

# MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

## Mental Health & Wellbeing

> **Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy**

> **Mental Health & Wellbeing resources**

> **The Mental Health and Wellbeing Team**

> **Collaboration and Initiatives**

> Online Resources

# Sexual harassment and sexual assault

If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault, there is support available. Acts of sexual harassment and sexual assault are never OK and are never your fault.

Western Sydney University is committed to creating safer university communities and, along with other Australian universities, is part of the [Respect. Now. Always.](#) Initiative which was developed to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault.

On this page:

- [What are sexual harassment and sexual assault?](#)
- [Next steps for sexual harassment and sexual assault](#)

- [Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and university](#)
- [University support](#)
- [Community support](#)
- [Resources](#)

## What is sexual harassment and sexual assault?

Western Sydney University has policies which define sexual harassment and sexual assault, discuss how the university responds, and discuss what support is available to people who have experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault. These policies can be found in the resources section of this page, and the below definitions come from these university policies.

### Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual behaviour that a reasonable person would consider offensive, humiliating or intimidating in the circumstances it occurs in, regardless of the intentions of the person doing the harassment.

Sexual harassment can take many different forms, and can include:

- Uninvited touches, kissing, massages or deliberately brushing up against someone
- Smutty jokes or comments in the workplace or classroom
- Making threats or promises in return for sexual favours
- Repeated invitations to go out, particularly after someone's said no previously
- 'Flashing' or sexual gestures
- Sex based insults, taunts, teasing or name-calling
- Staring or leering at someone or at parts of their body
- Touching or fiddling with a person's clothing, e.g. lifting up skirts or flicking bra straps
- Requests for sex
- Sexually explicit conversation
- Persistent questions or insinuations about a person's private life
- Stalking, sexual insults or taunting
- Sending offensive messages via email, text, or on social media
- Any other behaviour which creates a sexually hostile working or learning environment.

Sexual harassment can happen between people of any gender.

Sexual harassment isn't behaviour that's based on mutual attraction, friendship or respect, and is consensual, welcome and reciprocated.

However, behaviour which previously wasn't sexual harassment can become sexual harassment if it's no longer consensual, welcome and reciprocated but continues to occur.

## Sexual assault

**Sexual assault** is when someone is forced or coerced into sexual acts that they don't consent to.

Consent means that a person freely and voluntarily agrees to the sexual act. There must be a clear and explicit 'yes' to the sexual activity you are about to be involved in, and consent can be withdrawn at any time. The absence of a 'no' is not enough. Anything less than an active 'yes' is not consent- it doesn't matter what a person was wearing, whether they'd consented before, or if they are in a romantic or sexual relationship with someone.

Consent can't be given, or might not be able to be given, when:

- the person is asleep or unconscious
- the person is being intimidated, coerced or threatened into giving consent
- the person is substantially affected or intoxicated by alcohol or drugs
- the perpetrator is in a position of authority or trust

## Next steps for sexual harassment and sexual assault

If you've experienced sexual harassment or assault

If you've experienced sexual harassment or assault, support is available. If it's an emergency, please call emergency services on 000 now.

If you've experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault at Western Sydney University, [this webpage](#) talks about some of the supports and resources available through Western Sydney University, as well as some general community resources.

If you choose, you can also make a report via Western Sydney University's sexual offenses reporting portal. [This page](#) has further information about this portal and support available to make a report via this portal if this is something you'd like to do.

## Supporting someone else who has experienced sexual harassment or assault

It can be difficult to know what to do and what to say when a friend tells you that they've experienced sexual harassment or assault.

Western Sydney University's Respect. Now. Always. resources include a guide on how to support and respond to a friend who has let you know that they've experienced sexual or gendered violence, which can be found [here](#). This resource helps explain what steps to take and gives some examples of what you can say to provide support.

## University support

If you would like support or to talk to someone about sexual harassment or sexual assault, the WSU [Counselling Service](#), [Disability Service](#), or [Welfare Service](#) can help.

- **WSU [Counselling Service](#).**

Students can access free, short term, confidential counselling services. Face to face, Zoom or telephone appointments can be made by telephoning 1300 668 370 or sending an email to [counselling@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:counselling@westernsydney.edu.au). Our office hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am - 4:30 pm.

- **WSU [Disability Service](#).**

The Disability Service is free to access with Disability Advisors assisting students to meet their full potential. If you have a diagnosed physical, psychological or medical condition that impacts on your studies, you may be eligible for an [Academic Integration Plan \(AIP\)](#), developed by the Disability Service. Contact the Disability Service on 1300 668 370, email [disability@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:disability@westernsydney.edu.au) or make contact via [WesternNow](#).

- **WSU [Welfare Service](#).**

Academic, Personal and Financial Hardship, International Support and Accommodation: 1300 668 370 or via [WesternNow](#).

- **Multifaith [Chaplaincy](#)**

Multifaith Chaplaincy can provide confidential conversation and care, support for stress management and anxiety with links to religious groups and faith communities. For more information, please call Daniel Jantos on 0402771543 or email [d.jantos@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:d.jantos@westernsydney.edu.au).

- **WesternLife**

[WesternLife](#) - Join thousands of students at Your Virtual Community to share experiences, learn new things, connect with new friends, and engage with events or discussions that interest you!

- **Disruption to Studies**

Consider applying for [Disruption to Studies](#) and [Requests for Extension](#) if you feel as though your studies have been significantly impacted.

- **Deferred Exam**

[Deferred Exam](#) – You can apply for a Deferred Exam no later than 5.00 pm on the second working day after your scheduled exam if you are unable to attend a final exam due to serious illness, misadventure or other exceptional circumstances beyond your control. Submit a [Student Form](#) and attach supporting documents online for application.

- **Withdraw Without Academic Penalty**

[Withdrawal Without Academic Penalty](#) is an option available after the Census Date of the teaching term provided that you meet eligibility.

- **Leave of Absence**

A [Leave of Absence](#) is a temporary break from studying. Once you have completed one or more subjects in your enrolled program, you can apply for a Leave of Absence. A Leave of Absence can be taken as either six or twelve months. The maximum amount of leave you can take during your program is twelve months. Please note, you must submit your application before the relevant census date

If you are considering any of these options, please reach out to the counselling service for support and guidance. If you are an international student, please make sure you seek advice particularly if you are considering withdrawing without penalty or taking a leave of absence as these may have [implications for your visa conditions](#).

## Community support

If you need emergency assistance, call **000**.

You can also contact **Western Sydney University Campus Safety and Security** on 1300 737 003.

- [Full Stop Australia](#) (NSW Sexual Violence Helpline) provides 24/7 telephone and online trauma counselling for anyone in NSW whose life has been impacted by sexual violence, including survivors, as well as their friends, families, and supporters. They also provide support to others who have been impacted by this violence, including professionals such as police or journalists.
- [1800respect](#) is a national service providing counselling, information and support for those who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence. They provide online chat, as well as a 24-hour phone service available at 1800 737 732. You can access this service through an interpreter via 13 14 50, or via the National Relay Service for people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing on 1800 555 677.
- [Lifeline](#)  
Lifeline (24 hours crisis counselling) - **13 11 14**  
Lifeline SMS Counselling Service - between 6pm- Midnight you can text **0477 13 11 14** to receive counselling via text. You can find more information [here](#).
- [Mental Health Telephone Access Line](#)  
Available 24/7 to everyone in NSW on **1800 011 511**. Provides professional help and advice and referrals to local mental health services
- [Blue Knot Foundation](#) provides phone and email-based support for adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, as well as for their supporters and the professionals who work with them.  
Phone: 1300 657 380. Available 9 am to 5 pm AEST, seven days a week.  
Email: [helpline@blueknot.org.au](mailto:helpline@blueknot.org.au)
- [Bravehearts](#): Bravehearts provides counselling and survivor support services for anyone who has been affected by child sexual assault. For more information, or to talk to Bravehearts about receiving free counselling, you can contact their confidential support service.  
Phone: 1800 272 831. Available 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday.

# Resources

- [Websites](#)
- [Podcasts](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Apps](#)

## Websites

Reachout has information and resources about [sexual harassment](#) and [sexual assault](#)

[Say It Out Loud](#) provides information for LGBTQ+ people about relationships, including information about sexual assault.

The [Immigrant Women's Support Service](#) provides information about sexual violence for women from non-English speaking backgrounds, including information in a [variety of languages](#).

[Full Stop Australia](#) provides support and information for anyone in NSW whose life has been impacted by sexual violence, including survivors, as well as their friends, families, and supporters.

[1800respect](#) is a national service providing counselling, information and support for those who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence.

[Wirringa Baiya](#) Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre has fact sheets about [discrimination and sexual harassment](#) and [sexual assault](#).

## Podcasts

### **"Juicy Slice – Umm, is this sexual harassment?"**

In this episode of The Pineapple Project podcast, Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins talks about how sexual harassment can play out in the workplace and where you can turn if it happens to you.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/7oXuaEqUeaBfPXWtiDynbg?si=7558627bbbad4c30&nd=1>

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/juicy-slice-umm-is-this-sexual-harassment/id1340045090?i=1000431942194>

## Videos

[What is sexual harassment: Know where the line is](#)

[Western Sydney University- Sexual Offences Reporting Portal](#)

## Apps

[Daisy](#) is a free app that connects women around Australia to services providing support for the impacts of sexual assault, family violence, and domestic violence.

[Sunny](#) is a free app for women with disability who have experienced violence and abuse. Sunny has been co-designed with women with disability to make sure it provides the very best support for the people who use it.

[RACS Speak Up](#) – This app prepares you for an informal conversation with a trusted colleague or friend known as a ‘cup of coffee conversation’ when an unacceptable behaviour has occurred, encouraging you to speak up and giving tools on how to do so.

## Still struggling?

Stress can be challenging. Asking for help is an important step in managing these feelings and realising your full potential!

If you are still struggling, reach out to the WSU [Counselling Service](#) for support and advice. If you prefer to seek support from a service outside of the university, it may be helpful to speak to your General Practitioner regarding a [Mental Health Care Plan](#) and referral to a psychologist, or you can speak to a counsellor or other health professional. Remember you are not alone and there will always be someone out there who is willing to stay with you through your hard times.

**View a PDF version of this webpage [here](#).**

## References

[Western Sydney University – Respect, Now, Always](#)

[Western Sydney University – Respect, Now, Always – What to do if you have been subject to a sexual offence](#)

[Western Sydney University – Respect, Now, Always – Supporting a friend/Responding to disclosures of sexual offences](#)



