

Sexual Assault Policies and Services

The University of South Carolina is an educational community bound by common standards of conduct and a commitment to its educational mission. Sexual assault is considered particularly abhorrent because it interferes with the educational mission by:

- endangering the physical and emotional safety of community members;
- damaging trust in the community;
- offending the dignity and violating the autonomy of community members; and
- disrupting the academic progress of victims or survivors during their recovery.

As a result the University provides the following services:

- resources aimed at reducing the risk of sexual assault, including educational programs for men and women;
- a statement of expectations for behavior with regard to sexual conduct;
- procedural interventions to offer support and information following a sexual assault; and
- campus judicial procedures that provide for the needs of victims or survivors and protect the rights of alleged assailants.

Victim's Bill of Rights

Victims of sexual assault who report their experience to University officials can anticipate that:

1. All sexual assaults will be treated seriously.
2. Victims will be treated with dignity and respect and in a nonjudgmental manner.
3. Campus organizations and services that can assist victims will be identified.
4. When a crime is reported to University officials, those officials will offer assistance in notifying proper authorities.
5. When victims report and choose to pursue action against alleged assailants, assaults will be investigated and adjudicated by appropriate criminal and/or University authorities.
6. University personnel will not discourage victims from reporting, nor encourage them to underreport or report the incident as a lesser crime.
7. Victims may invite an advisor they choose to accompany them through University disciplinary proceedings.
8. A victim will be notified of the outcome of related University discipline proceedings. The victim and the charged student must respect the privacy of all involved.
9. University personnel will cooperate in obtaining, securing and maintaining evidence (including a medical examination), necessary in legal proceedings.
10. Victims will be made aware of any State or Federal laws regarding mandatory testing of sexual assault suspects for communicable disease and whether these professionals can notify a victim of the results of these tests.
11. Victims will be notified of mental health services available.
12. Victims will be afforded the opportunity to request immediate transfer of classes or other steps to prevent unnecessary or unwanted contact or proximity to an alleged assailant when reasonably available.
13. All students have the right to an environment free from sexual or physical intimidation, or any continuing disruptive behavior that would prevent a reasonable person from

attaining their educational goals. Disruptive behavior of this nature should be reported to appropriate University staff, so it can be addressed.

14. The sexual history of the victim is not considered relevant to the truth of the allegation; therefore, information regarding sexual history external to the relationship between the victim and the alleged assailant will not be considered in discipline hearings.

Immediate Care and Treatment Procedures for Victim

Any student who experiences sexual harassment (including sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual violence) harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex is encouraged to contact Tracey Mobley-Chavous, the USC Lancaster Title IX Coordinator. Her office is located in Starr Hall Room 122 and she may be contacted via telephone at 803-313-7152. Students may also contact Dr. John Rutledge, Director of Law Enforcement and Security if they would like assistance reporting the incident to local law enforcement. His office is located in the Maintenance Building and he may be contacted via telephone at 803-313-7156.

If an assault takes place on campus: contact Campus Security, Lancaster City Police at 283-3313, or dial 911. The sooner a sexual assault is reported, the easier it is to collect valuable evidence. To facilitate evidence collection, the victim:

- Should not bathe or douche.
- Should not urinate.
- Should not drink any liquids.
- If oral contact has occurred, the victim should not smoke, eat or brush teeth.
- If clothes are changed, soiled clothes should be placed in a paper bag (plastic destroys crucial evidence).

Campus security may transport the victim to an area hospital for medical attention and a rape protocol exam. If the victim does not want to contact the police, a friend or relative may transport the student to the hospital. When the victim arrives at the emergency room, the hospital will call Palmetto Citizens Against Sexual Assault to arrange for a volunteer advocate to accompany the victim throughout the exam. The hospital staff may also contact the City Police.

Medical attention is crucial to assess possible internal injuries or sexually transmitted diseases, as well as to collect medical evidence should the victim/survivor choose to pursue prosecution. The police will be contacted by the hospital to take possession of evidence collected while the victim/survivor makes a decision about whether to pursue charges. If a victim chooses not to go to the hospital, the victim is strongly urged to seek appropriate medical attention.

Follow-up and Recovery Services for Victim

Research has shown that follow-up counseling is of significant benefit to a victim/survivor of sexual assault and/or related trauma. This counseling may be initiated at any time after an assault (from hours to years). On-or-off campus counseling and other services are available to a student victim whether the crime was reported or prosecuted. Agencies available to USC Lancaster students include:

- Palmetto Citizens Against Sexual Assault, located at 106 North York Street in Lancaster. This agency provides follow-up counseling to victims/survivors of sexual assault. Counselors are available 24-hours a day by calling 286-5232.
- The USC Lancaster Counseling Services is located in the Bradley Arts and Sciences Building. Counseling Services serve USC Lancaster students. Appointments can be made by calling 313-7112.
- Catawba Mental Health Center, located at 1906 Highway 521 Bypass South. Catawba Mental Health is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Appointments can be made by calling 285-7456. The number is also used for crisis situations after-hours.

Reporting

All victims of sexual assault/battery are encouraged to report the incident to law enforcement agencies. Regardless of whether the victim chooses to immediately involve law enforcement officials, the victim is strongly urged to go through the rape protocol exam for medical attention and for the purpose of preserving important physical evidence of the assault, which may be used if the victim chooses to pursue legal prosecution at a later date. The rape protocol exam should be done as soon as possible. Physical evidence can be obtained up to 72 hours after the assault, recognizing that as time passes, the quality of the evidence diminishes.

A victim/survivor may also choose to file a report to Campus Security or the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. Whether legal or disciplinary action is desired, an anonymous report may be filed at any time with Campus Security and the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. This report provides University staff with information about the crime that may be valuable in their efforts to prevent future crimes and educate other students about high risk areas.

University officials who have knowledge about an assault are required to file an anonymous report with Campus Security in addition to supporting the victim/survivor and referring that person to campus resources.

Educational Resources

The following offices within the University of South Carolina Lancaster and the Lancaster community provide a variety of educational offerings. There are many videotapes, books, brochures, and periodicals that are available for viewing and/or checkout. Please see the following list:

- Palmetto Citizens Against Sexual Assault, 1106 North York Street, 286-5232
- Medford Library, USC Lancaster, 313-7060
- Lancaster County Library, 313 S. White Street, 285-1502

Further information may be found in the USCL Student Handbook.