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 their behavior, choices, 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)

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**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
- MSU Safe Place (confidential program) — (517) 355-1100
  - safeplace.msu.edu
- MSU Center for Survivors (confidential program) — (517) 355-3551
  - centerforsurvivors.msu.edu
- MSU Office of Institutional Equity (policy violation investigations) — (517) 353-3922
  - www.oie.msu.edu
- MSU Health Promotion (free anonymous HIV testing) — (517) 353-4660
  - www.olin.msu.edu/healthed
- Sexual Assault Exams - EVE in Lansing (transportation provided) — (517) 372-5572
  - www.eveinc.org