

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT AFFAIRS



BYSTANDER
INTERVENTION
TOOLKIT



I am _____
TRUE BLUE

as a member of this diverse community,

VALUABLE CONTRIBUTOR

I am a

PROGRESS
SUCCESS

ENGAGED

LIFE

c o m m u n i t y

RECIPIENT & GIVER

GIVER

I AM A

listener & a speaker

HONEST

HONEST

I AM COMMITTED TO REASON,

NOT VIOLENCE

NOW & FOREVER

TRUE BLUE.

BLUE RAIDER.

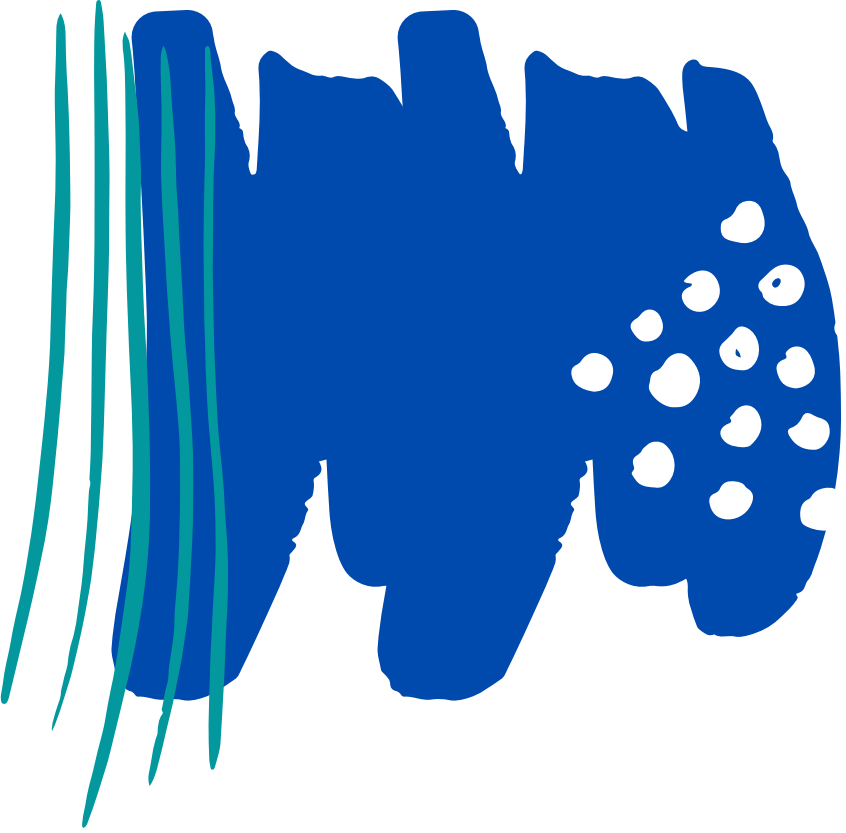


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CONTENT WARNING

This toolkit includes topics on sexual violence, sexual assault, and harassment.

Dear Student,

Sexual violence on campus affects everyone and, as such, the entire campus community must work collectively to create a safe environment where all students can live, work, and study. Together we can maintain a community where sexual assault, domestic violence, and relationship violence have no place. We want all our students to thrive and work to keep each other accountable and safe.

To help educate our community, we are providing this important toolkit. This toolkit is meant to be a guide to help you navigate instances of sexual violence and take responsibility for educating yourself and others on resources available.

This toolkit will teach you how to be an ally to survivors of sexual violence, what resources are available on campus, how to intervene and not be a bystander, and how to navigate friendships and relationships after an incident occurs. Most importantly, this guide will teach you how you can change the outcome of a traumatic situation by being knowledgeable and available (physically and emotionally) to someone who has been affected by sexual violence.

Together, we can be the Power of ONE.

Definitions and Terminology

Below are general definitions and terminology used when discussing sexual violence. MTSU-specific content is included in these definitions to help you understand what is currently used at the University.

Consent

Consent is an informed decision, freely given, made through mutually understandable words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity.

Coercion

Sexual coercion means pressuring, tricking, threatening, or non-physically forcing someone into any sexual activity.

Force

Force includes the use of physical violence, threats, intimidation, and/or coercion.

Incapacitation

Incapacitation is a state beyond drunkenness or intoxication. Typical signs include slurred speech, unsteady gait, combativeness, emotional volatility, vomiting, or incontinence.

Dating Violence

A pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship.

Fraternity & Sorority Life

Fraternities and sororities, also referred to as Greek-letter organizations or, collectively, as "Greek life" are social organizations at colleges and universities.

Hazing

Hazing is any intentional or reckless act, on or off University property, by an individual(s) which is directed against any other person(s) that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that person(s), or which induces or coerces a person(s) to endanger such person(s) mental or physical health or safety.

Power-Based Violence

A type of violence committed by an offender who uses the assertion of power, control, and/or intimidation to harm another. Strangers, friends, acquaintances, intimates, or other persons can commit these acts.

Sexual Assault

The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature in the workplace or learning environment.

Definitions & Terminology Continued

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature in the workplace or learning environment.

Middle Tennessee State University

Sexual misconduct and harassment are forms of sexual discrimination prohibited by state and federal law and MTSU. MTSU is committed to eliminating any and all acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment. An environment free from such acts is necessary to a healthy learning, working, and living atmosphere because such misconduct, discrimination, and harassment undermine human dignity and the positive connection among all people at this University.

Title IX

Title IX defines sexual harassment and sexual assault more narrowly: (1) An employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of MTSU on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct OR unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to MTSU's education program or activity; and (2) An offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Sexual Violence

The term "sexual violence" is an all-encompassing, non-legal term that refers to crimes like sexual assault, rape, and sexual abuse.

Stalking

Stalking is a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

Student Organizations

Student organizations are voluntary associations of MTSU students, which are legally separate entities from the University. Student organizations are student-initiated and student-run.

Victim Blaming

Victim blaming occurs when the victim of a crime or any wrongful act is held entirely or partially at fault for the harm that befell them. Some examples include: "She was asking for it", "You shouldn't have been drinking", "What were you wearing?", "They didn't fight back." Sexual assault is NEVER a victim's fault.

Supporting Survivors

Every 73 seconds, someone is sexually assaulted in the U.S. This means that even if you have not personally had an experience with sexual violence, it's likely that you know someone who has. Talking about sexual assault can be difficult. For many survivors, the reaction of the first person they disclose to, often a friend or family member, can have a huge effect on their healing process.

How can you provide support?

Start By Believing:

It is important to start by believing when someone discloses sexual violence to you. If you are not sure what to say, remember that a sincere "I believe you", "I am here for you", and "I'm sorry this happened to you" can be powerful for a victim to hear.

Stay Calm:

It is natural to feel upset when something bad happens to someone you care about but remaining calm can help your friend feel safer. Use your body language to show them you are engaged and focused on what they are telling you. Some common tips are put your phone away; gentle eye contact; and face them with a relaxed and open posture.

Avoid Victim Blaming:

Victim Blaming is when someone places the fault for a crime on the victim instead of the offender. This invalidates the experience of the victim and discourages them from reporting or disclosing to you, police, or even confidential resources. Example of victim blaming are: "Well, what were you wearing?", "Why did you drink so much?", "Why did you not fight or scream for help?", "You were flirting with them, what did you expect?", and "Do you really want to ruin their future over this?" Avoid victim blaming to ensure the victim feels safer confiding in you.

Listen:

Let your friend have control of the conversation. Avoid asking questions about what happened, but say, "I'm a safe person for you to talk to when you are ready." Give them the space and time to talk. Victims of sexual violence have, in addition to trauma, experienced a lack of control. Giving them the room to control the conversation is vital for maintaining trust. You can say things like "Thank you for telling me", "It was brave of you to come forward", and "I'm here for you. What can I do to support you?"

Validate Their Feelings:

There is no right or wrong way to deal with trauma. Healing is not linear. Everyone responds differently to trauma based on their experiences and your friend may not react how you would expect them to. Try to understand how they are feeling and let them know their response is valid. Be empathetic rather than sympathetic.

Let Them Make Choices:

Giving CHOICE back to a victim is crucial when they disclose sexual violence to you. It is a victim's choice to seek medical attention or report to police what has happened to them. It is not your place to force them to report or seek help - even if their choices are not ones you agree with. You can always share information about their options for seeking help. Understand that the steps they choose to take moving forward are ultimately up to them. You should, however, keep an eye out for red flag coping mechanisms like substance abuse.

Get Help For Yourself:

Secondary trauma is real for anyone supporting a friend who has experienced sexual violence. It can be triggering for yourself if you have experienced your own trauma. Creating healthy boundaries and checking in with yourself are important. You are encouraged to access resources on campus that can be found on page 23.

Bystander Intervention

Bystander Intervention is a strategy for preventing and disrupting an incident of violence through those who are aware that violence is happening. Bystanders are individuals who observe violence or witness the conditions that perpetuate violence. They are not directly involved, but have the choice to intervene, speak up, or do something about it. They are individuals who are present and potentially in a position to discourage, prevent, or interrupt an incident. An active bystander chooses to intervene to address the violence.

The **Bystander Effect** is a theory that individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when other people are present.

Why people do not offer help:

- 1) **Diffusion of responsibility** – especially if there is a group of people around; you think "someone else will handle it."
- 2) **Apprehension** – Risk of embarrassment if the situation turns out not to be an emergency.
- 3) **Cause of Misfortune** – Less likely to help if we perceive the person to be responsible; "the person deserves it."
- 4) **Conformity** – Look around to see if others will respond; "if no one else responds we won't either."

Becoming an Active Bystander

- 1) Notice the incident
- 2) Interpret as an emergency
- 3) Assume responsibility
- 4) Have the bystander intervention skills to help

DON'T BE A BYSTANDER!

USE ONE OF THE FIVE D'S OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

Direct - Distract - Delegate - Delay - Document

Direct:

Step in and address the situation directly. This might look like saying, "That's not cool. Please stop," or "Hey, leave them alone."

This technique tends to work better when the person that you are trying to stop is someone that knows and trusts you.

It does not work well when drugs or alcohol are being used because someone's ability to have a conversation with you about what is going on may be impaired, and they are more likely to become defensive.

Distract:

Distract either person in the situation to intervene.

This might look like saying, "Hey, aren't you in my Spanish class?" or "Who wants to go to Cook Out?"

This technique is especially useful when drugs or alcohol are being used because people under the influence are more easily distracted than those that are sober.

Delegate:

Find others who can help you to intervene in the situation. This might look like asking a friend to distract one person in the situation while you distract the other ("splitting" or "defensive split"), asking someone to go sit with them and talk, or going and starting a dance party right in the middle of their conversation.

If you didn't know either person in the situation, you could also ask around to see if someone else does and check in with them.

See if they can talk to their friend, text their friend to check in, or intervene. Find someone with authority: a professor, MTSU police, staff, bartender, or a bouncer.

DON'T BE A BYSTANDER CONT.

USE ONE OF THE FIVE D'S OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

Direct - Distract - Delegate - Delay - Document

Delay:

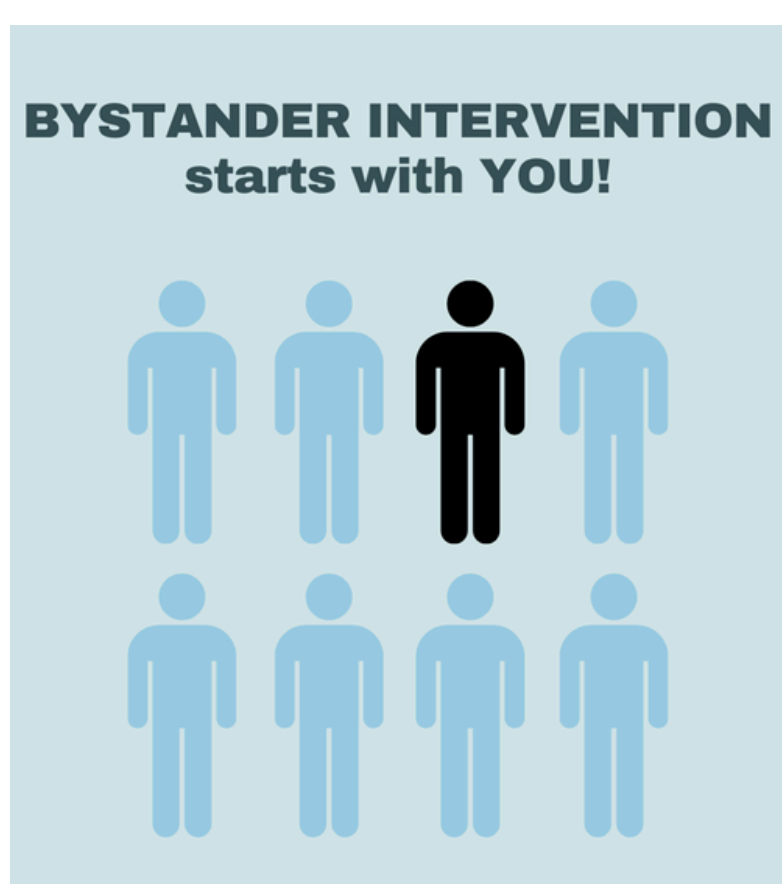
For many reasons, you may not be able to do something right in the moment. For example, if you are feeling unsafe or if you are unsure whether or not someone in the situation is feeling unsafe, you may just want to check in with the person.

In this case, you can combine a distraction technique by asking the person to use the bathroom with you or go get a drink with you to separate them from the person that they are talking with. Then, this might look like asking them, "Are you okay?" or "How can I help you get out of this situation?" This could also look like texting the person, either in the situation or after you see them leave and asking, "Are you okay?" or "Do you need help?"

Document:

It can be helpful for the target to have a video of the incident. Laws about recording in public vary, so check local laws first. Only document if the situation is safe. Keep a safe distance and say the day and time. Film street signs or other landmarks that help identify the location.

ALWAYS ask the person targeted what they want to do with the footage. NEVER post it online or use it without their permission. Keep your attention on the person being harassed – make sure anything you do is focused on supporting them.



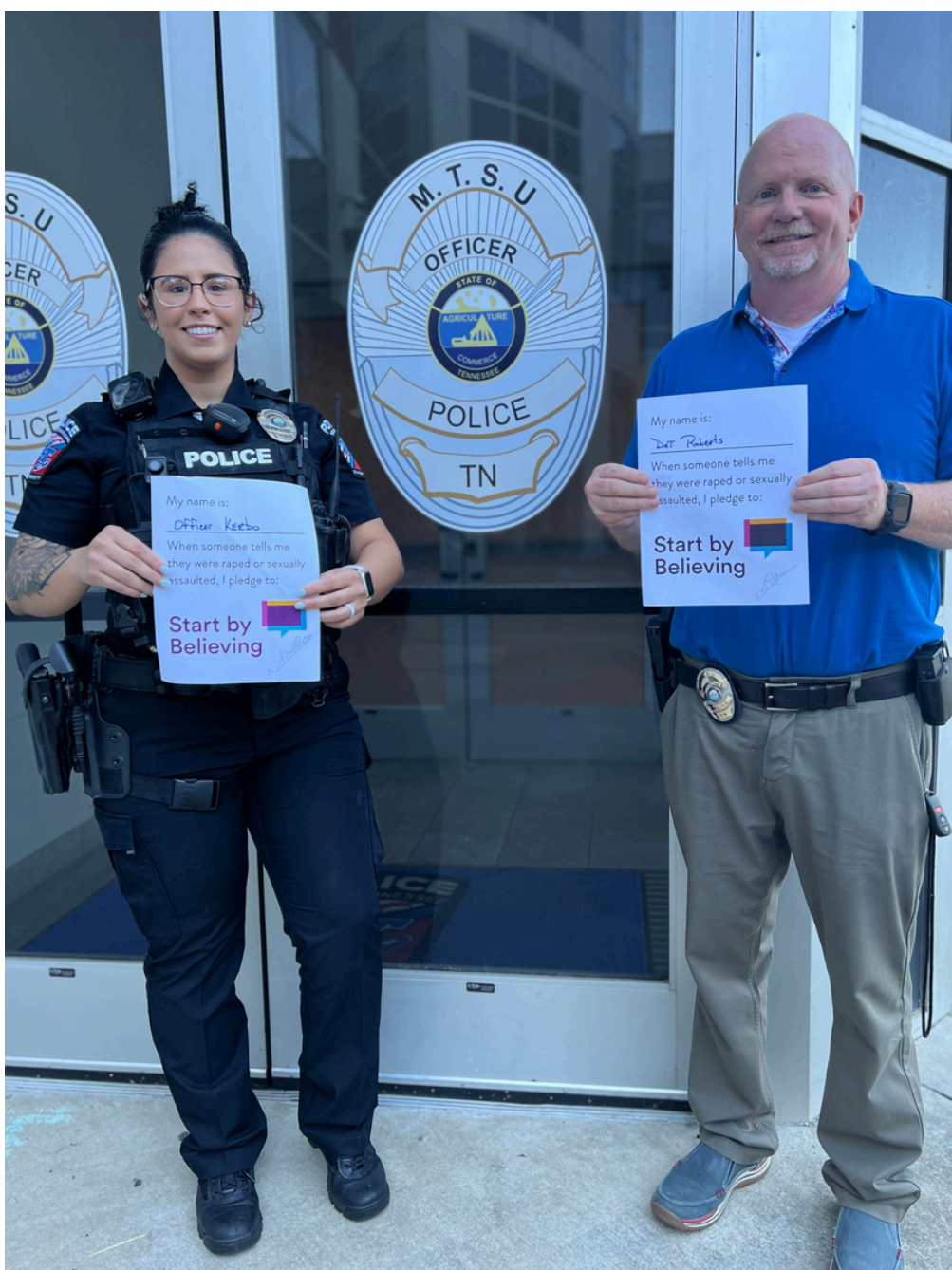
IF NOT YOU THEN WHO?

Start By Believing

Only 12% of college student survivors ever report their assault.

What is Start By Believing?

Start by Believing is a public awareness campaign designed to end the cycle of silence and change the way we respond to sexual assault. It was first launched in April 2011. Since then, thousands of people across the country and around the world have made their own personal commitment. This includes many campus professionals:



Pictured: (left) Officer Hope Kerbo and (right) DVSA Detective Tommy Roberts taking the pledge to start by believing.

When we Start by Believing, we create an atmosphere where victims receive the support they need in order to participate in an investigation. When victims fully participate, there is an increased likelihood that a thorough investigation can be conducted. The choice is ours, and the risks are clear. We have far more to gain, and far less to lose, by approaching victims with a perspective of start by believing. It is the right thing to do for victims, and best for campus environments.

**To request information about RAD
(self-defense) classes at MTSU email:
RAD@mtsu.edu**



Reporting On Campus

The decision whether to report sexual violence to university officials and/or police is a personal and individual decision. University personnel can assist you in contacting law enforcement officials if you choose to do so. By calling law enforcement, you are reporting the crime that was committed against you and seeking police assistance.

MTSU has NO Closed Doors

MTSU is concerned for the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff and prohibits all acts of sexual violence. We are committed to providing a healthy living, working, and educational environment for our campus community and will continue working to provide the safest campus environment possible. This brochure will provide you with information about the resources available to you, your options for reporting sexual violence, and the procedures used by the University to investigate sexual violence.

To Report an Incident to the University:

Title IX

Reports can be submitted any time online, or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator at (615) 898-2185 or titleix@mtsu.edu

Online Reporting:

Reporting Form

<https://mtsu.edu/sexual-violence/reporting-form.php>

To Report an Incident to the Police:

MTSU Police

You can call MTSU University Police at 911 or 615-898-2424. The University Police Department at Middle Tennessee State University is a fully functioning law enforcement agency that is open and operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in order to provide police services to the MTSU campus.

Reporting & Resources

Campus resources will be defined as one of the following:

Confidential: Nothing will be shared without your consent, except in rare circumstances.

Private: University officials, unless bound by confidentiality, are required to report an incident when a student shares information about sexual violence. Your information remains private to the public but must be shared with proper authorities.

Confidential

MTSU Counseling Services

615-898-2670, KUC 326-S

MTSU Counseling and Psychological Services

615-898-2271

Miller Education Center, 503 E. Bell St.

MTSU Student Health Services

615-898-2988

1848 Blue Raider Drive

Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Center (24/7)

DV: 615-896-2012

SA: 615-494-9262

1423 Kensington Square Ct.

Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Private

University Police (24/7)

615-898-2424 or 911

Title IX Coordinator

615-898-2185, Cope 116

Employee Assistance Program

1-855-437-3486

University officials, unless bound by confidentiality, are mandatory reporters. Mandatory reporters are required to report information about known or suspected prohibited conduct to the Title IX Office within 48-hours whether the employee received the information by means of a complaint, report, personal observation, or otherwise, including information learned from third parties.

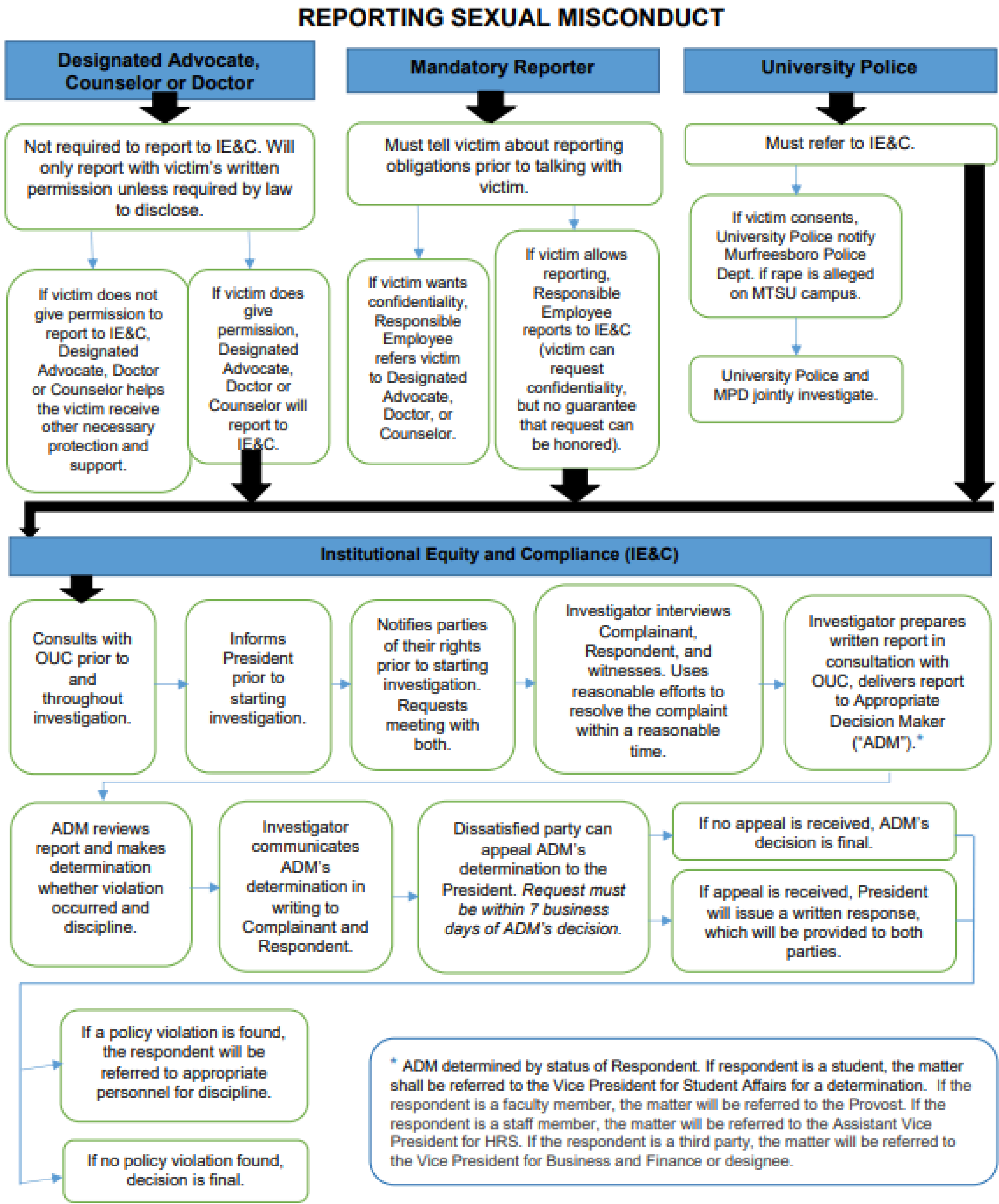
By reporting prohibited conduct to the Office of Title IX, mandatory reporters ensure that the university can fulfill its legal obligation, as well as connect a person to the best resources available.

You have the right to report anonymously!

You can report an incident occurred without reporting your information. You can find the direct link for the online reporting form on page 14 of this toolkit.

Reporting Cont.

Understanding the process of reporting may bring relief to someone who has experienced sexual violence. Knowing the options available gives them back their choice on what they want to do. Below is MTSU's diagram on what reporting sexual misconduct on campus looks like.



Abbreviation Key:

IE&C = Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance
OUC = The Office of the University Counsel (OUC)
ADM = Appropriate Decision Maker

Fraternity and Sorority Life & Student Organizations Addendum

Dear Member,

For many of you, your organization's values call upon you to have the best interest for your fellow members, brothers, and sisters at heart. You have already taken a great step in caring for others and yourself by referencing this toolkit to ensure that you are equipped with the necessary skills and tools to handle a variety of difficult situations. Read through the next pages to learn more about how to hold your fellow members accountable, navigating your own relationships, hazing facts and questions to ask, and additional resources.

By being an active bystander and choosing to do the right thing, you can have a direct impact on changing the statistics! The MTSU True Blue Pledge asks each student to be committed to reason, not violence. On behalf of the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life and the Office of Student Organizations and Service, we commend you for taking your time to use this toolkit and for being the Power of ONE!

Hannah Leyhew

Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life

Jackie Victory

Director of Student Organizations and Service

Holding Others Accountable

People tend to believe victims of sexual assault more quickly when they do not know the perpetrator than if it is someone they know well. So, what do you do when the person that is accused is your friend or fellow member? Below are some helpful ways to hold others accountable for their actions after an incident of violence has occurred.

Assess the situation.

Being friends with someone accused can be confusing and upsetting. Take a step back and assess the situation. Nobody wants to believe someone they know would commit a sexual assault, but this doesn't mean you should immediately reject the accusation. Ask yourself, "If this person wasn't my friend, would I believe the victim?"

Hold them accountable.

Being a good friend does not mean you have to defend their actions or behaviors. Calling them out when they do something wrong and helping them reflect on their actions are ways to be a good friend while not discrediting a victim's story. You should listen to what your friend has to say, but it is important to hold them accountable for their actions.

Speak up.

There are many factors that perpetuate sexual violence. You have the ability to speak up and influence the way your friends think about consent, rape myths, and sexual violence all together. If you see something, say something. If you hear a friend making jokes about rape or sexism, call them out.

Practice self-care.

Navigating a friendship after someone is accused of sexual violence can be daunting. Take care of your mental and emotional well-being. Listen to yourself and make decisions based on what is best for you. If you decide to stop being friends with them, that is O.K. too.

Navigating Relationships

Over half of sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance. This means you probably know someone who has been a victim of sexual violence and/or someone who has committed a sexual assault. In these cases, it is likely you have questions and may be struggling to understand what has happened. You may be experiencing many emotions like anger, confusion, sadness, helplessness, and even betrayal. Below are some tips on how to navigate relationships after an incident occurs with a friend or fellow member.

Direct your friend to resources.

Helping your friend access the necessary resources is a step you can take to provide support in what may be an emotional time for both you and your friend. To find the resources you may need, refer to page 15 in this toolkit.

Seek counseling.

There is no single way you are supposed to feel when you find out someone you care about has survived or committed an act of sexual violence. Regardless of what you are feeling, these emotions can be intense and difficult to deal with. Seeking a counselor to navigate these emotions can be beneficial for you to support you through this time.

Respect others' decisions.

If you choose to remain friends with the perpetrator, that is valid; but that choice may affect your relationship with the survivor. It is important to understand that the person(s) affected by the violence may decide to distance themselves from you and the perpetrator, and they have the right to do so. Be respectful of their decision.

Be mindful.

Be mindful of your words and actions after someone discloses violence to you. Do not use victim-blaming statements as they can be extremely damaging. False accusations of sexual violence are rare. Lastly, being mindful can ensure you are not downplaying or justifying acts of sexual violence further traumatizing the victim.

Hazing

Hazing is any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Hazing can occur in sports teams, clubs, Greek life, cheerleading, honor societies and more
- Hazing is often about power and control. Hazing does not build unity
- More than half of students in colleges and universities involved in clubs, sports teams and organizations have experienced hazing
- A significant number of hazing incidents and deaths involve alcohol consumption
- Students are more likely to be hazed if they knew an adult who was hazed
- 2 in 5 students say they are aware of hazing taking place on their campus
- Hazing occurs in middle schools, high schools, and colleges
- Both male and female students report a high level of hazing

IS IT HAZING?

If you are not sure whether or not something happening to you or to someone else is hazing, ask yourself these questions:

- Would I feel comfortable participating in this activity if my parents were watching?
- Would we get in trouble if a school/college administrator walked by and saw us?
- Am I being asked to keep these activities a secret?
- Am I doing anything illegal?
- Does participation in this activity violate my values or those of this organization?
- Is this causing emotional or physical distress or stress to myself or to others?
- Am I going to be able to get a job if I have to put a criminal arrest on my application?

FSL/SO Reporting & Resources

It is helpful if there is someone in your chapter that others can turn to if they need help. Below are individuals to whom you can report hazing or sexual violence Remember, reporting is a personal choice, but MTSU has the resources to help you through this time.

Fraternity and Sorority Life

Hannah Leyhew
Director, Fraternity & Sorority Life
(615) 898-5812
Hannah.Leyhew@mtsu.edu

Hayden Schimborski
Coordinator, Fraternity & Sorority Life
(615) 898-5812
Hayden.Schimborski@mtsu.edu

Student Organizations

Jackie Victory
Director, Campus Activities & Strategic Marketing
(615) 898-5812
Jackie.Victory@mtsu.edu

Danielle Bratton
Coordinator, Student Organizations & Service
(615) 898-5812
Jackie.Victory@mtsu.edu

Title IX

Christy Sigler
Assistant to the President Civil Rights Compliance
(615) 898-2185
titleix@mtsu.edu

University Police

Tommy Roberts
Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Detective
(615) 494-7607
Tommy.Roberts@mtsu.edu

Student Care and Conduct

Laura Sosh-Lightsy
Associate Dean
(615) 898-2750
oscc@mtsu.edu

Lauren Luther
Care Coordinator
(615) 898-2750
oscc@mtsu.edu

See page 15 for additional reporting information.

Middle Tennessee State University Community Values

Middle Tennessee State University (“MTSU” or “the University”) is committed to developing and nurturing a community devoted to learning, growth and service. Each person who joins or affiliates with the community does so freely and accepts and practices the following core values and expectations:

Honesty and Integrity

The notions of personal and academic honesty and integrity are central to the existence of the MTSU community. All members of the community will strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic achievement in the classroom and personal and social responsibility on- and off-campus.

Respect for Diversity

The MTSU community is composed of individuals representing different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, cultures, and ways of thinking. We respect individual differences and unique perspectives and acknowledge our commonalities.

Engagement in the Community

All members of the community are encouraged to participate in educationally purposeful activities that support and enhance the MTSU experience. Active involvement and personal investment in the classroom and throughout the community are hallmarks of an engaged citizen.

Commitment to Non-violence

MTSU is committed to the principles of non-violence and peaceful conflict resolution. Community members will freely express their ideas and resolve differences using reason and persuasion.



This toolkit was adapted from:
*Tulane University Title IX's,
Greek Life Sexual Violence Toolkit: Resources
for Organizations to Support Survivors and
Prevent Sexual Violence, 2020.*