



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

# Supporting survivors of sexual assault & misconduct

A guide to educate and equip the UQ Community to support survivors of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault and harassment



# UQ Respect

UQ Respect is a health promotion program run through Student Services that aims to engage the UQ community in the promotion of respect, equality and safety on campus and in society.

Our mission is to promote a safe and respectful campus culture by engaging our student and staff community in the prevention of sexual misconduct and providing trauma-informed support for survivors.

To meet our mission, it is vital that we foster a safe and respectful environment, free from all forms of physical or emotional harm and discrimination, including sexual harassment and assault.

This booklet is a guide to educate and equip the UQ community to support survivors of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault and harassment.

## What is sexual misconduct?

Any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or by force, intimidation, coercion, or manipulation. This includes behaviour that would amount to sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Sexual misconduct can happen to anyone. Such behaviour is never the survivor's fault and will not be tolerated at The University of Queensland.

## What is consent?

Consent is a vital part of sexual respect and having healthy sexual relationships.

### When it comes to sex, consent is not optional.

Consent can only be freely and voluntarily given by a person with the cognitive capacity to do so.

For example, you do not have consent if your sexual partner is:

- under force,
- unconscious or asleep,
- under the influence of drugs or alcohol,
- under threat or intimidation, or
- in fear of bodily harm.

This is not an exhaustive list.

## Emergency contacts

If you are experiencing an emergency, you can call:

- **000** for immediate police or ambulance assistance
- **UQ Security** 07 3365 3333 for on campus assistance
- **1800 Respect** 1800 737 732 for 24/7 counselling support

# How can I support survivors of sexual misconduct?

When someone experiences sexual misconduct, including sexual assault or harassment, the people they choose to talk to play a vital role. It can be difficult to know how to respond and you may be unsure about how to help.

Following these steps can help you to make sure that your response is non-judgemental, compassionate and supportive.

## 1. Listen

You should provide a safe and supportive environment for the survivor to tell their story.

### You should always

- Give them your full attention
- Ignore external interruptions
- Nod occasionally to show your understanding and support
- Use verbal cues like **yes** and **I understand.**

### You should never

- Interrupt them
- Ask why questions:  
***Why were you walking alone?***  
***Why were you wearing that?***  
***Why did you go see them?***
- Talk about your own experiences.

The experience and impact of sexual assault and harassment is personal, traumatic and different for everyone.

It's important to recognise that some survivors may be very open about their experience, while others may be closed. All of these reactions are normal and it's important to support a survivor in making choices that feel comfortable to them at the time.

## Contact the Sexual Misconduct Support Unit (SMSU)

You can contact the SMSU Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm  
**[sexualmisconductsupport@uq.edu.au](mailto:sexualmisconductsupport@uq.edu.au)**  
**[respect.uq.edu.au/support](https://respect.uq.edu.au/support)**  
**+61 7 3443 1000**

## 2. Support

Acknowledge the survivor's experience and the difficulty they faced in disclosing it. You should thank them for telling you and check that they are safe.

Remember that survivors may not be ready to discuss all the details of what has happened and they do not need to do this in order to access appropriate support.

### Use phrases like

*I'm here for you*

*Thank you for telling me*

*You're not alone*

These phrases help show your support for the survivor without pressuring them to speak further about the details of what happened.

## 3. Refer

The best thing you can do is to outline the support services that are available to the survivor so that they can make their own decision about their next steps.

It's important that you don't provide a survivor with misleading advice and instead, put them in touch with experts who can help them.

### Where can I refer?

There is support available at UQ and externally to support survivors of sexual misconduct as well as the wider UQ community. Support services include:

#### UQ Information line

Phone: +61 7 3443 1000

If you're not sure where to refer a survivor you can call the UQ Information line. The line is open during business hours, Monday to Friday (8am–5pm).

#### First Responder Network (FRN)

Web: [respect.uq.edu.au/first-responder-network](https://respect.uq.edu.au/first-responder-network)

The FRN is made up of members of the UQ Community who can answer questions about UQ's reporting process and support options.

#### UQ Sexual Misconduct Support Unit (SMSU)

Email: [sexualmisconductsupport@uq.edu.au](mailto:sexualmisconductsupport@uq.edu.au)

The SMSU is a safe and supportive place for students to receive guidance around sexual assault and misconduct.

#### Community Specialist Support Groups

Web: [health.qld.gov.au/sexualassault/html/contact](https://health.qld.gov.au/sexualassault/html/contact)

There are support services in the community that provide specialised and tailored support to vulnerable groups (e.g. interpreting services). You can show survivors different community groups available to them so they can choose to contact a group they feel comfortable with.



## What about the police?

The SMSU can provide support to survivors to help them report the incident to the Queensland Police Service.

Never force a survivor to go to the police. It is important that they make the choice about their next steps.



#### 4. Report

If the survivor gives you permission to share their experience, you or the survivor can submit a confidential online form to the Sexual Misconduct Support Unit.

[respect.uq.edu.au/report](https://respect.uq.edu.au/report)

#### Why make a report?

To improve our policies and support services, UQ needs to track and report on incidents of sexual assault and misconduct.

Reports can be kept anonymous and no further action needs to be taken. The choice is with the survivor on how they intend to proceed.



# UQ Respect

# Remember to look after yourself

Hearing another person's experience of sexual assault or harassment can be difficult and it's normal to be impacted by the experience.

It's important to be able to recognise signs you are being impacted so that you can also take care of your own wellbeing.

Vicarious trauma is when we experience negative changes in our internal experiences as a result of exposure to other people's trauma.

Help manage the impacts of vicarious trauma by engaging with our Sexual Misconduct Support Unit and First Responder Network.

You can also manage the impacts of vicarious trauma by seeking comfort from your own support network and by participating in grounding activities such as exercise or mindfulness.

## You may be experiencing vicarious trauma if you:

- find it difficult to manage your emotions,
- feel helpless and powerless,
- lose a sense of hope or meaning,
- have difficulty sleeping, or
- feel unusually irritable or angry.

# Future initiatives and feedback

**UQ Respect** is committed to ensuring that the learning, work and research environments for all members of the UQ Community are safe, respectful and free from all forms of sexual misconduct.

The **Sexual Misconduct Support Unit (SMSU)** is committed to:

- providing a supportive and safe place for students,
- ensuring appropriate psychological and academic adjustments are made for survivors,
- raising student awareness and engagement around sexual assault and misconduct,
- delivering training and support to the UQ Community,
- developing strategic prevention techniques, and
- liaising collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to ensure best practice.



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**If you have feedback or would like to find out how you can support these initiatives, please contact us.**

### **UQ Respect**

UQ Respect Coordinator

**T** +61 7 344 32629

**E** [uqrespect@uq.edu.au](mailto:uqrespect@uq.edu.au)

**W** [respect.uq.edu.au](https://respect.uq.edu.au)

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