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# GUIDE TO CREATING A WRITTEN NOTIFICATION

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## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Under the Clery Act, when a student or employee reports they have experienced dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the institution must provide them with a **written explanation** of their rights and options, whether the offense occurred on or off campus.

Effectively creating this resource may be difficult. That's not to say that it can't be done – in fact, we know it can be done well, and encourage you to look at this guidance as well as other samples from other colleges and universities as you create your own.

Creating this document also requires institutions to **look carefully at their own processes and consider how the network of people, offices, and activities all come together to support survivors** – not just within this document, but in the practical application of these services.

With that in mind, this guide is **not a template**. Every campus is different – your written notification should reflect this diversity and your own institution.

If you've created a document you're proud of and would be willing to share it with the broader campus community, please share it with us!



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## FIRST THINGS FIRST

### Summary of Clery Required Rights and Options Content

Written information regarding the following must be provided to students and employees that have experienced dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking whether the offense occurred on or off campus:

- the importance of preserving evidence and how to do so
- how and to whom to report an offense if an individual chooses to do so
- available on- and off-campus resources
- possible accommodations
- information on orders of protection or other similar orders
- procedures for disciplinary action

Additionally, institutions must indicate how they protect confidentiality of victim/survivors in public records, like a timely warning or crime log. Lastly, institutions must maintain any accommodations or protective measures provided as confidential (to the extent that it does not impair the ability of the institution to provide them).

### Additional Considerations

As you read the language in the following sample, consider how it might apply to your unique document and as you create your written notification ask yourself: Does it meet the requirements?

- Is it easy to read, both in the language used and how information is laid out within the document? Is it available in all languages used by the campus community or are there mechanisms in place to easily translate it into different languages?
- Are the contents of the document concise, yet informative?
- Does the document contain headings and subheadings to clearly denote what it contains—can readers easily ascertain whether or not the desired information is included? Does it describe all available options and resources? Is the tone of the document supportive and nonjudgmental?
- Does the document have an easy to remember/easily understood/easy to refer to name?
- How will it be distributed to individuals that have experienced dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and is it easily accessible to faculty and staff in support positions?



## TITLE OF YOUR DOCUMENT

If you or someone you know has experienced dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, XYZ University is here to help. You have the right to live, learn, and/or work in a safe and welcoming environment. Violence is unacceptable, and University policy prohibits dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (DVSAS). This document outlines steps to take depending on what services you want or need. Dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, are significant experiences and can be traumatizing. Each person's experience is unique and numerous options are available for support and reporting at XYZ University. It is important to note there is no one correct response — simply different options to access support and different reporting options. Your immediate and long-term safety is what's most important. The resources and options outlined below may be helpful as you decide what next steps are a good fit for you.

*[Note from Clery Center: Research and feedback from campuses consistently shows that survivors may not know what constitutes dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Therefore, you may consider providing examples of behaviors that qualify as DVSAS, or at a minimum, the Clery definitions. This element is not required under the Clery Act and may only serve as a way to further personalize your written notification.]*

### Unsure of where to start?

You may want more information or to talk to someone confidentially as you decide what you'd like to do moving forward. You can access crisis counseling, information, and support by connecting with the resources listed below.

*[Consider defining confidential and/or private.]*



## FIRST STEPS: THINGS TO CONSIDER

### Are you in danger?

If yes, call 911.

[Department Name] can also provide support by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx. We will coordinate transport to pick you up from your location and make plans for your next steps.

### Do you need medical attention?

You can receive medical attention at any medical facility; however, certain facilities have specially-trained staff to help survivors of sexual assault and/or have the ability to offer a sexual assault forensic exam (SAFE). Medical exams can also address other physical needs or trauma and assess for sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy.

The following locations have sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE):

*[Insert contact information for hospitals with SANE nurses (name of hospital, address, phone number.) Also emphasize any locations that may have expertise in responding to domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. Also list all known providers that offer SAFEs whether or not administered by a SANE.]*



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### Preservation of Evidence

It is important to preserve evidence that may be useful in obtaining a protection order or in proceeding with a criminal investigation or a disciplinary process should you choose to do so. Completing a forensic exam does not require you to file a police report or report to the institution, although we encourage these reports if you are comfortable doing so.

To preserve evidence, it is recommended you do not bathe, douche, smoke, use the toilet or clean the location where the incident occurred. Save items you were wearing, sheets, or towels in a paper bag. Text messages, records of phone calls, emails, pictures, notes, and gifts can all be pertinent for a report of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.



### EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL IMPACT

*[Your campus written notification may be one of the first resources an individual who has recently experienced DVSA may consult. Therefore, it can be helpful to acknowledge the possible emotional and physical impact they may be experiencing as they consider their options for reporting and support. Though helpful, this element is not required under the Clery Act and may only serve as a way to further personalize your written notification.]*

### Emotions are to be expected.

Dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are significant and can be traumatizing. Though each person's experience is unique, there are a wide range of emotions that may be felt over the days, weeks, months and even years following a traumatic experience. These reactions may change over time and it may be helpful to address them with the assistance of a trained counselor or therapist, victim/survivor advocate or even a trusted friend or family member.

### Possible physical effects may include:

- Pain and soreness
- Injuries, Nausea
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Panic attacks
- Sleep pattern disturbances
- Insomnia or sleeping more than usual
- Loss of appetite or change in eating habits (overeating or under-eating, etc.)

### Possible psychological and/or emotional effects may include:

- Impaired memory
- Shock, Denial
- Irritability and anger
- Sadness and grief
- Social withdrawal
- Apathy (detachment, loss of caring)
- Hypervigilance (always on guard)



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- Sleep disturbance (including nightmares)
- Flashbacks
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of trust in self or others
- Guilt, shame or embarrassment
- Thoughts of suicide or death
- Diminished interest in activities or sex
- Increased interest in sexual activity



### CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

*[Under the Clery Act, the only roles considered confidential and exempt from reporting responsibilities are Pastoral and Professional Counselors functioning in that capacity. If the practice of confidential reporting is different at your campus, be sure to indicate such information here.]*

- Confidential Resource (if available): Location/Hours/Contact Information
- Confidential Resource (if available): Location/Hours/Contact Information



### IF YOU NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION

#### On Campus Services:

- Name of health center
- Contact information
- Location
- How to reach them if during non-business hours
- Description of services offered (STI testing? Sexual assault forensic exam? Other medical exams? Prescription medication or prophylaxis?)
- Hours of available service
- Whether or not transportation is provided by the campus

#### Off Campus Services:

##### *[Information to Include]*

- Local hospitals with sexual assault nurse examiners or other medical facilities specializing in victim/survivor response
- Contact information
- Location
- Description of services offered
- Whether or not transportation is provided by the campus



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### QUICK GUIDE: AVAILABLE RESOURCES

*[Because written notification is required for all campus community members, specifying which services are targeted for students vs. employees (if there is a distinction) may be helpful as individuals work to identify their needs and options.]*

#### On Campus:

##### Victim/Survivor Advocacy

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Counseling & Mental Health

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Health

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Legal Assistance

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Visa & Immigration Assistance

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Student Financial Aid

Office(s)/Contact Information

#### Off Campus:

##### Victim/Survivor Advocacy

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Counseling & Mental Health

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Health

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Legal Assistance

Office(s)/Contact Information

##### Visa & Immigration Assistance

Office(s)/Contact Information

#### Additional Resources

*[Any additional resources on-campus or local or national resources that may be relevant.]*

#### Orders of Protection

You can also access orders of protection within our state as well as within the institution. Depending on the nature of the incident, XYZ University may be able to issue a no contact order to prevent contact between two individuals. *[Provide additional details/context as needed.]* To request a no contact order, please contact [name or title] at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

A *[name of criminal, civil, or tribal orders of protection or no contact order within the state]* may also be available. *[Provide description of types of orders, who to contact to file for such an order, and the institution's responsibilities for complying with and enforcing such an order.]*



**REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS/SUPPORTIVE MEASURES**

*["Supportive Measures" is a term used in reference to the law known as Title IX, whereas the Clery Act uses the term accommodations. There are many intersections between the Clery Act and Title IX. Supportive Measures may be provided before or after the filing of a complaint or where no complaint has been filed. These services are provided to both the complainants and respondent during a disciplinary process.]*

Regardless of whether or not you choose to report to local or campus police or public safety, there are specific options available to you, if requested and reasonably available. These options and who to contact to access them are outlined below.

Area Requiring Assistance	Who/How to Contact
Housing accommodations	Title/Office/Hours/Contact Information
Academic accommodations	Title/Office/Hours/Contact Information
Transportation/escort accommodations	Title/Office/Hours/Contact Information
Working accommodations	Title/Office/Hours/Contact Information
Financial assistance accommodations <i>[Information on financial accommodations is not a requirement under the law, but may be pertinent as financial control may be an element of dating or domestic abuse.]</i>	Title/Office/Hours/Contact Information
Additional protective measures, including an institutional "no contact" order, which is enforceable through <i>[insert office responsible for this here]</i>	Title/Office/Hours/Contact Information



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### CAMPUS DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

*[In this section outline a high-level overview of the type of disciplinary proceedings in place for students and employees in response to alleged violations of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking on your campus, including steps, anticipated timelines, standard of evidence used, and possible sanctions. Include clear contact information for anyone who can answer questions about this process.]*

To make a report against a student, contact: [Name, Title, Contact Information]

To make a report against an employee, contact: [Name, Title, Contact Information]

You have the right to:

- A prompt, fair, and impartial process from the initial investigation to the final result (completed within the timeframes laid out by our policy in a manner that is transparent, provides timely notice of meetings and equal access to information to both the complainant and the respondent, and conducted by officials without a conflict of interest or bias for either party that receive annual training on how to conduct an investigation and hearing process that protects the safety of victims and promotes accountability)
- Have others present during any institutional disciplinary proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by an advisor of your choice\*
- Notification, in writing, of:
  - The result of any institutional disciplinary proceeding from your report of dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking
  - The institution's procedures to appeal the results [only if such procedures are available]
  - Any change to the results
  - When the result become final\*

\*Also afforded to the respondent