

A SURVIVOR'S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE IMPACT OF CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT



CALLISTO



Welcome to the Survivor's Guide to Navigating the Impacts of Campus Sexual Assault.

A 2021 Know Your IX report entitled "[The Cost of Reporting: Perpetrator Retaliation, Institutional Betrayal, and Student Survivor Pushout](#)" outlined the many post-assault barriers survivors typically have to navigate while trying to persist at their institutions.

Over 100 student survivors surveyed shared the challenges they encountered on their campus after making a formal report to Title IX. Some of the challenges included adverse educational, financial, career, and health impacts, along with retraumatization and perpetrator backlash.

Learnings from the survey were used to inform administrative recommendations on how to better support the needs of student survivors. However, there remains a gap in resources designed to educate survivors on how they can tap into their local campus and community networks to navigate these challenges. After an incident of sexual assault, survivors are often unsure of how to navigate post-assault life. We hope that within the pages of this guide, you are able to come into your own understanding and begin to define what healing and justice means and looks like for you.

The logo for 'me too.' is a pink circle containing the text 'me too.' in white, lowercase letters. The 'me' is on the top line and 'too.' is on the bottom line.

me
too.

The Callisto Survivor's Guide was developed with support from me too. International

Callisto provides survivors with tools and resources designed to help bridge the gaps in the healing and justice process.

We invite you to explore the various sections of the guide to learn tips and pertinent information to assist you in navigating on- and off-campus processes and resources successfully. This guide was designed for the use and reference of undergraduate students. However, you may find some of these resources generally helpful as you navigate and define your own survivor journey. Of important note, this guide is by no means an all-encompassing resource for survivors, nor is it legal or medical advice.

We offer you this guide to help demystify the resources you have access to and help provide a roadmap on how to access those resources as you deem them appropriate for your needs.

This guide contains **a lot of information and sometimes that can lead to feeling overwhelmed or overloaded.** We highly encourage you to take your time as you read through **this document.** The table of contents offered below can help you pinpoint the section that would be of most benefit to you right now. Remember, finding healing is non-linear so be compassionate with yourself as you navigate this process. Take care of yourself. If possible, take some time to ground yourself and practice self-care.

This can include meditating, going for a walk, working out, watching your favorite show/movie, taking a bath, connecting with your community, or seeing a therapist.

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As you begin to interact with this chapter, we wanted to take a second to name that you may experience a few different emotions or responses. You may feel triggered, validated, and/or seen as you learn more about how trauma can show up in your mind and body. We encourage you to take as much time as you need to process through this section and practice self-care as you deem appropriate. As you review the sections in this guide, you may start to recognize how trauma can impact all areas of your life including physical health, financial, and academics. We encourage you to return to this chapter as often as you need to.

TRAUMA AND MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

People who have experienced sexual assault most likely experienced a trauma response during the assault. This is a physiological response that controls how a person reacts during and after an assault. There are many complicated aspects about trauma. **If you've already experienced trauma, additional trauma can exacerbate previous responses. Survivors from marginalized and historically underserved communities such as Black, Indigenous and other People of Color, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or other factors may experience additional trauma as well as systems and resources that do not meet their needs.** We have included basic information about trauma to help you understand what you may be feeling after being assaulted.

First, trauma typically causes 4 different automatic responses - fight, flight, freeze, and fawn. These responses can occur during the assault and long after as well. After the assault, you may experience these responses when something occurs that sparks intense emotions, which is also called a trigger.

When you are triggered, your brain processes information differently. As such, you may have thoughts and feelings that you don't understand or don't make sense to you or others around you. **People who have not experienced sexual assault cannot predict how they would have responded in the moment because they process that information from a calm, rational place and not from a reactive state.**

You may not understand that your behaviors or emotions are being influenced by trauma. Responses can range from very intense to mild, be quick or last a long time, and can sometimes feel unpredictable. **Processing and healing after trauma is not linear, so if you were not triggered by something previously, you could experience triggers in the future. This is completely normal.**

There are 4 main automatic responses when you experience trauma or are triggered. They include:

It is important to remember that trauma impacts how the brain functions and each person responds differently.

Research has shown that and estimated 94% of sexual assault survivors experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) within the first two weeks following their assault. **Further, survivors have self-reported suffering from additional post-assault health impacts including anxiety, depression, disordered eating, and chronic pain², just to name a few.** There are several options to help you navigate the challenges you may be experiencing both on- and off-campus.

FIGHT

Survivors are often expected to try to physically fight back against an assailant. While some survivors do use tactics like kicking, punching or yelling to try to stop an offender, fighting is the least common reaction to an assault. Because many survivors know their perpetrator, they may not initially be alarmed or think to react with violence. In the midst of an assault, a survivor may not have the physical strength to fight, or may fear that fighting could put them in additional danger. The fight response may also show up as an aggressive response to anything that creates a reminder of the sexual violence. Fight is often a self-protective adaptation to feelings associated with trauma.

FAWN

During an assault, a survivor may look for ways to appease the offender to avoid conflict or further harm. This response is most prevalent in situations where there is a long-term intimate partnership or sustained relationship with the offender, or if the offender has power over the survivor in the moment, or long-term. Adapting and trying to accommodate a person causing harm is not giving in, it is a way to avoid punishment, abandonment, or more

violence. Long term, survivors may feel a loss of their sense of self as a result.

FLIGHT

We all have a natural inclination to remove ourselves from uncomfortable or scary situations. Fearing for your safety and life can be a catalyst for seeking an escape route. Sometimes this escape route is literally leaving, but this may not be possible or safe in all situations. Some survivors flee through dissociation, or “blocking out” their thoughts, feelings and actions during the assault. After an assault, fleeing can take many forms, including checking out emotionally, overachieving, staying busier than usual, or using substances as an escape.

FREEZE

Freezing may include an inability to move, speak, or act. It can cause a feeling of not being able to think rationally, or one of hyper-vigilance. Freezing does not mean that consent was given. It is a normal, involuntary physiological response to a threat. Survivors may also find that this response leads to disruption in concentration and focus, as well as feeling foggy due to the trauma. ⁶

¹ Rothbaum, B.O., Foa E.B., Riggs D.S., Murdock T., Walsh W. (1992). A prospective examination of post-traumatic stress disorder in rape victims. *J. Trauma. Stress.* 5(3), 455–475. doi: 10.1002/jts.2490050309.

² Nesbitt, S., & Carson, S. (2021). The cost of reporting: Perpetrator retaliation, institutional betrayal, and student survivor pushout. *Know Your IX.* <https://www.knowyourix.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Know-Your-IX-2021-Report-Final-Copy.pdf>

ON-CAMPUS OPTIONS

Every student has access to free counseling services through the Counseling Center. You will want to visit your school's counseling center website to understand what services are available for individual and group counseling.

Oftentimes, these offices can also make recommendations for outside counseling services if you would like to meet with someone who is not affiliated with the institution. However, it is important to note that the service may not be free, but are often available on a sliding scale meaning the treatment will be priced based on your income.

The Office of Disability Services on-campus can assist in scheduling visits with your school's on-campus health centers to connect you with university affiliated physicians, therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists. This office can also provide you with information and referrals to resources in your local community if you would prefer to visit an off-campus site. The Office of Disability Services should also be able to assist you in finding solutions to transportation and even financial costs if you choose to utilize off-campus resources. Additional resources that may be helpful to your physical and mental healing journey are local victim advocates, disability advocates, and legal services.

If you have anxiety, depression, or some other mental disability because of the gender-based harassment or assault you experienced, then your school is legally required to provide you with reasonable accommodations under Section 504. These 504 accommodations can include more time on assignments or exams, adjustments to your grades, excused lateness or absences, or pre-approved visits to the school nurse, therapist, or psychologist. Your school's disability office can give you more information on how to get disability accommodations. An office of disability services can also enable you to take a break or leave the classroom whenever you are feeling anxious or afraid, without having to get permission from your professor.

OFF-CAMPUS OPTIONS

You may not want to use the school's resources for various reasons.

It is understandable and there are off-campus options you can also consider. The following resources are a great place to start to find a professional to speak with:

[Betterhelp.com](https://www.betterhelp.com)

[Therapyforblackgirls.com](https://www.therapyforblackgirls.com)

[Psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)

[National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network](https://www.nationalqueerandtranstherapists.com)

Your local sexual assault or rape crisis center typically offers individual and group counseling services and referrals that can meet your needs. They may also be able to help you identify other therapist or counseling services available within the community with a sliding scale, meaning the base rate you pay will be based on your income.

me too. International, the organization that ushered in what we now call the me too movement, offers various resources and toolkits.

One such resource that can assist you in your healing journey is Survivor Sanctuary.

This self-guided healing platform for survivors who are 18+ offers 36 healing lessons designed to meet your needs whether you are just beginning or looking to deepen your healing journey. You can begin exploring the multiple pathways toward healing by creating a free account [here](#).

This information is meant to be informative and is just a small snapshot into understanding a complex response system. For more information about what the ways trauma can impact you, we recommend referring to this [resource](#) offered by Herstory.

PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPACTS

If the sexual assault, harassment, and/or misconduct has affected your physical or mental health, you can connect with your school's office of disability services. The assault may or may not have caused physical injury to numerous parts of your body. You may have also contracted a sexually transmitted infection or became pregnant as a result of the assault. Additionally, trauma can have on going, long-term impacts to physical health such as chronic lung or heart disease. Anxiety and depression are often taxing to the body and may weaken the immune system.

In addition, survivors can seek support from on-campus resources like the campus disability office or Title IX office through a request for supportive measures. To learn more about the supportive measure you can receive under Title IX, please refer to the "Your Rights" section of the guide.

ONGOING MEDICAL ISSUES AND EXPENSES

If you are seeking medical services on-campus, the University Health Center is a really great resource to receive free or reduced prices. The University Health Center is often able to provide you with a range of services including, but not limited to:

- **STI/STD Testing and Treatment**
- **Pap Smears**
- **PrEP/PEP**
- **Pregnancy Testing**
- **Birth Control**
- **Emergency Contraception**

It is important to visit your institution's health center website to understand the full range of options and services that are available to you. Please refer to the next chapter to learn about how trauma and your mental health may be impacted by the assault.

ABORTION ACCESS

With the recent overturning of Roe v. Wade, it is important to note the significant impact that this decision can have on the options that survivors who can become pregnant may experience as they navigate post-assault medical care. Some states have full bans on abortions while others have shortened the window in which a person can qualify to terminate a pregnancy. To help understand what options and rights you have within your state, here are some resources that can help you as you make these important decisions:

Abortion Finder allows you to enter your location to see what verified providers may be able to assist you, types of abortions, and offers a state-by-state guide that outlines most up-to-date options and laws within your state.

<https://www.abortionfinder.org/>

Plan C provides up-to-date information on how people in the U.S. are accessing at-home abortion pill options online.

<https://www.plancpills.org/>

Aid Access offers online consultations for abortion pill by mail for women, girls, trans men, nonbinary and all people who are less than 10 weeks pregnant and are seeking to access abortion or miscarriage treatment.

<https://aidaccess.org/en/>

If/When/How offers Repro Legal Helpline, a free, confidential helpline where you can learn about your legal rights regarding self-managed abortion based on your location.

<https://www.ifwhenhow.org/repro-legal-helpline/>

The Miscarriage and Abortion Hotline offer people who are self-managing through a miscarriage or abortion text and phone options to discuss their questions and concerns.

<https://www.mahotline.org/>

Given the increased restrictions around abortion across the country, there is increased concerns about states prosecuting abortion providers and clients through the use of phone and computer surveillance. Therefore, if abortion is an option you are looking to explore, it will be important to understand how you can maintain your privacy. [The Digital Defense Fund](#) has created a online security guide outlining tools you can use to maintain the privacy and security of your information while seeking abortion services.

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Emergency Contraception (morning-after pill) is a safe and effective method for reducing the risk of unintended pregnancies.

It's recommended to be taken after people engage in penis-in-vagina (P-in-V) sex without birth control or with a method that fails.

Emergency contraception has a **95 percent efficacy** rate for preventing pregnancy if taken within 3 to 5 days of unprotected P-in-V sex. There are two FDA-approved emergency contraceptive pills:

ella (ulipristal acetate)

Plan B One-Step (levonorgestrel)

Experts have shared that "between Plan B and Ella, Ella is the emergency contraception (EC) that is most effective for people with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or less. It is not effective for [cis]women who have a BMI of 35 and more. In terms of weight, Ella is most effective for those who weigh between 155 to 195 lbs. If you weigh more than 195 lbs and need emergency contraception, please talk to your doctor³." **We also recognize that you may have questions about how emergency contraception options may impact your body if you identify as trans or nonbinary.** A great resource to understand the impacts of EC and birth control on your body can be found by reviewing the Reproductive Health Access Project's fact sheet on **"Birth Control Across the Gender Spectrum."**

The cost of the pills typically range from \$40-\$68. Plan B does have generic options (i.e. MyWay, Take Action, Afterpill) can be found at a cheaper price. The Affordable Care Act does allow insurance plans to cover the cost of FDA-approved emergency contraception. You can access Ella and Plan B by visiting your on campus student health center, local pharmacy, Planned Parenthood location, or using online telehealth service providers like NURX or Wisp.

³ Ella. (2020, July 20). *The ella® pill: All you need to know about ella®*. Retrieved October 28, 2022, from <https://www.ella-now.com/all-you-need-to-know-about-taking-ella/>

SAFETY PLANNING

One of the challenges you may be trying to navigate is concern about running into the perpetrator on- and off-campus creating a sense of discomfort and feeling unsafe. **This is a completely reasonable response to have and it is important to take some time to think about how you can protect yourself. A recommended tactic is to develop a Safety Plan.**

What is a Safety Plan?

A Safety Plan helps you identify the concerns that you have about your personal safety and helps you to outline practical strategies to support your physical and emotional safety. Safety planning can also help you identify strategies for coping with and responding to instances when you may feel unsafe.

Why is safety planning important?

Following an instance of sexual assault, your view or experience of campus as a safe space may have shifted to feeling very unsafe and unwelcoming. Familiar spaces, situations, and people may trigger emotional and physical responses (see above trauma responses) that you may not anticipate. While it is difficult to plan for every particular situation, some forethought and planning around how to navigate campus in a way that makes you feel most comfortable can help you navigate or minimize the trauma responses you may experience.

What should I consider as I develop a Safety Plan?

There are several considerations to be made when developing a safety plan including your immediate physical safety, academics, technology, housing, work, extracurricular activities, and within the local community.

We recommend walking through the questions offered in the "Guide to Safety Planning with Victims of Sexual Violence" created by the Victim's Right Law Center with a trusted friend, therapist, or other resource.

If you need help developing a Safety Plan, you can call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673 or a local crisis line and tell them that you would like help developing a Safety Plan.

ACADEMIC IMPACTS

Many universities have free tutoring services and writing centers that can assist you with assignments and exam prep. Additionally, if you need an extension on assignments, asking a professor directly, contacting the head of student life, or speaking to your academic advisor are all paths to finding solutions for you to complete your work on a timeframe that could be more comfortable for you. Finally, you can request accommodations such as notetakers and additional time on exams and assignments through the Office of Disability Services, just to name a few.

Tutoring and Writing Center Services

Writing centers and other academic support resources are available at most universities. Oftentimes, these services can be found in the student center or the library, but if you need more information ask your RA or a professor. **Some campuses have formal tutoring services and for those that do not, you may be able to identify a tutor through your department by speaking with your professor or department head.**

Requesting an Extension on an Assignment

The best starting place to understand the policies and accommodation options offered by the institution and your professor is by visiting the syllabus for the course. Ask your instructor as early as possible if you can have accommodations at office hours or via email with a specific request. **Remember, professors are non-confidential resources and responsible employees, so be careful with your wording when requesting an accommodation if you are not interested in formally reporting to Title IX.**

Office of Disability Services Accommodations

The Office of Disability Services provides accommodations for students to make learning, living, and working on campus more accessible. This resource works with administrators, faculty, staff and students to create an inclusive environment for all individuals. **Typical accommodations include the following: having a note-taker for class lectures, using a laptop computer in a classroom, taking exams in a distraction-reduced room, and having additional time to complete assignments and exams.** Feel free to reach out to your campus office to discuss your needs and options.

Survivors have reported experiencing significant academic impacts post-assault including lower grades, increased class absences, and delays to their education from needing to take time off. There are several resources and accommodations available to you on your campus to address your academic needs.

If you are considering taking a course at another institution with the intention to transfer the credit, you will likely have to pay out of pocket for the credit hours. A popular option is looking into the local community college system to see if the course is available as the credit hours are often less expensive.

ACADEMIC IMPACTS

→ Search for your institution's registrar's office website.

- Look for the policies related to course withdrawal and repeating a course.
- Schedule a meeting with your academic advisor to discuss your options.

Questions to ask:

- Am I still in the withdrawal period?
 - If so, what impact will withdrawing from my course(s) have on me academically?
 - If not, what options do I have that would minimize impact on me academically?
- What courses on my schedule would the institution allow me to repeat?
 - If I repeat the course, what impact would it have on my GPA? Major requirements?
- What courses can I take at another institution that would transfer here for credit?
- If I wanted to take a leave of absence, how would I go about initiating the process?
 - What impacts would taking a leave of absence have on me academically?

→ Search your institution's financial aid website.

- Look for the policies related to course withdrawal and repeating a course.
- Schedule a meeting with a financial aid advisor to discuss your options.

Questions to ask:

- Am I still in the withdrawal period?
 - If so, what impact will withdrawing from my course(s) have on me financially?
 - If not, what options do I have that would minimize impact on me financially?
- What courses on my schedule would the institution allow me to repeat?
 - If I repeat the course, what impact would it have on my financial aid? Refunds?
- If I wanted to take a leave of absence, how would that impact my financial aid? Refunds?
- What impact would this have on my scholarship eligibility or disbursements?

Survivors have expressed not wanting to attend class because their perpetrator takes the course and experiencing issues with focus and information retention resulting in failure of a course. Guess what? It is okay if you failed the class. Don't feel that you have to stay and act like everything is normal. If you need to step back, please do so. You can still recover and finish the course and your academic tenure successfully. Here are some steps you can take to understand your specific institution's policies.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Experiencing harm and trauma can often lead to financial challenges that you may not have anticipated. Survivors of sexual assault have shared that they often encounter financial impacts including:

- Quitting their job(s) because they work with their perpetrator (i.e. coworker, professor, advisor, or employer).
- Breaking a lease or housing contract.
- Incurring unanticipated child care expenses.
- Legal advising service expenses.

With these challenges in mind, we offer some recommendations and tips on how to approach these challenges for your consideration. Explore these topics on the following pages:

Workplace Concerns

Breaking a Lease or Housing Contract

Child Care Expenses

Legal Advising Services

Additional Resources for Consideration

WORKPLACE CONCERNS

When someone who you work with or for has caused you harm, it has significant impacts on your ability to persist and may also make the workplace feel like an unwelcoming or unsafe environment. Many employers have policies and procedures in place to address and respond to issues of sexual harassment or other forms of sexual misconduct. You have the right to report any instances of sexual misconduct that have occurred within the workplace to your supervisor, human resource office, or employer. Once the employer has been notified of sexual misconduct that has taken place within the workplace, they have a legal obligation to investigate and can institute interim measures to maintain employee safety. The employer's obligation to address issues of sexual misconduct of which they have knowledge applies to on-campus and off-campus employment.

To help you understand what your employer's policies are and what options you might have within your workplace, you can often visit the company's or institution's human resources, Title IX, and/or Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office website. You will want to use search terms such as "[insert company] sexual harassment policy or [insert school name] sexual misconduct policy." You may also be able to make a report using anonymous reporting options through an employer's anonymous hotline. By reviewing the policy, you can get an understanding of how harassment and other forms of misconduct are defined, what misconduct is covered by the policy, and any reporting contacts and procedures.

It is important to note that your safety in the workplace context does hinge upon your willingness to report from the employer standpoint. However, you may have the option to work with a supervisor to make changes to your shift or other modified work arrangement, as applicable or available.

If you are considering taking a course at another institution with the intention to transfer the credit, you will likely have to pay out of pocket for the credit hours. A popular option is looking into the local community college system to see if the course is available as the credit hours are often less expensive. 17

BREAKING A LEASE OR HOUSING CONTRACT

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

If the person who harmed you lives in your building, you have a few options you can explore with the Residential Life office on your campus. The following steps can help you understand your options.

Visit the housing or residential life website

- **Locate** the housing agreement/contract that you signed for the current academic year
- **Review** the room change and cancellation policies
- **Note 1:** There may not be vacant rooms available for you to move into or there may be some wait time before you are allowed to move. This is especially true if you have chosen to not seek supportive measures through the Title IX office.
- **Note 2:** The housing contract will outline any cancellation fees and refunds you would be eligible for. If it does not, you will want to speak to a staff member in the Residence Life office.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

A great starting point to understanding the rights and responsibilities you have is by reviewing your lease agreement. Typically, there is a section that will outline the parameters necessary to terminate your lease. There are usually some fees that must be paid and a minimum notice time period stipulated that you will need to comply with. If you are comfortable, sometimes having a conversation with your landlord could help open up some additional options.

Depending on the state you live in, there are housing laws in place that outline how you can break a lease with an off-campus rental property. Securing a civil or criminal family violence protection order will likely be needed to end a lease without additional penalties or fees. However, it is important to review the housing laws of your state to understand if this is a possibility and if so, how do you notify a landlord.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides housing protections for those who have experienced domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Protections under VAWA extend to tenants living in housing supported by funding administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Typically, tenants in these programs are participants of a Housing Voucher Program. If you live in one of these properties and are the holder of a voucher, you will want to understand the rights you have by searching "occupancy rights under the Violence Against Women Act (insert state)." [Womenslaw.org](https://www.womenslaw.org) offers resources to learn more about the housing protections offered under VAWA and your state's housing laws.

CHILD CARE EXPENSES

If you have children, there are a few considerations you can make as you try to navigate finding safe child care services: Some colleges and universities offer on-site child care facilities that can come with a special discounted enrollment fee for students. Most states have child care financial assistance programs and options that are typically funded by the federal government (i.e. Head Start and Early Head Start).

Looking to understand what resources your state offers? Feel free to reference [childcare.gov](https://www.childcare.gov) to learn more about your options.

LEGAL ADVISING SERVICES

Aside from wanting to understand all of their legal rights and options, survivors have reported experiencing perpetrator backlash. Oftentimes perpetrators will engage in litigation abuse, retaliatory cross-filing, and file defamation suits. Along with these retaliatory actions, survivors have also experienced violation of a no contact order and are unsure of how to proceed. In these instances, legal advising and representation would be an important consideration. However, seeking out legal advice and counsel can be very expensive, often costing between \$100 to \$400 an hour. While legal counseling can be a financial barrier, there are some supports in place that can help you offset the cost or receive pro bono (free) legal services.

You can often find free legal services on your campus or within your community. On your campus, these services are traditionally housed within the law school. You can identify these services by searching “free or pro bono legal services (insert school name, city, or state).” A recommended resource to understand your state’s laws and identify a local legal aid is www.womenslaw.org.

As a reminder, Callisto does offer free legal advising and referral services to students who match in our Matching System. Our Legal Options Counselors can discuss options with you with specific recommendations based on your unique circumstances. Visit projectcallisto.org to learn more.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERATION

Emergency Fund

Most schools offer some form of emergency fund that students can apply for to help offset the cost of emergency funding needs or financial hardship. The program is often housed within the Dean of Students office. You often have to provide an explanation of what the funds will be used for along with supporting documentation to demonstrate the need.

Food Insecurity

Loss of a job can create food insecurity, a lack of consistent access to enough food to live an active, healthy life. Be gentle with yourself. There is nothing to be ashamed of. Because food insecurity is a concern that many campuses have identified within their student population, many campuses have programs designed to help meet this student need. Resources often available to help alleviate this need can be found by searching "food pantry (insert school name)." These services are free to students and sometimes schools have food scholarships or shared dining dollar programs to assist students who may have food access needs. Some students may also qualify for food assistance programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). To learn if you qualify for SNAP, you can keyword search "SNAP Program (insert your state)."

YOUR RIGHTS

Please review the sections in the following pages to understand your rights as a student survivor.

Campus SaVE Act

Title IX and Supportive Measures

Statute of Limitations

Confidential versus Responsible Employees

Clery Act

CAMPUS SAVE ACT

Every state in the United States has laws against sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Additionally, all colleges and universities have a judicial process for sexual misconduct that functions independently from state laws.

According to the Campus SaVE Act, survivors of sexual violence are NOT legally obligated to report an incident to anyone—and some might choose not to report. But it's important to know what options are available on your campus and in your community. This act is a federal law that guarantees victim's rights.

Colleges must provide students or employees who report an incident of sexual violence a written list of their rights. The following section outlines your rights as a student survivor under federal legislation. As a survivor, the decision of next steps, if any, are up to you. If you choose to report to your school's Title IX office, this next section will provide you with information on how to navigate the process.

TITLE IX

Title IX is a federal civil rights law in the United States that was passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. It prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or educational program that receives funding from the federal government. Title IX can change depending on the administration and other legislative amendments. Schools are required to comply with all updates and guidances so your rights or access to particular resources are subject to change.

An example of how colleges and universities are tasked with interpreting Title IX is the **standard of evidence** – the level of certainty and the degree of evidence necessary to establish proof in a criminal or civil proceeding. Educational institutions may choose the **“preponderance of the evidence standard”** or the **“clear and convincing evidence standard.”**

Put simply, in the Preponderance of the Evidence Standard, the level of persuasiveness must be greater than 50%, while in the Clear and Convincing Evidence Standard, it must be substantially greater but need not be 100% or even beyond a reasonable doubt. Preponderance of evidence is a lower standard of proof than the clear and convincing evidence standard. Education institutions have the right to determine which standard they will adopt. Once a standard is adopted, that same standard must be applied to all formal complaints of sexual harassment⁵.

⁵ U.S. Department of Education. (2020, May). Summary of major provisions of the Department of Education's Title IX Final Rule. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/titleix-summary.pdf>

TITLE IX

Under Title IX, if the perpetrator is a student or employee at the same university as you, you have the right to an investigation where your school will try to find out what happened by interviewing you, the harassers, and other people who may have valuable information.

“Schools are required to adopt and publish a grievance procedure outlining the complaint, investigation, and disciplinary process for addressing sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence occurring within ‘education program or activity’ which the Department [of Education] states ‘includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the recipient exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs, and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a post-secondary institution. Additionally, school security and/or law enforcement personnel must notify survivors of their rights to use the school’s grievance procedure in addition to being able to file a criminal complaint.’”

To understand your specific school’s Title IX process, you will want to visit their Title IX website. Remember, you maintain the choice to report or not.

Note that going through the Title IX or law enforcement reporting process can be triggering or retraumatizing. We encourage you to review the trauma and mental health impacts chapter of this guide.

You also have the right to an informal resolution where your school will use a non-investigative method to help you and the harasser reach an agreement. Your school must provide an explanation of the informal resolution process before you choose this option. You also have the right to switch from an investigation to an informal resolution at any time before the process ends, and vice-versa. It is important to note that it is illegal for your school to use an informal resolution if the harasser is a school employee.

Know Your IX provides a [template](#) for requesting an investigation or an informal resolution.



TITLE IX

Title IX and other civil rights laws require schools to provide free supportive measures to restore or preserve your equal access to education, to protect your safety, or deter further/future sexual harassment. Supportive measures must be offered even if you do not decide to formally report or initiate an investigation. In order for you to get supportive measures under Title IX, you must tell your school that you have faced sex-based harassment, but you do not have to disclose more than that. **If you don't want to file a formal complaint or start a Title IX investigation at this time, you can make a confidential report to get supportive measures. A confidential report lets you choose what information you want to share with your school and provides more control over the reporting process than filing a formal complaint.**

TITLE IX

The Title IX office and other campus resources can connect you with free support and resources and take administrative action while you decide if submitting a formal complaint or a police report is right for you to help you feel safe on campus such as: safety planning, modification to work or class schedules, work or housing relocations, or university orders to restrict or minimize interactions between individuals.

If you can't find your Title IX Coordinator or you don't feel comfortable talking to them, you can ask another trusted staff member to help. You can request the following supportive measures from your school:

- Issue a one-way no-contact order that prohibits the harasser from directly communicating with you (in person and online). Your school is responsible for making sure the harasser follows the no-contact order. Your school can send a copy of the no-contact order to employees to ensure it is followed such as professors, TAs, RAs, coaches etc. A no-contact order can't necessarily prohibit your harasser from attending the same school events as you, but it can prohibit them from directly communicating with you while in attendance. If the harasser fails to follow the no-contact order, it is advised that you keep a detailed record including time, place, and date and submit these notes to your Title IX Coordinator.
- Move you to a different class, dorm, dining hall, campus workplace, and/or transportation route—but only if you ask to be moved. If you live with the harasser or are staying with them temporarily, you can also ask your school to help you find another place to live.
- Give you a campus escort to walk with you between classes and other school activities.

Important Information to Know about Interacting with Title IX:

Title IX does not require that you inform your parents or other family members that you have faced sex-based harassment. That is your decision to disclose to them and you have the right to privacy unless you are under the age of 18.

If you decide that you are not immediately ready to report, it is important to note that there is a statute of limitations (the amount of time the government has to bring an action against the person who committed a crime). The statute of limitations varies from state-to-state depending on the type of assault involved and if it's a criminal or civil case. Click this [link](#) to learn more about the statute of limitations in your state. The statute of limitations for a Title IX complaint is 180 days from the date of the incident.

For more information about Title IX and the process of reporting, check out the Equal Rights Advocates Student Survivor [Toolkit](#).

CONFIDENTIAL VS RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEES

Confidential resources allow you to share information about your incident without reporting to law enforcement and Title IX. You can speak to a confidential resource about an incident of sexual misconduct regardless of whether or not you want to make a formal report, they must keep it confidential. Traditionally, confidential resources on your campus include:

- Counseling Center staff
- Ombudsperson
- Student Health Center Staff
- Victim's Advocate
- Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Staff
- Campus Clergy

Responsible Employees are non-confidential resources for survivors and have a responsibility to report incidents of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. Traditionally, responsible employees on your campus include, but are not limited to:

- Housing Staff - Resident Assistants (RAs), Resident Directors (RDs), etc.
- Faculty/Professors
- Coaches
- Teaching Assistants and Fellows

As you seek support services on your campus, it is important to be keenly aware of the type of resources you are accessing and the responsibilities for reporting that those staff members have. Doing some research on the front end to verify what resources are considered confidential and non-confidential on your campus allows for you to remain in control of what happens next, if anything.

UNIVERSITY POLICE

Reporting to the police and Title IX prompts two separate investigative processes. If the incident happened on campus, you can submit a formal report of the incident to University Police. If you would like to report to the police to initiate a criminal complaint, you will have to make a separate report to University Police. It is important to note that making a Title IX report does not prompt a report being filed with University Police. However, the Title IX Coordinator can assist you in setting up an initial meeting with police.

When you report, a trained detective is typically assigned to your case to conduct the investigation. The investigation process usually consists of interviewing and taking a formal statement from the survivor and any witnesses, collecting any evidence from the crime scene, and receiving any evidence obtained in a medical examination. University Police can explain the criminal proceedings and support you through the process if you would like to engage in the criminal case process. Some University Police Departments offer an advocate who can support you through any medical and law enforcement procedures. You will want to visit your campus's police department website to understand the services and procedures available for survivors of sexual misconduct. As a reminder, the Incident Log offered within Callisto Vault is a great resource to help you capture the details of the incident ahead of and can assist you in making your formal report.

CALLISTO VAULT

Many survivors are not ready to report to authorities. If you are not ready, there are several things that you can do that can help you chart a path forward. [Callisto Vault](#) is a suite of tools designed to help survivors navigate barriers and define their own pathways toward healing and justice. Within Callisto Vault, survivors can access two tools: the Matching System and Incident Log.

Incident Log

As you decide what next steps you want to take, it can be helpful to document the details of the incident in case you want to report or engage with a service provider in the future. When documenting the assault, it is often recommended that the following information is captured: date you are writing the account, date of the incident, time, exact location, all details of the incident you can recall, names of any witnesses, anyone you spoke to during or after the incident, and any description of the offender(s). In addition, you may want to save any physical evidence (clothing, bedsheets, condoms, etc.) and electronic evidence (emails, photos, videos, text messages, screenshots, and social media interactions). If you have injuries from the assault, take pictures and save them in a secure location.

While you may not want to revisit the memory of the assault, documenting it can help you process the assault and/or provide a starting point for if you decide to tell someone such as a lawyer, therapist, police officer, or friend. [Incident Log](#) offered within Callisto Vault allows you to capture a secure, timestamped record of your incident that is only accessible and viewable by you for your use and reference now or in the future.

Callisto Vault is available for free use by anyone - student, faculty, and/or staff - with an active .edu email address on any colleges and universities within the U.S. and its territories.

Matching System

We know that survivors are often faced with the challenge of overcoming the narrative of an “isolated incident” and are unsure of what their rights and options are. We also know that 90% of college sexual assaults are perpetrated by repeat offenders who offend an average 6 times before they graduate. While campuses often have “whisper networks” where known offenders may be discussed or students warned, Callisto Vault’s Matching System serves as a private alternative where you can learn if other survivors were harmed by the same perpetrator and be connected to coordinate action.

The [Matching System](#) allows a survivor to enter the unique identifiers (ex: social media handles) of the perpetrator and in the event that another survivor enters the same unique identifier, a “match” occurs. Any serial perpetrator can be detected, regardless of their university affiliation. Once matched, each survivor is connected with a Legal Options Counselor who will explain their options and facilitate collective action, while protecting survivor privacy. This can help you and the other survivor(s) in your journeys of healing and justice.

We encourage you to create a matching entry in the Matching System using your .edu email address. Remember, you can enter the Matching System even if you have reported to authorities or for a previous assault that occurred during your enrollment.

CLERY ACT - THE VICTIM'S BILL OF RIGHTS

The Clery Act is a federal law that requires colleges and universities to report campus crime data, support victims of violence, and publicly outline the policies and procedures they have in place to improve campus safety. To learn more visit: <https://www.clerycenter.org/the-clery-act>.

In cases of sexual assault on campus:

- Survivors shall be notified of their options to notify law enforcement.
- The accuser and accused must have the same opportunity to have others present at any disciplinary proceeding.
- Both parties shall be informed of the outcome of any disciplinary proceeding.
- Survivors shall be notified of counseling services.
- Survivors shall be notified of options for changing academic, employment, transportation, financial aid, immigration, and living situations.

See the next page for more of your rights.

A (student or employee) victim or survivor of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, gender-based harassment or bullying, and stalking shall be afforded the following rights:

- Victim's or survivor's option to decline to notify authorities.
- The accuser and accused are entitled to the same opportunities to have others present at any disciplinary proceeding or related meeting including an advisor of their choice.
- Both parties shall be notified simultaneously of the outcome of any disciplinary hearing, procedures to appeal, any change of results prior to final results, and final results.
- Written notification to victims or survivors about victims' or survivors' rights, options, and assistance the school is required to provide, including the institution's obligation to arrange appropriate accommodations for academic, counseling, health services, legal advocacy and assistance filing criminal reports, housing and transportation, financial aid assistance, immigration and visa assistance, help with employment concerns, and various other on-campus and off-campus needs.
- Information regarding how the institution will protect the confidentiality of victims or survivors, including how publicly available record keeping will be accomplished without the inclusion of identifying information about the victim or survivor, to the extent permitted by law.
- Written notification to students and employees about existing resources and services on campus and within the local community, including counseling, medical and mental health services, immigration and visa assistance, employment, financial aid assistance, and legal services.

OFF-CAMPUS OPTIONS

There are many victim's rights organizations available to you off campus including if you wish to pursue a criminal case. It can be helpful to have a trusted friend assist in finding a resource that is the best fit for you and even performing some of the initial contact to insure the resources will reflect your needs and wants. A few invaluable resources that we recommend:

ENOUGH provides student survivors of sexual assault and sexual harassment with free legal information, advice, and services.

<https://www.equalrights.org/enough/>

The National Women's Law Center assists in filing Title IX complaints and lawsuits in limited circumstances and can also connect you with referrals.

<https://nwlc.org/>

The Transgender Legal Defense Fund provides information about civil rights laws that impact trans students.

<https://www.transgenderlegal.org>

The National Crime Victims Center can connect you with victim's rights attorneys.

<https://victimsofcrime.org/>

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

We know that not all survivors wish to report to law enforcement, particularly for underserved, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ survivors. This is due in part to a long standing history of BIPOC survivors who have often been unjustly criminalized in the process of reporting, along with the needs of LGBTQ+ survivors oftentimes being diminished by the heteronormative approach to collecting evidence in the criminal justice system. Research and current media indicates that discrimination and harassment by law enforcement is an ongoing and pervasive problem for folks of marginalized identities.

If you do wish to file a criminal charge against the perpetrator, you will need to contact your local police department. Each state has different definitions of criminal sexual assault and to understand additional protections that your state may offer, search the term “[insert state] survivor bill of rights” or “[insert state] crime victim’s bill of rights.” Having support from victim advocate from your local rape crisis center can help you navigate the criminal justice system.

Another great resource to learn more about specific laws in the state where you attend college visit: www.womenslaw.org.

Now that you have come to the end of the document, we wanted to take a second to commend you for having the courage to begin defining what healing and justice mean for you and exploring support resources. Asking for help and sharing your story is not easy, but can empower you to actualize who you want to be moving forward.

You are not defined by what happened to you.

We hope that this guide helped provide some much needed reassurance that the challenges - academic, financial, and physical and mental health - you are experiencing are not uncommon. We trust that you were able to develop a better understanding of your rights and the full range of options you have as you define what healing and justice means to you. We encourage you to download, bookmark, and share this guide with fellow survivors.

This guide is written by both student survivors and allies, acting not just from professional experience and training, but from personal experience as well. If you have an edit or alteration you'd like to suggest be made to the Survivor's Guide, email us at contact@projectcallisto.org. A special thanks to Abigail Tick for her work to bring this guide to fruition.

THE WAY YOU
ARE SUPPORTED
TO TELL YOUR
STORY CAN MAKE
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