

RESTORE

A STUDENT GUIDE FOR RESPONDING TO A PERSON ACCUSED OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The RESTORE strategy can be used when someone has been accused of harm to center a restorative mindset. The goal is to address your needs as the person listening and to support the person who has potentially harmed another member of the community.



REALIZE THAT THEIR RESPONSES MAY VARY.

When someone approaches you and tells you that they have been accused, they may start:

- blaming others: “they came on to me,” “they started it,”
- blaming themselves: “If only I had not been...,” “If only I had...,”
- denying that it happened: “I could never have done anything like that...,” “that’s not the type of person I am...,”
- withdrawing from the community: “I don’t deserve support,” “I should leave this group,”

All these responses are normal when you learn you have potentially hurt someone. Know that none of these responses, or others you may see, indicate what happened or not.



ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE WITH THEM.

You do not have to have all the answers for what to do to help them and it is not your job to try to find out the truth. It is better to ask, “what do you need?,” “how can I be helpful?” so you know what they are looking for in terms of support.



SHOW SUPPORT BY LISTENING FULLY AND OPENLY.

Sometimes you do not need words, giving your time and attention without distractions shows support. Many people share that just being able to talk about their experiences to someone else lessens the weight of isolation and secrecy.



TRY TO UNDERSTAND AS BEST AS YOU CAN.

Understanding someone’s feelings, thoughts, or beliefs does not mean you agree or accept them. You can say, “I can understand why being accused of hurting someone is difficult to hear.”

A helpful template to acknowledge what is coming up for them is, “I hear that you are *__(insert feeling)__* because *__(insert reason for feeling from what information you have from them)__*.”



OWN AND HONOR WHAT COMES UP FOR YOU.

When we find out someone we know and potentially care about has been accused of harming someone else it can bring up a lot of feelings such as confusion, sadness, anger, and/or concern. All and any feelings you have are valid. Know that you have time to decide how to move forward.

OPEN offers Community Consultation if you are looking for a place to learn what support, resources, and options are available to you in learning about an accusation.

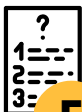


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REVIEW AND OFFER RESOURCES.

You can best support someone by offering options and leaving space for them to decide where to go from there. The student may be interested in connecting to mental health providers or speaking with a Confidential Resource Advisor.

The Confidential Resource Advisors are a confidential and restorative-informed resource for Northeastern students who have been accused of causing sexual or identity-based harm, are currently in an investigation/adjudication process, and/or have been found responsible for causing harm. The Confidential Resource Advisors will not tell a student what they should or should not do; instead, CRAs will provide information and resources for a student to explore what next steps would best support their needs. This may include: facilitating connections for ongoing counseling and/or legal services; accompanying students through the University investigation and adjudication process; and facilitating educational conversations around sexual violence.

**E**

ESTABLISH HOW YOU WANT TO MOVE FORWARD

Depending on your relationship with the person you may want to figure out how to continue being friends or you may decide that you need some time to process what they shared. It may be helpful for you to talk to someone to reflect upon what is best for you. Know that it is okay if you change your mind.

If you don't feel like you can support them you can say, "I understand you are feeling (insert feeling) and are looking for support, but I don't think I am the best person to support you right now. OPEN is a confidential resource on campus you can talk to more about this and figure out what next steps you can take."

Remember, you are not alone responding to disclosures of sexual violence. The Office of Prevention and Education at Northeastern (OPEN) is here to support you and to ensure you know the resources available to you.



Make an appointment to meet with OPEN staff.

This QR code links to a confidential service request form. Sign in with your Northeastern credentials to access the form.

Email open@northeastern.edu with any additional questions about our services. OPEN staff monitor service request submissions and email Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5 PM ET, and will reply to requests as soon as possible.