Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence: What to do?

Your initial response is critical and can promote trauma recovery!

- Call 911 if assault is in progress
- Check for injuries or medical needs
- Ensure safety
- Believe the victim/survivor
- **Don’t judge** victim/survivor and her/his behavior, choice, etc.
- Be supportive, empathic, and sensitive
- Expect different behavior/reactions (anger, tearful/crying, laughing, calm, collected, detached/numbness) Trauma or shock can present in many ways
- There is no “normal response” to violence, abuse or trauma
- Respect personal space (don’t initiate touching or hugging)

- **Don’t pry.** Remember you are NOT the investigator
- Avoid asking unnecessary questions. Instead ask “What do you need?” or “How can I help?”
- Contact service providers for consultation and support
- **Guide to appropriate resources**
- Follow the university mandatory report protocols
  www.oie.msu.edu
- Respect privacy (tell only those who need to know for reporting purposes)

Resources & Service Providers

- Emergency (assault in progress) 911
- MSU Police Department (on-campus incidents) (517) 355-2221
  www.police.msu.edu
- East Lansing Police Department (off-campus incidents) (517) 351-4220
  www.cityofeastlansing.com/police
- Sparrow Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Unit (517) 364-3641
  www.sparrow.org/sane
- MSU Safe Place (confidential program) (517) 355-1100
  www.safeplace.msu.edu
- MSU Sexual Assault Program (confidential program) (517) 355-3551
  www.endrape.msu.edu
- MSU Office of Institutional Equity (517) 353-3922
  www.oie.msu.edu
- Olin Center for Sexual Health Promotion (517) 353-4660
  www.olin.msu.edu/healthed