

Campus Safety Planning for Respondents

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Introduction

On college and university campuses, “safety planning” is a practice often utilized with victims/survivors of sexual violence. According to the Victim Rights Law Center, *“An effective safety plan empowers the victim to reclaim a sense of safety and security by addressing immediate safety needs and outlining strategies to help reduce future incidents of harm.”* Historically, safety planning has also been used for adult sex offenders re-entering their community as well as for adolescents and children with problematic sexual behaviors who are going through a reunification process with their families. This document explores how the practice can be similarly effective with students who are concerned about their own behaviors, students who have been accused of sexual misconduct, students who have been found responsible for sexual misconduct and who are remaining on or returning to campus, and students who may be transferring to a campus with a transcript notation for sexual misconduct at a prior institution or possibly listed on the sex offender registry (collectively, “Respondents”).

Guiding Principles

In considering whether and how to create a safety plan with a Respondent, it may be helpful to keep the following guiding principles in mind:

- Campus safety is a shared responsibility and there is often no single person who is individually responsible for the effort;
- The goal is to increase the sense of safety for everyone involved and to reduce the likelihood of other problematic sexual behavior;
- Listening to the needs and requests of the student filing the complaint is critical;
- The process will have the greatest impact when the student with problematic behaviors is involved;
- Safety planning is most effective when there are multiple people involved who care about the safety of each student;
- In more serious situations, safety planning benefits greatly from a risk assessment from a qualified practitioner; and
- Safety planning can be useful in a variety of situations and must be individualized for each student and each situation.

What is a Safety Plan?

Many colleges and universities are already using some form of safety planning for Respondents on their campus. For example, these may be referred to as interim measures. However, the premise behind safety planning is to focus on the goal of safety for everyone involved. The elements of a safety plan may include, but are certainly not limited to: changes to housing, class

schedules, on-campus work schedules, contact or no contact with certain individuals, use of social media, alcohol or other substance consumption, and participation in activities. The option of a safety plan can be offered to any student who has been accused of sexual misconduct and then it can be adjusted over time, depending upon what the student wants, is willing to do, and where they are in the process. A safety plan could also include any interim measures that the campus has developed with the Complainant. If possible, it is always helpful to involve the student in their own safety planning. This helps ensure that the student understands the campus expectations and is committed to upholding them. If a student is found responsible, then the campus may choose to add additional elements to the safety plan as a part of the sanctioning process, informed by the finding and possibly informed by a more comprehensive assessment by a trained professional (see below).

Developing a Plan

Given the broad range of behaviors at issue (e.g. sexual harassment, voyeurism, attempted rape, rape), the diversity of students involved, and the complexity of each situation, all safety plans must be carefully individualized for each Respondent. Among other things, this requires accounting for important developmental differences, possible cognitive differences, additional issues to be addressed (e.g., alcohol or substance abuse), the resources available to the student (both on campus and off), and whether the student has a pro-social network and/or family support. By understanding the individual risks, needs, and the Respondent's receptivity to the safety planning process, the campus can construct a safety plan that establishes clear boundaries, sets the consequences for crossing those boundaries, and identifies additional resources needed to keep everyone safe. Although a campus might find it helpful to offer a consistent set of options for each student, there is no "one-size-fits all safety plan" that can be used with every Respondent.

The following steps can help guide the safety planning process.

Step One: Identify what you know about the complaint and about the student accused

- While you may have limited information, gather what information is available about the student who has been accused, the complaint, as well as the environment surrounding the event. For example, was the allegation for behavior on campus or off campus, was alcohol involved, have there been any previous allegations against this student, etc. Also be sure to collect information about protective factors such as whether the student is involved in pro-social activities.

Step Two: Identify who needs to be involved/informed

- If the student is accused of sexual misconduct, the person responsible for Respondent services needs to explain the conduct process to the student as well as identify the resources on campus and off campus that are available to that student. The point person may also consider any additional support people for that student who can also help to hold them accountable for the safety plan elements. The point person should

discuss this question when talking directly with the student accused, identify any additional people, and revisit it with the individuals identified. Their participation and support will be a key element of the successful safety plan.

Step Three: Identify known risks as well as protective factors

- The initial allegation may offer insight into the risk factors for the student accused of sexual misconduct. Information available on campus may also provide insight into the protective factors for this student (see Appendix for a chart of possible factors). For students who have been found responsible and completed a treatment program (e.g., suspended and returning to campus, applying with a transcript notation or on the sex offender registry), the treatment provider will know more about the risk and protective factors for that student and may suggest additional more specific criteria. These could include limits to events they can attend if alcohol is available or specific pro-social activities that increase safety and limit their risk in the future (e.g. activities that match the interest of the student and lowers the risk of future problematic behaviors).

Step Four: Consult with the student about what they want (goals and practical changes)

- If a student remains on campus, this is an opportunity to ask the student what their goals might be in the process. This may be a question that needs to be asked a number of times in the process, but while their options are limited, they may also want to request some accommodations (e.g., they might want to change their own class schedule or where they are living).

Step Five: Create the plan

- Creating clear guidelines for the student accused or found responsible is essential for everyone involved. The guidelines will vary depending upon the student, their risks, as well as the protective factors they bring to their situation. Sample criteria may include changes to the work or class schedule, completion of an assessment, referral to counseling or education program, or specified safe people to talk with if concerned about a situation. It should be noted that the institution can set more targeted safety planning measures when more information is available and in particular, if an assessment of the student is warranted and then shared.

Step Six: Discuss the plan with the student, their support people, and key stakeholders

- Once the safety plan has been established, support people and key stakeholders (identified in Step 2) should be alerted to the safety plan. This is also the time to explain if there is a protective/no contact order and discuss how they can handle a variety of situations (e.g., they arrive at a party where the reporting party is, identify a plan for what to do to comply with the no contact order). A short training can be helpful to

ensure that support people and stakeholders know the plan and know what to do if the student does not adhere to the plan.

Step Seven: Evaluate the plan

- Once the plan is implemented, there should be regular check-in with the student involved as well as a 360° check-in with the student's support people. The check-in should offer a chance for feedback and an opportunity to assess whether the student and their support people are fully adhering to the plan. Furthermore, the plan may need to change as the student goes through the conduct process (e.g., interim measures may become permanent sanctions or may be reviewed if the student leaves, completes a treatment program, and then returns to campus in another year).

Conclusion

This summary is intended as an overview of the safety planning process for Respondents. It provides some insight into how safety planning can be used to the benefit of everyone involved, but does not give enough detail to effectively create a plan for each and every student. For more information on safety planning, you may want to explore the following resources:

- [Victim Rights Law Center Safety Plan](#)
- [Considering Family Reunification after Child Sexual Abuse](#) by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- Stop It Now! [Tip Sheet on Family Safety Planning](#)

You may also contact the authors directly by visiting www.klancystreet.com.

Appendix

The Seven Major Risk/Need Factors

Major Risk/Need Factor	Indicators	Intervention Goal
Substance Abuse	Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs	Reduce substance abuse through a drug or alcohol treatment program, enhance alternatives to substance abuse
Pro-criminal/misconduct attitudes	Rationalization for crime/misconduct, rape myth support	Counter rationalizations with prosocial attitudes, build up prosocial identity
Antisocial personality pattern	Impulsive, adventurous pleasure seeking, restlessly aggressive	Build self-management skills, teach anger management
Social supports for misconduct	Isolation from prosocial others	Establish prosocial friends and associates
Family/peer relationships	History of poor family/peer relationships, inappropriate parental monitoring or disciplining	Teaching relationship skills, enhance caring relationships (e.g., mentoring)
School/work	Poor performance, low levels of satisfaction	Enhance work/study skills, nurture interpersonal relationships within the context of school and campus work
Prosocial recreational activities	Lack of involvement in prosocial activities or involvement with activities problematic to the individual	Encourage participation in prosocial activities, match activities to individuals to lower risks

Adapted from Risk-need-responsivity model for offender assessment and rehabilitation 2007-06 (p.6), by Bonta, J. and Andrews, A. (2007). Ottawa, Canada: Public Safety Canada Copyright 2007 by Her Majesty the Queen. Retrieved from: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rsk-nd-rspnsvty/index-en.aspx>