

# Sexual Violence:

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THE CUA COMMUNITY



THE  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY  
*of* AMERICA



This booklet was designed to serve as a resource guide for the CUA community and is not meant to address all of CUA’s policies related to sexual violence. To read the full policies and more detailed information, please visit [deanofstudents.cua.edu](http://deanofstudents.cua.edu).

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# CUA Cares

The Catholic University of America promotes respect for persons' bodily integrity, the virtue of chastity, and the sacredness of human sexuality. The belief in the inherent dignity of each person is the foundation to all Catholic social teaching. The Church teaches that violence against another person, including sexual violence, fails to treat that person as someone worthy of love.

We all share responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the safety and dignity of each person. No one deserves to experience sexual violence. When we are witness to acts that compromise the dignity of those in our community it is our responsibility to be empowered bystanders and take action.

At CUA we understand the seriousness of sexual violence and the impact it has on our community. If you or a friend is ever in need of support as a result of sexual violence or assault, know that we at Catholic University care deeply about you. We are committed to connecting you with resources and support. **Above all else, we want you to know that you are not alone.**

# What Is Sexual Violence?

The spectrum of sexual violence includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Sexual assault
- Acquaintance assault
- Alcohol- and drug-facilitated sexual assault
- Sexual harassment
- Domestic violence
- Dating violence
- Stalking
- Indecent exposure
- Sexual exhibitionism
- Use of communication systems to send unwanted sexual material and messages
- Prostitution or the solicitation or employment of a prostitute
- Peeping or other voyeurism
- Allowing others to view consensual sexual activity
- Nonconsensual video or audio recording of sexual activity

For more information and detailed definitions, visit [deanofstudents.cua.edu](http://deanofstudents.cua.edu).

# What Is Consent?

CUA defines consent as informed, freely given, mutually understandable words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in sexual activity. Effective consent may never be obtained when there is a threat of force or violence, or any other form of coercion or intimidation. A current or previous dating or sexual relationship is not sufficient to constitute consent, and consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity. Consent cannot be obtained from a minor, someone who is mentally disabled, or someone who is unable to understand or who cannot communicate a lack of consent. Silence or lack of active resistance does not imply consent.

## Consent should be:

- A voluntary, informed, mutual agreement: consent indicates willingness to participate in sexual activity
- An active agreement: consent cannot be coerced
- A process, involving ongoing communication: consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity

## Consent is not:

- The absence of “no”
- Silence
- Implied or assumed
- Based on a current or previous dating relationship
- Possible if someone says no repeatedly and finally says yes

## In what circumstances can a person not give consent?

- When the person is incapacitated or unconscious as a result of alcohol or drug use
- When the person is a minor or mentally disabled
- When the person is unconscious or asleep

*Incapacitation is the inability to give consent because one is unconscious or unaware sexual activity is occurring. Signs that one may be approaching incapacitation may include: vomiting, incoherent speech, difficulty walking or standing.*



## If It Happens to You or a Friend

The University views sexual offenses with the utmost seriousness and offers many services to support and assist survivors of sexual violence. We will listen to you, support you, and can provide you with resources and accommodations. The University publishes Grievance Procedures for Reported Sexual Offenses ([deanofstudents.cua.edu](https://deanofstudents.cua.edu)) that outline the overall process and what to expect.

If you have experienced any form of sexual violence, your first priority should be to **get to a place of safety**, then consider the following actions:

### Report the Incident

You can contact the Department of Public Safety (DPS) **202-319-5111**. DPS is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can contact the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) or other local law enforcement agencies as necessary. Reports of sexual offenses may also be made to the dean of students at **202-319-5619**, [sawyerj@cua.edu](mailto:sawyerj@cua.edu), or to the University's Title IX Coordinator at **202-319-4177**, [vinik@cua.edu](mailto:vinik@cua.edu). We will take your report seriously and support you throughout the entire process.

### Seek Medical Attention Immediately

Students can receive free, confidential medical treatment and testing through the DC Forensic Nurse Examiners (DCFNE) program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. You are encouraged not to bathe, change clothes, brush teeth, or do anything that may interfere with the collection of evidence. A free Uber ride to the hospital is available through the UASK DC app. At the time of this publication evidence collection is **ONLY** done at MedStar Washington Hospital Center.

*We will listen to you, support you, and can provide you with resources and accommodations. We will take your report seriously and support you throughout the entire process.*

### **Write Down the Events of the Assault**

Recording the events of the assault, although emotionally difficult, can be helpful in preserving details and can serve as a valuable resource in any legal action you might decide to take. Include the date, time, and chronology. If there are witnesses or people who have information about the assault, write down their names. Try to preserve any harassing letters, text messages, or emails as evidence.

### **Counseling and Support Services**

Sexual violence can be difficult to discuss. We at CUA are committed to protecting your privacy and offering confidential resources for your support. If you are 18 years or older you may speak with certain persons in legally protected roles including:

- Professional mental health counselors (including those in the Counseling Center)
- Physicians
- Priests (in their professional capacity of giving religious or spiritual advice)
- Licensed rape crisis/sexual assault counselors

The CUA Counseling Center, Office of Campus Ministry, and DC Rape Crisis Center all offer a wide selection of local counseling and support options. The Office of the Dean of Students can help connect you to appropriate on- and off-campus options.

Certain individuals (such as those in Residence Life or the Office of the Dean of Students staff) are considered “Responsible Employees” and are required to report if you share details of the incident. For more information about privacy and confidentiality, visit the Grievance Procedures located on the dean of students website at [deanofstudents.cua.edu](http://deanofstudents.cua.edu).

# Why Seek Medical Attention?

It is especially important for you to seek immediate and appropriate medical treatment. Following such incidents, you should not shower, eat, change clothes, or brush teeth prior to seeking medical attention.

**Student Health Services (SHS)** is open from Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the academic year and is equipped to provide confidential and professional medical care. SHS can be reached in the Kane Health and Fitness Center or at **202-319-5744**. While the SHS staff is unable to collect evidence for the purposes of pursuing criminal prosecution, they can provide assistance and support if you request or require transportation to the hospital.

The DC Forensic Nurse Examiners (DCFNE) program at **MedStar Washington Hospital Center (WHC)** provides comprehensive nursing care, medical testing, forensic evidence collection, and support services free of charge within four days (96 hours) of the assault, and even beyond. If you are unsure if evidence collection is still possible, call the DCFNE on-call nurse.

Emergency Room staff may ask if you wish to speak to the police; this decision is up to you. You will not be required to file a police report if a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) collects evidence. The DCFNE program will hold evidence collected for 90 days should you choose to file a report with MPD within that time. The Network for Victim Recovery of DC will send an advocate to the hospital to assist throughout the process.

If you go to a hospital other than WHC, you can request to be transported to WHC for evidence collection and a free physical exam. If you choose not to go through with evidence collection, you are encouraged to make an appointment at SHS or any local hospital for follow-up care.

*A list of community resources and area hospitals is available at the back of this booklet and in the Office of the Dean of Students.*



# How to Support a Friend

When someone has experienced sexual violence, chances are they will turn to a friend for help or support first. How you respond to your friend is very important. Consider the following ways of showing support:

- Thank them for coming to you — this takes a great deal of courage and strength.
- Listen without judgment.
- Let them know what happened is not their fault.
- Don't press your friend for details — allow them to share information when they are ready.
- Help connect your friend with University and/or community resources.
- Offer to go with them to MedStar Washington Hospital Center, to file a report, or to go to the Counseling Center.
- Be patient. It may take your friend some time to process the events of the incident and to decide how to proceed.
- Consider going to a counselor yourself — it can be difficult supporting a friend through a traumatic experience.

We are called as members of the CUA community to look out for each other.

## Are You an Empowered Bystander?

We are called as members of the CUA community to look out for each other. If you see someone in a risky situation, there are many different ways to step in and make a difference. This is known as “bystander intervention.” How you intervene can vary based on the situation and your comfort level. Having this knowledge on hand can give you the confidence to take action when your gut tells you something isn’t right. Stepping in can make all the difference, but you should never put your own safety at risk.

Here are three different strategies you can use to step up and take action:

### Direct

If you are comfortable you can directly approach either or both parties involved. Let them know your concerns and why you are intervening. Not sure if a friend is in trouble? Just ask! Send a text or step in and say, “Are you OK right now?”

### Delegate

Sometimes you may not feel that you are the best person to directly intervene in a situation. Maybe you do not know the person, do not feel safe, or just feel someone else would be more effective. That is OK. Find friends of either party and encourage them to intervene. If you feel the situation is too serious for you to get involved or you are simply unsure, call the Department of Public Safety or find a resident assistant.

### Distract

Use a distraction to divert attention and redirect the focus somewhere else. A distraction can give the person at risk the chance to get to a safe place. You can diffuse the situation without directly confronting anyone. Step in and change the subject, tell your friend you need to talk to him or her, or commit a party foul.

# Tips for Risk Reduction

## What can you do to stay safe?

You can take steps to increase your safety in social situations. These tips can help you feel more safe and may reduce the risk of something happening, but, like any safety tips, they are not foolproof. It's important to remember that sexual assault is never the victim's fault, regardless of whether they were sober or under the influence of drugs or alcohol when it occurred.

- When you go to a social gathering, go with a group of friends. Arrive together, check in with each other throughout the evening, and leave together. Knowing where you are and who is around you may help you to find a way out of a bad situation.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or worried for any reason, don't ignore these feelings. Go with your gut. Get somewhere safe and find someone you trust or call law enforcement.
- Have a backup plan. Sometimes plans change quickly. You might realize it's not safe for you to drive home, or the group you arrived with might decide to go somewhere you don't feel comfortable. Download a rideshare app, like Uber, or keep the number for a reliable cab company saved in your phone and cash on hand in case you decide to leave.
- Think when you drink. Alcohol and other drugs can inhibit a person's physical and mental abilities. In the context of sexual assault, this means that alcohol and other drugs may make it easier for a perpetrator to commit a crime and can even prevent someone from remembering that the assault occurred.
- Don't accept drinks from people you don't know or trust. If you choose to accept a drink, go with the person to the bar to order it, watch it being poured, and carry it yourself. At parties, don't drink from the punch bowls or other large, common open containers.
- Be aware of sudden changes in the way your body feels. Do you feel more intoxicated than you should? Some drugs are odorless, colorless, and/or tasteless, and can be added to your drink without your noticing. If you feel uncomfortable, tell a friend and have them take you to a safe place. If you suspect you or a friend has been drugged, call 911, and be upfront with healthcare professionals so they can administer the right tests.
- Communicate. Don't be afraid to show and communicate your feelings in your relationships. In a respectful relationship each person is valued and treated as an equal. It's ok to be assertive and say no.

*(adapted from "Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Sexual Assault" RAINN, [rainn.org](http://rainn.org))*

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **I was underage and drinking at the time of the assault. Will I get in trouble?**

Our primary concerns at CUA are your well-being and offering you support. We want to create an environment where you feel comfortable coming forward and reporting, and we hope to remove any barriers that may prevent you from seeking assistance and support. Therefore, if you are involved in underage drinking, provided that the violation did not pose harm to others, you will not be charged through the University conduct process. CUA may offer you resources and supports based on your alcohol use, but you will not get in trouble.

## **Will anyone contact my parents without my permission?**

If you are 18 years or older, CUA will not inform your parents unless there is a medical emergency or concern for your emotional well-being. We strongly encourage you to contact your parents and can offer support and help you find ways to have the conversation. If you are under the age of 18, University departments other than the Counseling Center have a legal obligation to contact your parents or guardians. In either case, your parents or guardians may be notified if you are hospitalized for serious physical injuries resulting from the assault.

## **Will the medical exam be reported to my parent's health insurance?**

The DC Forensic Nurse Examiner (DCFNE) program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center is free. You will not be required to provide health insurance information for the forensic medical exam completed during your visit. If you use your parents' health insurance at an emergency room or doctor's visit unrelated to the SANE program, it will be listed on your parents' insurance summary.

## **Will my peers and others on campus find out what happened?**

University and law enforcement personnel will take reasonable steps to maintain your privacy. Given that peers sometimes have a difficult time keeping confidences, you should carefully consider the people you trust to maintain your privacy about what happened to you. You should feel comforted to know that University officials will share information about your situation only with those who have a clear need for such information. While campus safety and security staff cannot guarantee confidentiality, they can help you identify other people on campus who may offer confidential support.

## **I am concerned about my safety. What will the University do to help protect me from retaliation?**

Your safety is one of our main concerns. The Office of the Dean of Students will assist survivors as appropriate, including but not limited to adjusting academic and/or living situations, if requested and if appropriate. If the person who assaulted you is identified, that person may be ordered to refrain from having or attempting to have any further contact with you. Violations of this “no contact” order will be taken very seriously and appropriately addressed.



# Resources for Help

## On Campus

- Department of Public Safety ([publicsafety.cua.edu](http://publicsafety.cua.edu)) .....202-319-5111
- Office of the Dean of Students ([deanofstudents.cua.edu](http://deanofstudents.cua.edu)) .....202-319-5619
- Title IX Coordinator ([title9.cua.edu](http://title9.cua.edu)) .....202-319-4177
- Counseling Center ([counseling.cua.edu](http://counseling.cua.edu)) .....202-319-5765
- Student Health Services ([health.cua.edu](http://health.cua.edu)) .....202-319-5744
- Office of Campus Ministry ([ministry.cua.edu](http://ministry.cua.edu)) .....202-319-5575

## Off Campus

- Metropolitan Police Department .....202-727-9099
- DC Rape Crisis Center 24-Hour Hotline ([dcrcc.org](http://dcrcc.org)) .....202-333-RAPE (7273)
- Rape Abuse and Incest National Network ([rainn.org](http://rainn.org))
  - Phone Hotline .....800-656-HOPE (4673)
  - Online Hotline .....[ohl.rainn.org/online](http://ohl.rainn.org/online)
- DC Forensic Nurse Examiners program at MedStar Washington Hospital Center
  - On-Call Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner .....800-641-4028
  - Free transportation to/from MedStar Washington Hospital Center is available.*
- Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC) ([nvrdc.org](http://nvrdc.org)) .....202-742-1727
- UASK DC [App] ([uaskdc.org](http://uaskdc.org))

For more information or to request additional copies, please call the Office of the Dean of Students at The Catholic University of America at 202-319-5619.

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The Catholic University of America admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, or disability.

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