

Dear Student:

I am writing to provide students filing complaints of sexual battery sexual misconduct and sexual harassment with information about available options. Staff members at the University of Florida are anxious to help victims/survivors/harmed parties through whatever process they may choose to follow. Enclosed is a brochure with valuable information along with specific information pertaining to filing a complaint through the University Conduct system.

The Office of Victim Services provides round-the-clock crisis intervention, advocacy and referral services for survivors, academic assistance and support, support through the conduct system if conduct charges are filed, referral information for other campus and community support services. You can either call ahead and make an appointment or you can drop-in to the Office of Victim Services at UFPD (392-5648 or 392-1111 after hours). Ask to talk to an advocate or set up an appointment with an advocate.

You may also make an appointment with the Counseling Center from 8:00am-5:00pm or with Student Mental Health. If you do not wish to make an appointment both places have drop-in counselors available. These agencies maintain confidentiality and have a tremendous amount of experience working with survivors. If you choose to speak with your Resident Assistant, hall director, faculty or other staff, you should know that while they will respect your privacy to the extent possible they do have to report sexual assault/harassment to their supervisors.

I strongly recommend that all survivors/victims, if you have not already done so, seek medical care. If the assault has occurred within the past 48 hours, Shands at Alachua General Hospital have nurses to perform the medical exam (known as the sexual assault forensic nurse exam to collect physical evidence. This evidence will be preserved in the event you decide to pursue legal action. Even if you have no desire to press criminal charges, seeking medical attention is extremely important because of the possibility of sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.

All survivors have the right to consider pressing formal criminal charges through the State Attorney's Office. The investigation costs, legal fees, etc. are all paid for by the city and/or state. If you choose to pursue this option, call the police who will do everything they can to insure confidentiality. The police and district attorney will advise you of your rights and ultimately they will decide if the criminal case is strong enough for them to proceed. If you wish, advocates are available through Victim Services to assist you with the criminal justice process.

In addition to the criminal justice system, survivors also have the option of pressing charges through the University of Florida Student Conduct Code if the other person involved was a University of Florida student at the time of the incident. Filing a complaint through the University system may be done in addition to pursuing a legal remedy, or instead of pursuing a legal remedy. The attached handout entitled, "What About Sexual Misconduct" outlines the procedures for pressing charges through the University's Student Conduct Code and provides excerpts from the Code.

Please take advantage of the resources outlined above. Additionally, please feel free to stop in and see me or call me at anytime to ask questions about the Conduct Process.

Sincerely,

Chris Loschiavo, Assistant Dean and Director
Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution