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

Your initial response is critical and can promote trauma recovery!

- **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)

- **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)
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 relationship violence, stalking 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
- MSU Sexual Assault Healthcare Program (sexual assault medical forensic exams)  •  (517) 353-2700 centerforsurvivors.msu.edu