

# Sexual Assault Response System

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## Lamar Community College Sexual Assault Response System

### Introduction

This protocol defines and coordinates the efforts of various campus departments in order to provide a caring and effective institutional response to student sexual assaults. Such definition and coordination is intended to make the institutional response 'more than the sum of its parts' for the benefit of the survivor of assault and the community at large. While allowing flexibility within the individual departments, this protocol is intended to ensure continuity and consistency for both victims/survivors and accused perpetrators to receive needed support services.

This policy is based on the following understanding of sexual assault:

1. Sexual assault is a single term covering a range of coercive behaviors that violate both State legal statutes and Lamar Community College Code of Conduct. The common element of these behaviors is use of coercion, force or threat of force to obtain sexual contact against a person's will. The type of coercion may range from unwanted sexual touching to intercourse. The perpetrator of sexual assault may often be known to the victim/survivor. Even with no physical force use, the experience may severely traumatize the victim/survivor.
2. Victims/Survivors of sexual assault need clear boundaries and role definitions used by those professionals who offer help because a victim/survivor's personal boundaries have already been violated during the incident. Victims/Survivors need to know what services are available and who provides them. Similarly, they need to know what is outside the scope of any given provider's services and they need to know that providers will stay within their roles.
3. Victims/Survivors of sexual assault need clearly defined choice points and options because they have been in a powerless position and denied choice. They need a chance to re-establish a sense of personal control.
4. "Time is of the essence" for victims/survivors of sexual assault in several ways. "Time is short" in the sense that they are likely to be in a crisis and in need of immediate support. Time is also short for securing evidence for possible prosecution. On the other hand, victim/survivors "need time" and ongoing support to emerge in a constructive way from the sexual assault.
5. Trust in others may have already been severely damaged so all efforts to help should respect the victim's/survivor's need for safety and control. Those providing services must be clear about boundaries of confidentiality in their communications because any outside communication (to another service provider, for instance) may be experienced by the victim/survivor as another violation of trust. The service provider's problem-solving efforts and strong recommendations may be perceived as blaming and further attack. In general, the victim/survivor needs to be heard, needs to be respected, needs to understand options, and needs to move at her or his pace through the process of recovery.
6. If the accused is known, is a LCC student and either the victim/survivor has given permission to identify the accused or a police investigation has begun, options and services should be offered to the accused as soon as possible. Referrals to Sexual Assault Services, Counseling Services, and the V.P. of Student Services should be made.

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Sexual assault must be directly confronted by the campus community. An array of medical, legal, psychological, administrative and disciplinary services must be in place and immediately available to students reporting sexual assault. Furthermore, Lamar Community College is committed to supporting students' exercise of informed choice among these services and ensuring the anonymity of those students affected by incidents of sexual assault. Off-campus support and judicial services may also play important roles, and Lamar Community College will continue to provide support services to students who choose to seek criminal or civil prosecution as well as disciplinary action under the Campus Code of Ethics. This protocol outlines these services and describes how they might work in concert.

This protocol is based on recognition of the fact that the immediate community response as outlined herein is only part of the picture. A whole range of preventive educational programming is needed to reduce the risk of sexual assault for students.

## **Title IX Coordinator**

The implementation of this protocol will be overseen by the Lamar Community College Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator serves as a primary resource for the student reporting an assault as well as the responding departments. Each responding department will deliver a Sexual Assault Incident Report, with the victim/survivor name or other identifying information, to the Title IX Director no later than 24 hours after initial contact with the student. A telephone call will be made to the Coordinator or another Title IX Investigator immediately following the initial contact. The Title IX Coordinator will assign an incident number for each case to prevent duplicated reports and to ensure confidentiality in follow-up contacts with involved service providers.

Each department will also encourage the student (victim/survivor and/or accused perpetrator) to speak directly with the Title IX Coordinator or designated Title IX Investigator, for support in seeking the additional services outlined in this protocol. The Title IX Coordinator, or member of the investigation team, will be "on call" at all times for availability to the student and the department. The Title IX Coordinator will help the student understand, evaluate, and choose among the services outlined in this protocol. The Title IX Coordinator will also help ensure continuity of services by offering the student follow-up contacts as needed. The Title IX Coordinator will also serve as an important resource to departments for any concerns regarding sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and/or stalking issues. Departments will be expected to maintain a close working relationship with the Title IX Coordinator for both on-going staff development and crisis intervention services.

If the student decides not to speak to the Title IX Coordinator, the Coordinator will still oversee the implementation of the protocol. For each sexual assault incident, the Title IX Coordinator will assign a common identification number to the reports received from the departments the student has contacted and open a file to track the incident. The confidential file will be maintained within the office of the Title IX Coordinator and will be used to develop statistical information related to both official and unofficial reports of campus sexual assault incidents, according to the federal regulations implementing the Campus Security Act/the Clery Act (U.S. Public Law No. 101-542). The Title IX Coordinator will contact the departments to follow-up on the services they provide for each student incident without the need to disclose the student's name. Such follow-up with departments will help ensure consistent implementation of the protocol and generate feedback necessary for future revision of the protocol. Such follow-up will also help departments stay informed about evolving services available at Lamar Community College and the general community.

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## Campus Alert Notifications

If the Title IX Coordinator or the Campus Security Department determines that a reported incident of sexual assault represents a potential danger to the campus community, the Coordinator of Student/Resident Life, (CERT) Core Emergency Response Team and the V.P. of Student Services will be notified. A potential danger to the community is defined as follows:

- A pattern of acquaintance sexual assaults
- A stranger assault
- A violent or sadistic assault
- Gang rape

This Team, in collaboration with the Title IX Coordinator will determine if a Campus Alert Notification is warranted. If so, a Connect-Ed Alert Notification will be distributed campus wide to protect and educate the community while respecting the student's rights to anonymity.

## Comprehensive Protocol Guidelines

The goal of this protocol is to specify the following information for each of Lamar Community College departments that constitute the immediate support network for students involved in a case of sexual assault:

- Boundaries of confidentiality
- Services offered by the individual department
- Options and choices available to the student
- Statements about services offered by associated departments

1. All departments file a sexual assault incident report with the Title IX Coordinator. This report may be filed with the victim/survivor's name (if permission is granted) or with other identifying information. In cases that represent clear danger to the community at large, A Campus Alert Notification may be released. Resident Advisors are obligated to share sexual assault reports with the Coordinator of Student/Resident Life, who must share information (including the reporting student's name), with the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will then contact the reporting student(s) to provide support as needed.
2. Concerning the student's choice points and services, use of any and all services by these departments is fully voluntary. The Title IX Coordinator will offer overall assistance and follow-up to the student. Residence Life staff will offer to accompany the student to seek professional services, but will not force or require this. The student can choose whether an investigation happens and whether to file criminal and/or disciplinary charges.
3. Concerning statements made by each department about available services, this protocol establishes a consistent and comprehensive message. The student will find that he or she hears very similar things from the various departments in an effort to inform the student of the network of supports available on campus and in the community. The Title IX Coordinator will follow-up with each department to ensure consistent implementation of this protocol.