



*Guide for Victims of*

## **Sexual Assault & Harassment**

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**Domestic, Relationship &  
Dating Violence**

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**Stalking**



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# INTRODUCTION

This guide is for USF-Tampa students and employees who experience rape or other sexual violence,\* sexual harassment, relationship or dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

In the immediate aftermath of any of the above interpersonal crimes or situations, victims often are confused and shocked, and may not know what to do, whom to tell, or where to seek help. Victims are often concerned about their privacy and safety.

This guide is intended to provide information that will assist USF Tampa student and employee victims to understand their options and resources in the event of any of these interpersonal crimes or situations.

**IMPORTANT! If in imminent danger from the abuser, call 911.**

Due to the potential for increased risk, victims of intimate partner violence (domestic, relationship or dating violence) and stalking are urged to consult confidentially with a victim advocate at USF's Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention (VAVP) (see *Resources*, page 16) for an individualized risk assessment, safety planning and exploration of options. The advocate will help you pursue any reporting options you choose, as safely as possible.

*\* There are different terms used by different states to refer to sex crimes, such as sexual assault, rape, sexual violence or, as in Florida, sexual battery. In this guide, we will refer to these crimes generically as "sexual assault," since that is the term most commonly used.*

# REACTIONS TO VICTIMIZATION

Initially you may react to victimization with shock, disbelief, or denial. You may do your best to try to forget and just go on with your life. Perhaps you believe that being strong means trying to recover on your own and not asking for help. This approach may work for a while, but most of us are not prepared for the disruption to our daily lives that traumatic events often bring. You may experience one or more of the following involuntary reactions, which are expected reactions to trauma:

- Sleep disturbances and/or nightmares
- Changes in eating behavior: loss of appetite, overeating, nausea
- Inability to concentrate or focus
- Constantly thinking about or visualizing the traumatic event
- Hypervigilance and increased startle reaction
- Emotional outbursts of crying or anger
- Irritability
- Feeling numb
- Loss of interest in school, work or usual activities
- Inability to push yourself to attend class or work, resulting in unexcused absences
- Flashbacks in which you re-experience sensory moments from the incident

As stated above, these are expected, involuntary reactions over which you do not have initial control. As unpleasant as these reactions are to endure, they are biochemically triggered as your brain attempts to process the trauma.

Additionally, most often, the offender is someone you know. If this is true for you, you may:

- Feel betrayed because you trusted this person
- Have difficulty trusting others
- Blame yourself for trusting the offender
- Be grieving the loss of the friendship or relationship in addition to coping with the violence and betrayal

Remember that trust is a good thing – betrayal of trust is not. Learning to trust again is part of your healing process; take your time.

Advocates at USF's Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention (**VAVP**) provide trauma-informed care and can help you to understand your reactions and feelings in relation to what has happened to you (see *Resources*, page 16). USF's Counseling Center is also a resource for helping you understand and cope. If you find your academic success or employment negatively affected, VAVP can advocate to remedy problems in academics and employment due to victimization.

# VICTIM DISCLOSURE, EMPLOYEE OBLIGATION TO REPORT, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

USF encourages victims of sexual assault or harassment, relationship or dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking to talk about the incident or situation with someone they trust to receive needed support and to allow the university to respond appropriately.

## Confidential Campus Resources

Employees of the following campus resources can provide confidential support and services to you and are **not required** to report disclosures of sexual assault or harassment, relationship or dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking:

- VAVP
- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services

You can seek assistance from employees of these services without triggering an investigation, unless you wish the incident to be investigated. The only exceptions to this confidentiality are the following circumstances which require employees to report a situation to authorities:

- when child abuse is involved
- when there is the potential of imminent harm to self or others
- when a student victim is under the age of 18.

## Employees Who Must Report Disclosures

With the exception of those USF employees of the departments indicated above, certain other employees are obligated to report disclosures of sexual assault or harassment, relationship or dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking by students or employees to either the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (**OSSR**) or the Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Equal Opportunity (**DIEO**), depending on whether the offense was committed by a student or employee.

Once reported to one of these offices, OSSR or DIEO will proceed with a non-criminal investigation of the incident immediately and appropriately in order for USF to resolve the situation promptly and fairly. During the investigation, although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the privacy of all parties involved will be maintained as much as possible, and information will be shared only with those with a legitimate need to know.

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Employees who are mandated to report include:

- Employees who supervise other employees
- All faculty
- Employees who supervise or oversee students
  - Resident Assistants (RAs)
  - Academic advisors
  - Faculty advisors
  - Program advisors
  - Student activity coordinators
  - Graduate assistants
- University Police Department

### **If the Incident Was Reported Against Your Wishes**

As discussed above, for purposes of campus safety, certain employees of USF are required to report instances of sexual assault or harassment, relationship or dating violence, domestic violence and stalking that come to their attention.

Sometimes well-intentioned friends or family members of a victim may contact law enforcement or other officials to report the incident or situation, even when the victim does not wish others to know.

Since the reporting of a crime or situation of misconduct against the wishes of the victim can be disempowering and may be hurtful to the victim, VAVP will provide an advocate who will explain your rights under these circumstances and ensure that your privacy and wishes are considered by those responsible for the investigation.

*USF cannot require you, as a victim, to participate in any investigation or misconduct proceeding against your will.*

For more information about the reporting obligations of USF employees, please refer to *USF System Policy 0-004: Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment (including Battery)* at <http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-004.pdf>

# REPORTING OPTIONS FOR VICTIMS

Depending on the circumstances of your situation, you have a number of options if you wish to report what has happened to you:

- Report to law enforcement
- File a Title IX complaint with any of the university's Title IX Coordinators or visit the university's DIEO (see *Resources*, page 17)
- Report student misconduct through the OSRR (see *Resources*, page 17)
- Report employee misconduct through the university's DIEO (<http://usfweb2.usf.edu/eoa>)
- Choose not to report

If you are hesitant to report sexual assault because of underage drinking or illegal substance use, please be aware of USF's *Medical Amnesty (Student Reporting) Policy 30-004*, which encourages the reporting of sexual assault in such circumstances and protects the victim from misconduct sanctions (<http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-30-004.pdf>).

***If you believe you are in danger, dial 911 immediately.***

## Reporting a Crime to Law Enforcement

For criminal offenses such as sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence, relationship or dating violence, a report should be made to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the location of the incident:

- Campus: University Police Department (**UP**)
- City of Tampa: Tampa Police Department
- Temple Terrace: Temple Terrace Police Department
- Unincorporated Hillsborough County: Hillsborough County Sheriff Department

You may contact the appropriate law enforcement agency directly **or** you may contact VAVP to assist you in making the report. The benefits of using a USF advocate include:

- An advocate is on-call 24/7, including weekends and holidays, to respond in person to victims reporting a violent crime.
- An advocate can help you determine the jurisdiction.
- An advocate can accompany you to make the report, if you wish.
- The advocate can continue to assist you throughout the investigation.
- If the case results in court proceedings, the advocate can continue to support you throughout the legal process.

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UP has a well-deserved reputation for providing a sensitive response to victims of crime. When you contact UP, you will be offered the services of an advocate from VAVP. Be aware that once a report has been made to UP, they must investigate the crime.

When you contact off-campus law enforcement agencies, you typically will not be offered an advocate. It is strongly recommended that you contact VAVP for accompaniment and advocacy through the reporting process.

## **Sexual Assault**

If you are sexually assaulted, the following information will help guide you in reporting the assault:

- Do not go to a hospital emergency room unless you have physical injuries requiring immediate medical attention.
  - Forensic medical exams (“rape kits”) are **not** performed at hospitals in Hillsborough County/Tampa but rather by Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners as a service of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay.
  - Exams can be performed up to 120 hours after the sexual assault and are requested by law enforcement as part of the reporting process.
- Preserve evidence as much as possible until it is collected.
  - Avoid bathing or showering, urinating, eating or drinking (if oral-genital contact occurred during the assault), washing clothes worn during the assault, or washing bedding or towels that were part of the incident.
  - Save all communications to or from the offender or witnesses via voice mail, text, social media or email about the incident.
  - Even if you did not preserve evidence, you may still report the crime.
- Call 911 to report the sexual assault **or** contact USF’s VAVP for an advocate to assist you in reporting. A police officer or sheriff’s deputy will respond and take an initial report from you. The officer will contact the Sexual Assault Services of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay to initiate the forensic exam process.
- The forensic exam process can be distressing, although every effort will be made to make you as comfortable as possible.
  - You may want a friend or family member and/or your advocate from VAVP to accompany you to the off-campus location for the exam.
  - If you choose not to have a USF advocate accompany you, the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay will have an advocate present to assist you.
- A detective/investigator may interview you at the time you make the report and/or in the days following your initial report. Your advocate can accompany you to the interview(s), if you choose.



- Your advocate will provide safety planning, help you determine your immediate needs, and assist you in obtaining changes or accommodations in such areas as:
  - Housing and relocation
  - Academics
  - Transportation
  - Work
  - Injunction for Protection (“restraining order”) – used to restrict offender’s contact with you (see pg. 10 for more information)
- The State Attorney’s Office in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred has the authority to prosecute crimes when there is enough evidence to pursue the case. The decision to prosecute is made by the prosecutor on behalf of the State of Florida.

### **Stalking and/or Domestic, Relationship and Dating Violence**

Due to the increased risk of danger, victims of these types of crime are urged to consult confidentially with a victim advocate at VAVP for an individualized risk assessment, safety planning and exploration of options. The advocate will help you pursue any reporting options you choose, as safely as possible.

***If you believe you are in danger, dial 911 immediately.***

- Seek medical care, if needed.
  - Hospital emergency room
  - Student Health Services
  - Other medical provider of your choice
  - A victim advocate can accompany you or meet you at the facility if you wish
- Preserve evidence as much as possible.
  - Leave damage to property or dwelling as is for law enforcement to document; avoid changing or washing clothing that may be torn or contain blood evidence; make sure that bruises and other injuries are photographed by police, medical caregivers, or, as a last resort, a friend or relative.
  - Save communications to or from the offender or witnesses via voice mail, text, social media or email about the incident.
- Even if you did not preserve evidence, you may still report the crime.
- Call 911 to report the incident **or** contact USF’s VAVP for an advocate to assist you in reporting. A police officer or sheriff’s deputy will respond and take an initial report from you.

- If UP is contacted, they will offer to contact an advocate from VAVP to assist you during and after taking the report.
- A detective/investigator may interview you at the time you make the report and/or in the days following your initial report. Your advocate can accompany you if you choose.
- Your advocate will provide safety planning, help you determine your immediate needs, and assist you in obtaining changes or accommodations in such areas as:
  - Housing and relocation
  - Safe emergency shelter
  - Academics
  - Transportation
  - Work
  - Legal aid
  - Injunction for Protection
- The State Attorney's Office in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred has the authority to prosecute crimes when there is enough evidence to pursue the case. The decision to prosecute is made by the prosecutor on behalf of the State of Florida.

### **Injunctions for Protection**

Injunctions for Protection are referred to as “restraining orders” or “orders for protection” in some states. You do not have to report the crime in order to request an Injunction for Protection. The intention of an Injunction for Protection is to restrict the access of the offender to the victim, allowing the victim to avoid contact with the offender. Some offenders will abide by the terms of the injunction; however, others will not. For this reason, Injunctions for Protection, when granted, are not guarantees of safety.

The process for requesting an Injunction for Protection is complex:

- Requires you (the “petitioner”) to complete the correct form
- Requires very specific, detailed information
- Can be denied based on wrong form or omission of details

To increase the chances of a successful petition, ask an advocate from VAVP to assist you with the documentation and filing. Attending the petition hearing and having to testify can be confusing and frightening, but you do not have to handle this alone. Your advocate can guide you through the process and accompany you to court hearings for the injunction.

## **Reporting Sexual Discrimination, Harassment or Assault Under Title IX**

Due to the increased risk of danger, victims of intimate partner violence (domestic violence, relationship or dating violence) and stalking are urged to consult confidentially with a victim advocate at VAVP for an individualized risk assessment, safety planning and exploration of options **prior** to filing non-criminal complaints. The advocate will help you pursue any reporting options you choose, as safely as possible.

***If you believe  
you are in  
danger, dial  
911  
immediately.***

Title IX protects people from sex discrimination in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance (20 U.S.C. § 1681). Title IX applies to USF programs and activities, as related both to education and employment. USF is committed to providing an environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. See the USF System Policy 0-004 Sexual Misconduct/ Sex Harassment available at <http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-0-004.pdf>.

The following are your options for filing a Title IX complaint:

- Contact a Title IX Deputy Coordinator (see *Resources*, page 17)
- Make an anonymous complaint via EthicsPoint, USF's third party hosted hotline, by calling 866-974-8411 or online at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/14773/index.html>
- Request an advocate from USF's VAVP to assist you in filing a complaint.

Title IX also prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, has made allegations of sexual assault or who has testified, assisted, or participated in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing related to Title IX. If you believe that you have experienced retaliation, contact the investigator for your Title IX complaint, your victim advocate, a Title IX Deputy Coordinator, or UP.

### **Misconduct by a Student**

You may wish to make a complaint of sexual or other misconduct by a student, which will result in a non-criminal investigation. Information about this option and a complaint form is available on the OSRR website at [sa.usf.edu/srr](http://sa.usf.edu/srr). You can also contact the OSSR directly (see *Resources*, page 17) or request the assistance of an advocate from VAVP. To explore this option confidentially, you may contact VAVP.

Be aware that OSRR must investigate misconduct once they have knowledge that sexual assault or harassment; domestic, dating or relationship violence; or stalking may have occurred.

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If you do not already have an advocate, OSSR will offer you the assistance of an advocate from VAVP, who can provide support throughout the entire process and accompany you to any hearings.

### **Misconduct by an Employee**

You may wish to make a complaint of misconduct by a faculty or staff member at USF, which will result in a non-criminal investigation. Information about this option and the necessary forms are available on the DIEO website at <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/ea>. You can also contact the DIEO directly (see *Resources*, page 17) . To explore this option confidentially, you may contact VAVP.

Be aware that DIEO must investigate misconduct once they have knowledge that sexual assault or harassment; domestic, dating or relationship violence; or stalking may have occurred.

If you do not already have an advocate, DIEO will offer you the assistance of an advocate from VAVP, who can provide support throughout the entire process and accompany you to any hearings.

# IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO REPORT OR ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT REPORTING THE INCIDENT

If you do not wish to report sexual assault, stalking, or other interpersonal crime, USF offers the confidentiality and services of VAVP, the Counseling Center and Student Health Services to you (see *Resources*, page 16).

VAVP specializes in these situations and offers you the most complete support including:

- Crisis intervention
- Risk assessment
- In-depth exploration of options
- Safety planning
- Ongoing support
- Advocacy for issues resulting from the impact of the incident
  - Housing and relocation
  - Academics
  - Transportation
  - Work
  - Legal aid
  - Injunction for Protection filing assistance

An advocate will not pressure you to do anything you do not want to do, but will help you explore your options and support your decisions.

## **Non-Reported Incidents of Sexual Assault**

Please seek medical attention as soon as possible following a sexual assault, especially if penetration or oral-genital contact occurred. An advocate from VAVP can assist you regarding options for addressing medical needs.

You may choose to undergo a forensic medical exam for evidence collection without filing a police report. Evidence can be collected and stored for up to one year, allowing you time to decide whether or not to report the incident to law enforcement. Your advocate can arrange this exam for you and accompany you to the off-campus location at the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay.

- Exam can be performed up to 120 hours after the incident.
- You can receive medications for STI prevention and pregnancy prevention.
- Exam and medications are free of charge.

For more information about this option, please contact VAVP. You may also contact the Sexual Assault Services at the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay (see *Resources*, page 18).

## **Non-Reported Situations of Domestic, Relationship and Dating Violence and Stalking**

If you have been physically injured, please seek medical attention as soon as possible. An advocate from VAVP can assist you regarding options for addressing medical needs and can accompany you if you wish.

This type of violence, which involves individuals in an intimate or pre-intimate relationship, rarely occurs in isolation and is likely to occur multiple times, keeping the victim in a situation of ongoing danger.

VAVP strongly encourages you to contact us for individualized, confidential risk assessment and safety planning. We will not pressure you to leave the abuser but will help you make informed choices regarding your safety and will provide you with the same services that are provided to those who choose to report.

## **LGBTQ STATEMENT**

USF strives to promote the safety and well-being of all students and employees. The information in this guide is applicable to students and employees regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. VAVP is aware that anyone who is perceived as not conforming to traditional sex and gender stereotypes may be targeted for sexual harassment or assault, and/or hate crimes. In addition, interpersonal violence may occur in same-sex relationships.

In VAVP, we enjoy diversity among our staff. All advocates are certified as LGBTQ allies through the USF Safe Zone Ally training program.

## **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

USF strives to promote the safety and well-being of all students and employees. The information in this guide is applicable to students and employees regardless of their disability status. VAVP is aware that persons with disabilities may be targets of crime, abuse or harassment, and our advocates are committed to providing accessible and available services.

For reasonable accommodations, please contact us at 813-974-5756 (FL Relay 711) and/or [va@usf.edu](mailto:va@usf.edu).

# CONFIDENTIAL CAMPUS RESOURCES

## **Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention (VAVP)**

VAVP is staffed by professional victim advocates who are Designated Victim Services Practitioners and provides crisis intervention; ongoing support and services; advocacy for academic, financial, housing, conduct, criminal justice or civil justice matters occurring due to crime or abuse victimization; risk assessment and safety planning; accompaniment on and off campus to hearings, court, medical appointments, and other appointments related to victimization and recovery; and assistance with completion of documents and forms for filing complaints, applying for State Crime Victims Compensation, requesting Injunctions for Protection, etc.

[sa.usf.edu/advocacy/](http://sa.usf.edu/advocacy/)

Student Services Building (SVC), Basement Level, Suite 0067

**Office: 813-974-5756**

**Victim Helpline: 813-974-5757**

## **Counseling Center**

The Counseling Center provides brief, confidential counseling services to currently enrolled USF students, and has licensed mental health clinicians, social workers, psychologists and board certified psychiatrists on staff.

[usf.edu/student-affairs/counseling-center](http://usf.edu/student-affairs/counseling-center)

Student Services Building (SVC), 2nd Floor, Suite 2124

**813-974-2831**

## **Student Health Services**

Student Health Services provides general health, sexual health, and gynecology services in a supportive, student-centered environment, and has medical doctors, physician assistants, and advanced registered nurse practitioners on staff.

[usf.edu/student-affairs/student-health-services](http://usf.edu/student-affairs/student-health-services)

SHS 100 (located east of the USF Bookstore)

**813-974-2331**



# NON-CONFIDENTIAL CAMPUS RESOURCES

## **University Police (UP)**

usf.edu/administrative-services/university-police

Emergency: 911

Non-Emergency: 813-974-2628

## **Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities (OSSR)**

sa.usf.edu/srr/

ALN 109

813-974-9443

## **Title IX:**

### **Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Equal Opportunity (DIEO)**

<http://usfweb2.usf.edu/EOA/>

ALN 172

Dr. Jose Hernandez, *Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator*

813-974-0537, jehernan@usf.edu

### **Deputy Coordinators:**

#### ***For Students:***

Winston G. Jones, *Director - OSSR*

813-974-9443, winstonjones@usf.edu

#### ***For Complaints Involving Athletics:***

Jocelyn Fisher, *Senior Associate Athletic Director*

813-974-6885, jafisher1@usf.edu

#### ***For Complaints Involving USF Health:***

Olga Joanow, *Director Faculty Relations*

813-974-1676, ojoanow@health.usf.edu

#### ***For Employees:***

Camille Blake, *DIEO*

813-974-3906, camille20@usf.edu

Rhonda Ferrell-Pierce, *DIEO*

813-974-3970, ferrell@usf.edu

# OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES

## **Crisis Center of Tampa Bay (Sexual Assault Services)**

The Sexual Assault Services unit at the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay provides victim advocacy for the larger Hillsborough County community, and is Hillsborough County's authorized location for forensic evaluations and treatment, often referred to as "rape kit exams." The exams are performed by Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) who are Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners specifically trained to collect evidence from victims of sexual assault. Forensic exams for sexual assault victims from USF-Tampa receive that service free of charge through this program. For more information on forensic exams, see page 8.

[crisiscenter.com/content/19/Sexual-Assault-Services.aspx](http://crisiscenter.com/content/19/Sexual-Assault-Services.aspx)  
211 or 813-234-1234

## **The Spring**

The Spring is the certified domestic violence shelter in Hillsborough County. They provide safe emergency shelter, a 24-hour crisis hotline, safety planning, advocacy, and transitional housing, among other services.

[thespring.org/](http://thespring.org/)  
24-hour crisis hotline: 813-247-SAFE (7233)

## **Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office**

[hcso.tampa.fl.us/](http://hcso.tampa.fl.us/)  
Emergency: 911  
Non-Emergency: 813-247-8200

## **Tampa Police Department**

[tampagov.net/dept\\_police/](http://tampagov.net/dept_police/)  
Emergency: 911  
Non-Emergency: 813-231-6130

## **Temple Terrace Police Department**

[templeterrace.com/index.aspx?nid=171](http://templeterrace.com/index.aspx?nid=171)  
Emergency: 911  
Non-Emergency: 813-989-7110

# NOTES

This publication was supported by funding from the Rape Prevention Education grant provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Florida Department of Health (DOH). The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the CDC, or DOH.



VICTIM ADVOCACY  
& VIOLENCE PREVENTION

**Crime Victim Helpline: (813) 974-5757**

**Office: (813) 974-5756**

Office hours are Monday thru Friday 8am to 5 pm;  
no appointment is necessary

4202 E. Fowler Avenue, SVC 0067  
Tampa, Florida 33620

**[usf.edu/advocacy](https://usf.edu/advocacy)**