.edu and diversity.uiowa.edu
Explain where individuals can go to report a potential violation of university policy related to sex-based harassment or discrimination	Title IX & Gender Equity Office diversity.uiowa.edu	Yearly policy email Syllabi Online education Choose session  Video shared via social media and hosted on endingviolence.uiowa.edu and diversity.uiowa.edu
Recall that people who experience harm can get support from the	Supportive measures are individualized services offered as appropriate and	Video shared via social media and hosted on

university without making a complaint	reasonably available to both parties that are aimed at restoring or preserving access to university programs or activities. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• Safety planning</li> <li>• Extensions of time or other course-related adjustments</li> <li>• Modifications of work or class schedules</li> <li>• Mutual restrictions on contact between the parties</li> <li>• Changes in work or housing locations</li> <li>• Leaves of absence</li> <li>• Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of campus</li> <li>• Other changes to academic, living, dining, transportation, and working situations</li> </ul>	endingviolence.uiowa.edu and diversity.uiowa.edu  ICON news section (once per semester)
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As a result of policy education, **employees who routinely interface with students and key student leaders** will be able to:

Learning Outcome	Criteria	Method
Know whether they are mandated reporters		Discuss with Central HR and Equity Compliance – anytime someone accepts an appointment. Aim to make this visible when an employee logs into self-service.
Respond supportively to disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I hear you</li> <li>• I care about what you're saying</li> <li>• I want to get you the support you need and know (or will figure out) what the resources are available</li> <li>• Thank you for sharing this with me</li> <li>• It is common for individuals to report misconduct to receive support from the university and choose not to make a complaint</li> <li>• Reporting doesn't mean losing control or unwanted escalation</li> </ul>	Online Anti-Harassment Training  Video that we share out at the beginning of every semester, maybe as an Iowa Now Story  A supplemental document with the main talking points
Explain where individuals can go to receive confidential help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rape Victim Advocacy Program (RVAP)</li> </ul>	Supplemental document in the DOS Quick Guide  How To Get Help video

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP)</li> <li>• Women’s Resource and Action Center (WRAC)</li> <li>• University Counseling Service</li> <li>• Monsoon and Nisaa</li> <li>• Office of the Ombudsperson</li> </ul>	
Summarize the different ways potential misconduct can be addressed through the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options include non-disciplinary interventions as well as pathways that may lead to discipline</li> <li>• Someone can simply learn about options without initiating a process</li> <li>• Mutual no contact directives are often available without a complaint</li> </ul>	Create a video?
Describe concept of supportive measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsive to the impacts of trauma</li> <li>• Non-punitive (cannot pose unreasonable burden on the other party)</li> <li>• Tailored to the needs of the individual and situation</li> <li>• Aimed at restoring or preserving access to university programs or activities</li> <li>• Individuals can often get flexibility with their university-related commitments, specifically course work</li> </ul>	Supplemental document in the DOS Quick Guide.
Identify Title IX and Gender Equity (or OIE?) as the office that facilitates resolutions and supportive measures		<p>Online Anti-Harassment Training</p> <p>Outlined in other materials in this document</p>
Navigate online resources to ensure they provide accurate information about any options and resources provided		Supplemental document in the DOS Quick Guide
Describe how to report sexual harassment, dating/domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault involving students, employees, or visitors to the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use OIE online form</li> <li>• Call or email TIXGE</li> <li>• One has not fulfilled their reporting responsibilities by telling someone else who they think will report it (such as an HR person or supervisor)</li> </ul>	How To Report video
Describe what it means for a harmed party to “report a problem”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting is not the same as making a complaint</li> </ul>	How To Report video

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting is primarily about a harmed party gathering information about resolution options and supportive measures</li> <li>• Many people “report” misconduct and don’t make a complaint. There’s no pressure to do otherwise.</li> <li>• A harmed party can also choose what information they want to share in making a report – there’s no obligation to provide details (such as what happened or the name of the harm-doer).</li> </ul>	
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As a result of policy education, **mandated reporters** will **ADDITIONALLY** be able to:

Learning Outcome	Criteria	Method
Recall when a situation arises that they are a mandated reporter		Discuss with Central HR and Equity Compliance – anytime someone accepts an appointment. Ensure employees can see this in self-service.  Annual training and on-demand training
Clearly inform someone that they are required to report certain types of misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a strategy to inform someone, in a caring way, that they are a mandated reporter BEFORE someone tells them their whole story</li> <li>• Have a strategy to inform someone, in a caring way, that they are a mandated reporter AFTER someone tells them their whole story</li> </ul>	Include in the above training (maybe a video)
Articulate why the university has broad reporting requirements for employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that a harmed party gets accurate information about options, resources, and supportive measures</li> <li>• For the university to understand the types and frequency of harm in the community</li> </ul>	Include in the above training
Articulate TIXGE’s values concerning victim/survivor choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting obligations are about the university’s obligations to a harmed party – the harmed party is not obligated to do anything</li> </ul>	Include in the above training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people choose to meet with TIXGE to receive information and assistance and not make a complaint</li> <li>• A harmed party can choose what information they want to share</li> </ul>	
Execute the responsibilities of a mandated reporter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform about resolution options including the formal grievance process and adaptable resolution</li> <li>• Refer to RVAP or DVIP</li> <li>• Inform about TIXGE</li> <li>• Share all details with TIXGE</li> <li>• Being a mandated reporter does not involve information gathering.</li> </ul>	Create and provide checklist (host this checklist on self-service)

## Decision Tree and Frequently Asked Questions

The working group also outlined additional policy information that students may want to know. It was determined that a decision tree to help students get help and a Frequently Asked Questions section of the Title IX and Gender Equity website would be the best formats to provide this additional information. Draft content for both the decision tree and FAQ were shared with student groups on campus and updated based on feedback. The committee liked this site from Loyola as a potential format: <https://www.luc.edu/coalition/gethelp/>. Committee also discussed the format used for mental health resources on this website: <https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/>, but had determined that individuals’ needs in these situations might not be well represented by any one particular selection from a drop down menu.

### Decision Tree

#### Understanding confidential versus non-confidential resources

*Confidential resources* won’t share information with anyone including your friends, family, coworkers, supervisor, law enforcement, or campus administrators without your explicit consent (except in cases of high risk suicidal intent or high risk intent of committing violence against another)

*Non-confidential resources* typically have an obligation to consider the interests and safety of the larger campus community. This means they may or may not be able to honor a request that no action be taken or that no one be told about what you reported. When talking to a non-confidential resource, you may choose to first try to understand their obligations before you share all the details about a problem.

#### What kind of help do you need?

- Flexibility with academic commitments
  - “I’ve missed a lot of classes”
  - “I’m overwhelmed with my schoolwork”
  - “I need to take the semester off”
  - “I’m having difficulty concentrating/sleeping and it’s affecting my schoolwork”
- Managing discomfort in specific campus locations
  - “I don’t feel comfortable in my assigned residence hall/parking lot”

- "I don't feel comfortable going to class/the rec center/on-campus job"
- Emotional support
  - "I've talked to my friends/family, but they don't understand"
  - "I feel alone"
  - "I'm struggling to cope/sleep/eat"
- Information about options for addressing a problem
  - "How might I prevent this from happening to someone else?"
  - "I want the person who harmed me to know what they did was wrong"
  - "There's no proof. Is there anything that can be done?"
  - "I don't want to make a big deal out of this, but something should be done."
  - "I want to file a complaint"
- Getting someone to leave me alone
  - "I just want the person who harmed me to stay away/stop contacting me"
- Addressing safety concerns
  - "I'm fearful getting to/from campus"
  - "I'm afraid to leave my residence hall/apartment/home"
  - "I don't feel safe at home"
  - "I'm afraid to go to class/work"
- Medical treatment
- Unsure
  - "I don't know what to do"
  - "I'm overwhelmed"

### Frequently Asked Questions

- How long does it take to resolve an administrative complaint?
  - Will I miss class or work?
- Who will find out if I file an administrative complaint?
- Can someone be held accountable if there's no proof?
- What are the consequences when someone is found responsible for sexual misconduct?
  - What are the types of sanctions?
  - When will sanctions be imposed?
  - Who imposes sanctions?
- What is the difference between the administrative process and the criminal process?
- I was drinking underage (and/or doing illegal drugs) at the time. Will I get in trouble if I come forward?
- I don't want anything to happen to the person who harmed me, but I need support and am falling behind. Is it risky to report what happened, so I can get the help I need?
- How does the administrative process help?
  - What is the potential impact for me?
  - How is this different from getting help?
- In what ways can this be resolved?
  - How often does this process result in accountability?
  - What do I have to do so I don't have to see this person on campus?
- What happens if I make a complaint and there's no violation of university policy?
- How much will I have to disclose if I report something?
- How can I get a note for my professors without sharing everything again?
- How many times will I have to tell my story?
- What kind of support is available during the complaint resolution process?
- How will I be protected from retaliation?

- Report versus complaint
  - Report: may be submitted by anyone, suggests problematic behavior based on sex, anonymous, in any way
  - Complaint: alleges potential violation of SH/SM policy, signed by complainant or TIX-C, cannot be filed anonymously or by third party, is required to initiate formal grievance process or adaptable resolution.

## Feedback

An undergraduate research fellow (URF) in the Division of Student Life facilitated a focus group with the Peer Prevention Trainers to gather feedback on the decision tree and frequently asked questions. Below is a summary of the focus group, and more comprehensive notes can be found in the appendix.

Overall, these students appreciated the wording and clarity of the resource tools reviewed. This group is very familiar with resources for sexual misconduct as part of their peer educator roles. They also have an increased awareness of the knowledge gaps of students attending violence prevention workshops. Feedback about the tool and FAQs centered around students understanding their control over the next steps, counseling and medical resources, how sanctions and no-contact directives are monitored and enforced, and how to navigate the investigation process and advocate for themselves based on their own specific situation and needs. One student shared, "Making sure the language is accessible is key, and this tool accomplishes that. The Title IX office has many technical terms on their website, so a resource like this is important."

## Recommendations

- Review and bolster online resources to ensure information outlined in this report is available, clear, and accessible
- Develop an online decision tree (like <https://www.luc.edu/coalition/gethelp/>) and/or implement a chatbot to connect individuals to resources. The objective is to incorporate a web-based tool that aims to meet people where they are – needs first, resources second.

## Appendix

### Undergraduate Research Fellow Report

### Assessment of a Policy Decision Tree Resource Tool for Students Experiencing Sexual Misconduct

This report is prepared on behalf of the work for Undergraduate Research Fellow, Ijeoma Ogbonna, conducted in the Fall 2022 semester. Ijeoma's learning goals focused on conducting qualitative research methodology around issues of sexual violence prevention. These goals were a continuation of her previous semester's work which focused on research in campus sexual violence prevention education.

Overall Research Questions

1. What impact do students' perceptions have on campus-provided resources pertaining to sexual misconduct?
2. What are the greatest barriers facing students when interacting with campus provided resources pertaining to sexual misconduct & gender-based violence?



In partnership with the Title IX and Gender Equity unit, focus group methodology was chosen to obtain feedback from students about a drafted resource tool for students who have experienced a problem with sexual misconduct entitled: *Policy Decision Tree: Resources for Students Who have Experienced a Problem (Understanding confidential versus non-confidential resources.)* This research supported the UI 2021-2024 Anti-Violence Plan strategy focusing on Title IX policy education and addressed the student learning outcomes listed below.

- Locate information online if they or someone they know experiences sexual harassment, dating/domestic violence, stalking, or sexual misconduct
- Explain where individuals can go to receive confidential help on campus

**Methodology:** A focus group facilitator guide was developed to include questions about the draft resource tool and FAQ's. The introduction included reminders about confidentiality and refraining from personal disclosures related to sexual misconduct. Ijeoma reviewed her responsibility as a mandatory reporter in her current role as a Resident Hall Assistant (RA). The guide included introductory "warm up" questions about campus wide Clery notifications and awareness and use of current resources. Definitions of confidential and non-confidential resources were reviewed. A physical copy of the tool and FAQ's were provided to participants to review during the session. An example of how these might be displayed and user interaction on a website was demonstrated to participants. The session was recorded for accuracy.

**Target Audience:** One focus group was conducted with UI students who are Peer Prevention Trainers (n=8) at the Women's Resource and Action Center. Peer Prevention Trainers facilitate bystander intervention trainings and other violence prevention workshops (e.g., healthy relationships, consent, and stalking prevention) alongside the UI Violence Prevention Team across campus. Focus groups were attempted with students in the residence halls and the Afro House but none were recruited.

## Findings:

### Introduction

*Q1. How do you feel when you receive a notification from the University regarding instances of sexual misconduct?* Students shared that it was upsetting to receive these notifications but understood why they are necessary. It is especially hard to read about this occurring in the dorms as it most likely may be a happening to freshman and the thought of having something like this happening in the first year is troubling. Students shared concern for the reporting party that this incident is now being "broadcast" across the university and how difficult this must be for them. Finally, there was discussion about including "what is being done about this?" in the message.

*Q2. If you experienced an issue with sexual misconduct, who would you feel most comfortable sharing this experience with?* Students listed roommates, a best friend, mom, and confidential resources at WRAC (2).

### Knowledge of current resources

*Q3. What do you know about current resources at the University of Iowa pertaining to sexual misconduct and gender-based violence?* These students were very familiar with confidential and non-confidential resources across campus as this is part of the workshops they provide to students. They were able to identify all types of resources and what was available 24-hours a day.

*Q4. Do you understand the difference between confidential and non-confidential resources?* Yes, this group of students is familiar with the differences. They did report in their workshops that not all students understand the difference between confidential and non-confidential resources and their roles. One example was students not knowing that RA's are mandatory reporters and they are a likely first place students might disclose a problem.

Q5. *What have your general experiences been with these resources if you have interacted with them? Several students shared positive experiences with WRAC's services, particularly their responsiveness. One student shared that she has interacted with all of the resources, including the Title IX-GE office and all have been positive.*

*Utilization of the Resource Tool and FAQs*

Scenario: Imagine that you or a friend has experienced a problem with sexual misconduct, such as stalking or some type of harassment, what kind of help might be needed if they went to a university website for support?

Q6. *Are these the right questions for the tool?*

- Overall feedback was positive that these questions were appropriate concerns a student might have and experience.
- One recommendation was to be clear about how students are accommodated when living in the same hall and classes as the perpetrator. Who makes sure the no-contact rules or sanctions are followed? What are the consequences if they are not?
- Add counseling option for support – individual and group support links for someone to talk to regularly, it is hard to get access to mental health overall.

Q7. *Is the wording appropriate?*

- Overall, the wording of the tool is good, not too academic. The simple terms are appreciated and clear.
- Suggested edit “what can I do if I no longer have the “proof”?”

Q8. *Are there questions in the tool or FAQ's that are missing?*

- Add “Can I report an incident without reporting the perpetrator and still get help?” This is on the FAQ's but with more with more complex wording.
- Add medical options in the resources related to STD's, potential unwanted pregnancy, awareness of SANE services, and “what is the window of time for medical options?”
- Add “What happens if you need to go to the hospital?” “What is a SART?”
- Several students had trouble with the use of the word “resolved,” replace with “what can be done about my situation” because the complaint may not ever be “resolved”, that is a complicated term.
- Add “how can I heal?” or “How can I move on?”
- Add “Will the police need to get involved?”
- Add “What constitutes university property?”
- Add “What is my level of control in the investigation process and when can I withdraw from the process?”
- Separate and add “What if there no proof?” and “Will I be believed”? Students may wonder if there is no proof, where does it end? Is it worth it to put myself through this?
- Add “How does support change or what does it look like when the perpetrator is a person I am in a relationship with versus an acquaintance?”

Q9. *What are the barriers to using the resources that these tools would connect you with such at the Title IX-?*

- Misconceptions of what the resources can do for you and a lack of awareness that they can be used for all aspects of sexual misconduct, not just sexual assault.
- Students might wonder if reporting is more stress to reporting than it is worth?
- Add a “guide” with simplified steps of the reporting process (a workbook format?) to outline each step. Students need something to refer to long after the incident has occurred and as they continue to process options.

Q10. *Where should this tool be located?*

- I liked the University of Chicago app that has a tool like this one that can be used on a phone.
- Hawktools app could include these resources

- Link to Student Wellness where the “Make an Appointment” link is located.
- A website is best because students may not download the app on their phone, websites are more accessible.
- Add to MyUI page of student resources in a space where students access regularly like ICON
- Add to Canvas page that is linked to something accessed routinely via course access

Overall comments: Could resources be tailored to the harm experienced? For example, if you have experienced sexual assault, start here, or if you have experienced stalking, start here. Another suggestion was to address how to be a better advocate for yourself.

### *Summary*

Overall, these students appreciated the wording and clarity of the resource tools reviewed. This group is very familiar with resources for sexual misconduct as part of their peer educator roles. They also have an increased awareness of the knowledge gaps of students attending violence prevention workshops. Feedback about the tool and FAQs centered around students understanding their control over the next steps, counseling and medical resources, how sanctions and no-contact directives are monitored and enforced, and how to navigate the investigation process and advocate for themselves based on their own specific situation and needs. One student shared “Making sure the language is accessible is key and this tool accomplishes that. The Title IX office has lots of technical terms on their website so a resource like this is important.”