

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE GUIDELINES:

A GUIDE FOR FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENT LEADERS ON HOW TO RESPOND TO REPORTS OF
SEXUAL ASSAULT

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Purpose

The following document is intended to provide guidance to faculty, staff and other campus leaders (e.g. residence life staff, student staff) on responding and providing information and referral to individuals who report sexual assault.*

Section I outlines steps to take when approached by someone who reports they have been sexually assaulted. Since the appropriate response varies according to when the incident occurred, Section 1 is divided into four parts:

- Part 1:** Helpful immediate responses and ways to make referrals
- Part 2:** Responding to sexual assaults that have occurred within 72 hours
- Part 3:** Responding to sexual assaults that have occurred after 72 hours
- Part 4:** Initial points of contact

Section II of this document is a summary of terms around sexualized violence.

*For the purposes of this document, the term “individual(s)” shall hereby refer to any person who is coming forward to a Dalhousie community member with a report of sexualized violence, sexualized assault, and/or sexual harassment.

SECTION I: RESPONDING TO A REPORT OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Part 1: Immediate Responses

1. Minimize Trauma and Take Reports of Sexual Assault Seriously

Ensure that you and the individual are in a quiet area where the individual's privacy is protected.

Show the individual that you take the report seriously.

Let the individual control the pace of the intervention to the extent that this is possible. Wait for the individual to finish without interrupting. Allow the individual to take breaks when needed and make them feel in control.

Ask if the individual would like for you to contact a member of their support network (friend, family member, someone who can offer translation service).

Refrain from asking the individual for details about the incident. Focus on what support(s) the individual wants to engage with.

Allow the individual to determine what physical contact is acceptable between yourself and them. Only make physical contact with the individual if you have been invited to do so.

Be aware that certain terms such as "victim" and "survivor" are trigger words, and when addressing an individual who has experienced a sexual assault you always want to ask them how they prefer to be addressed.

NEVER respond by:

- Asking "why" questions or other questions that might imply blame. (i.e. "Why didn't you yell," "What were you doing there?")
- Blaming or judging the individual's actions. (i.e. "You shouldn't have had so much to drink")
- Dismissing the individual's feelings or minimizing their experience. (i.e. "You should just forget about it")
- Trying to "fix" the problem. (i.e. pressuring them to report and/or telling them what to do)

2. Follow the flow charts in Parts 2 and 3 to help the individual navigate options both on- and off-campus.

3. You do not have to have all the answers. If someone is disclosing to you, it typically means that you are someone they trust and oftentimes they just want to be heard. Don't be afraid to tell them

that you don't know the answers, and use that as a point for referral. Ask the individual what they would like to do, and how you can help. Do not take control of the situation or try to make decisions for them. Tell the individual about counselling, medical care, legal and safety planning options and resources. Encourage the person to get appropriate support.

Above all, do no harm. Sometimes, when individuals feel overwhelmed by just having heard a person's report of sexual assault, they will feel stressed to do something. When this occurs, they could unintentionally say things that could be hurtful to the individual making the report. Remember, if you do not know what to say, you do not have to say anything.

How to make a referral

An important part of being helpful to someone reporting sexual assault is providing information about options and resources. You may do this by helping the individual get connected with one or more of the resources listed in **Part 4** of the protocol. Some examples of ways to facilitate a referral for a person reporting sexual assault are provided below:

1. I am here to listen and support you, but it would also be helpful for you to talk to someone who has specialized knowledge in this area.
2. There are places that you can go anonymously to get information or support.
3. Even if you don't know what you want to do right now, it can be helpful to talk to someone about your options.
4. I would be happy to go with you to talk to someone.
5. What would make it feel safe for you to go talk to someone?

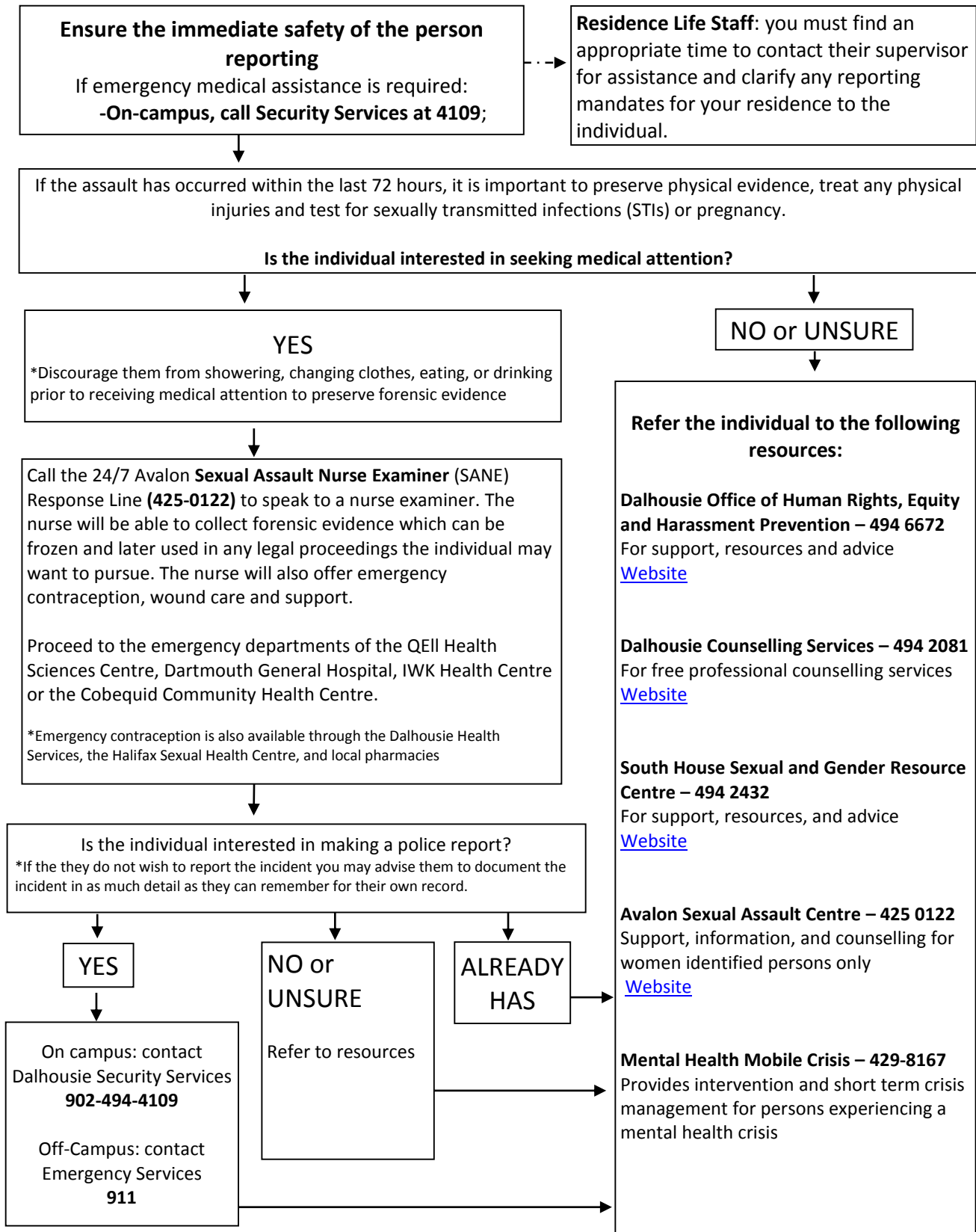
Limits of Confidentiality:

Defines what can be held in confidence and what cannot. Confidentiality does not mean anonymity. In other words, any information that is disclosed by an individual who reports sexualized violence to Residence staff will remain confidential and only accessible to other authorized staff of the Residence or the University. In practice, Residence staff are required to share information "up, but not out." This means that if the individual shares their story with a Residence Life Staff, or Front Desk Staff, then the staff will be required to share that information with the Residence Life Manager and ultimately Dalhousie's Advisor on Harassment Prevention. The individual does have the option of asking that the reporting be anonymous, which will protect their personal identity. If the Residence Life Manager and/or Dalhousie's Advisor on Harassment Prevention believe that the safety of the person, residence, and/or campus community is at risk, then this information will be immediately reported to the Dalhousie Security Services and the Police.

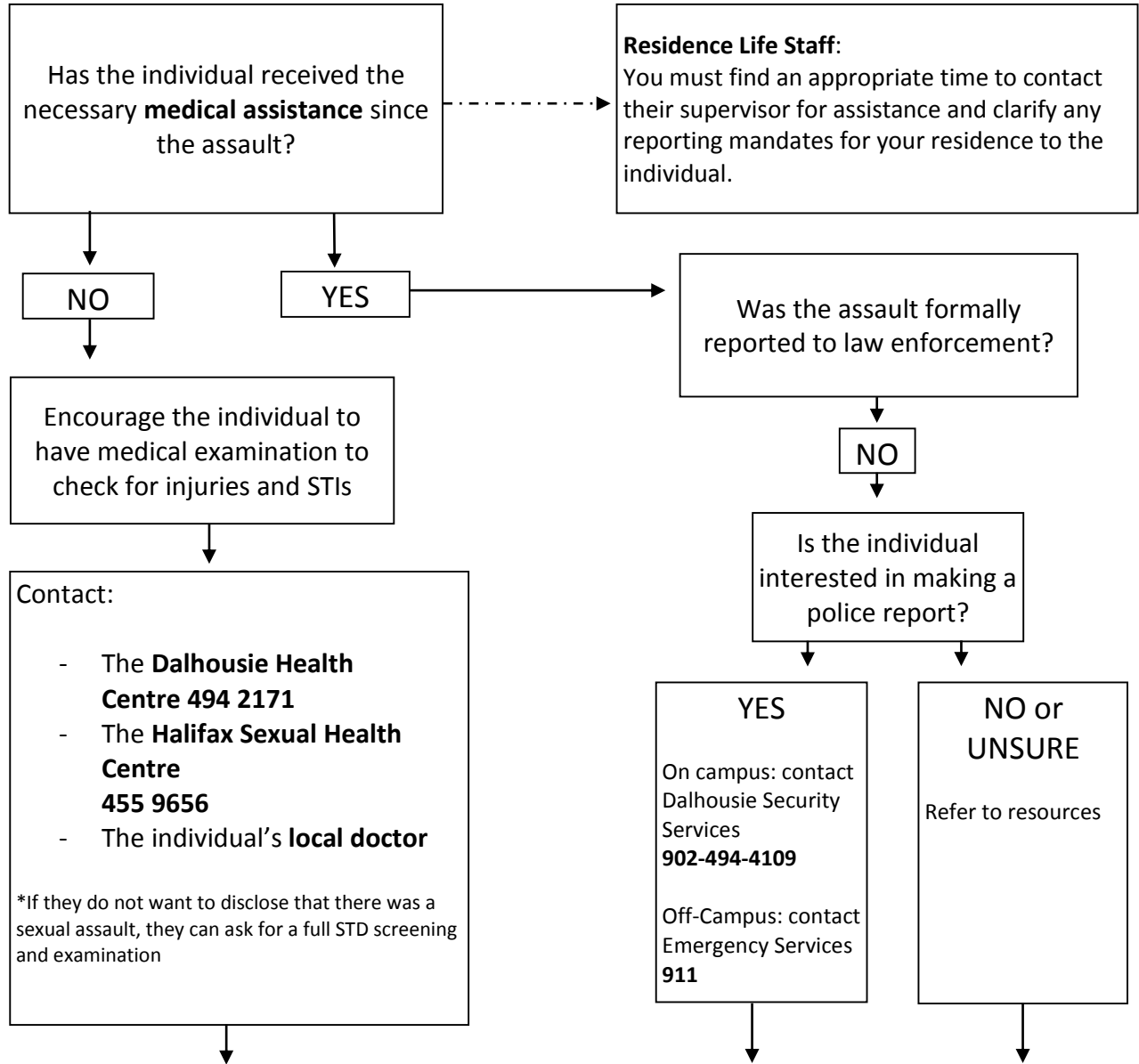
Additionally, there are limits to what can be held in confidence when defined as a threat of physical harm to another person or to one's self (Canadian Counselling Association: Code of Ethics).

- The individual is at imminent risk of harming her/himself
- The individual is at imminent risk of harming another person
- There is are reasonable grounds to believe that others in the Dalhousie community may be at imminent risk of harm based on information that an individual has provided

Part 2: Responding to Reports of Sexual Assault within 72 hours



Part 3: Responding to Reports of Sexual Assault after 72 hours



Refer the individual to the following resources:

Dalhousie Office of Human Rights, Equity, and Harassment Prevention – 494 6672
For support, resources, and advice
[Website](#)

Dalhousie Counselling Services – 494 2081
Free professional counselling services
[Website](#)

South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre – 494 2432
For support, resources and advice
[Website](#)

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre – 425 0122
Support, information, counselling for women identified persons only
[Website](#)

Mental Health Mobile Crisis – 429 8167
Provides intervention and short term crisis management for persons experiencing a mental health crisis

Part 4: Initial Points of Contact

The following table provides contact information agencies that may be contacted, should the individual reporting a sexualized assault decide that additional support and/or information is needed. These following services are Queer and Trans inclusive except for Avalon which only provides support to women identified persons.

For any individual who requires emergency medical attention contact **911** for emergency services.

Medical

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE).....	425-0122
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For immediate medical response to a sexual assault (all genders) • Collection of evidence if the assault occurred within the last 72 hours • Evidence collected can be frozen for 6 months pending a decision whether to proceed with a criminal charge • Testing and treatments for STIs as well as other medical care • Testing for pregnancy and provision of support and information about options • Treats physical and emotional needs resulting from the assault/abuse • Coordinated through Avalon Sexual Assault Centre 	
Dalhousie Health Services.....	494-2171
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a physician on call 24 hours a day • Routine medical exams and consultations • Emergency contraception (morning-after pill) • STI and pregnancy testing • Non-nominal (anonymous) HIV testing 	
Halifax Sexual Health Centre.....	455-9656
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administers STI testing and treatment • Provides Morning-After Pills, pregnancy testing, pregnancy options counselling, abortion counselling and referrals • Administers anonymous HIV testing 	

Counselling, Emotional Support and Information

Dalhousie Office of Human Rights, Equity, and Harassment Prevention.....	494-6672
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Monday to Friday: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm; call for an appointment • Provides advice on reporting options, internally and externally, as well as information referrals 	
Dalhousie Counselling and Psychological Services.....	494-2081
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Monday, Thursday, Friday: 9 am to 5 pm; Tuesday, Wednesday: 9 am to 8:30 pm; Saturday: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm; Sunday: closed • Provides free professional counselling for a wide range of concerns including sexual assault 	
Dalhousie South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre	494-2432

- Open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (September to May) and 10 am to 2 pm (May to August)
- This is not a crisis center but can inform people of their options in a private and safe environment.
- They offer support and solidarity and resources on what a person’s options are

Dalhousie Residence Life494-7077*

*calls will be referred to appropriate Residence Life Manager

- Open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:00 pm; call for appointment. In the event of emergency outside of office hours an RLM on call can be reached by calling any residence desk, or by contacting any Residence Life Staff member in the building.
- Provides non-judgmental support to residence students and advice on options for reporting and referrals
- Provides peer support
- Works with students to maximize personal safety in residence; including emergency safety options

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre.....425-0122

- Open Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm and 1:30 to 4:30 pm
- Provides support, information, options for help, advocacy and referrals, group counselling, escorts for women who wish to go to the hospital after an assault, and support during legal proceedings
- Arranges short-term individual counselling to women 16 years and older who have experienced sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse or sexual harassment

Mental Health Mobile Crisis.....429-8167

- Provides intervention and short term crisis management for children, youth and adults experiencing a mental health crisis
- Offer telephone intervention throughout the Capital District and mobile response in areas served by Halifax Regional Police including Halifax, Dartmouth and Bedford

Mental Health Services.....424-4232

- Services offered are emergency mental health services and crisis response; acute inpatient care; case management; psychosocial rehabilitation; clubhouse programs; employability and some housing supports; outpatient outreach services; and specialty services

Law Enforcement

Halifax Police, Fire, Ambulance - **911** – **Call if individual needs immediate emergency care**

Halifax Regional Police Department (non-emergency).....490-5020

- Can be called if the individual wants to make a formal report of the crime and begin an investigation into the crime by the Halifax Police.

*if the incident occurred in a city other than the HRM, it is best to contact the law enforcement agency in the city where the incident occurred.

Dalhousie Security Services.....494-4109 (Emergency); 494 6400 (General)

- Provides confidential on-campus security and reporting procedures. Can assist with police reporting options.

Section II: Definition of Terms

Sexual Assault:

Any form of sexual activity that has been forced by one person upon another. Without consent, it is sexual assault. Sexual assault can happen between people of the same or opposite sex. It includes any unwanted act of a sexual nature such as kissing, fondling, oral sex, intercourse or other forms of penetration, either vaginal or anal.

Consent:

Under Canada's *Criminal Code*, consent is defined as a voluntary agreement of the complainant to engage in the sexual activity in question (Section 273.1).

CONSENT is when:

- The individuals have indicated that they are interested in having sex.
- Everybody involved is clearly capable of making an informed decision of their own free will.

There is NO CONSENT when:

- Your acquaintance/friend/date/partner is passed out (or asleep) or is incoherent, staggering, or not aware of his/her environment.
- Consent/permission has been given on behalf of another person.
- Sexual contact would be an abuse of power, trust, or authority.
- You think you have consent because they are not resisting. Apparent compliance can come from fear or an inability to verbalize or fight back due to intoxication from alcohol and/or drugs.
- You don't think the person would agree to sex if they were sober.
- You and your acquaintance/friend/date/partner have never talked about having sex together before now - when you are intoxicated - and you don't know what the person would want.
- Your acquaintance/friend/date/partner has indicated (verbally or non-verbally) that they are not interested.
- Even though you and the person have had sex before, they said that they weren't interested tonight.
- Someone has stated what they are comfortable with, but when they are intoxicated to the point where they are unable to articulate permission, you go farther than they agreed to.
- You are not sure.

Coercion:

Using pressure, threats and/or intimidation to force another to engage in sexual activity. Some examples of coercion are:

- Constantly putting pressure on someone or refusing to take no for an answer
Making someone feel guilty ("If you love me, you'll...")
- Threatening to withhold something or do something to make someone comply ("I'll breakup with you...", "I'll tell everyone you...")
- Being emotionally manipulative ("I can't live without you...", threatening to harm one's self)
- Using physical or verbal intimidation to force someone into submitting or complying (not allowing someone to leave, previous or implied threats of violence)

Sexualized Violence:

An act of violence, and aggression characterized by an attempt to threaten, intimidate, coerce or engage in any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, which involves a violation of one's sexual integrity. Examples include, but are not limited to, creating and/or sharing images non-consensually, sexual harassment, stalking or voyeurism. Sexual violence includes, but is not limited to sexual assault and other sexual offences included in the Criminal Code of Canada.

Rape Culture:

Is a culture in which rape and other forms of sexualized harassment/violence is prevalent and in which violence against women is normalized and excused in popular culture, the media, society, and laws. Rape culture is validated and perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language, the objectification of women's bodies, and the glamorization and minimization of sexualized violence, thereby creating a society that is desensitized to sexualized violence and that disregards women's rights and safety. Within rape culture masculinity is a set of learned cultural characteristics, values, and behaviours that contribute to a culture where using sexual force over women is permissible and often expected and rewarded. Victims of rape and assault are blamed and made to feel embarrassed, ashamed and guilty about the violence perpetrated against them (victim blaming). Social forces like these lead to low reporting and conviction rates.

Sexual Integrity:

Sexual integrity refers to the inviolable nature of a person's sexuality which can be compromised by sexualized violence. It does not, in any way, make reference to the morality of a person.

Sources

Sexual Assault Response Protocol: University of California, Irvine
Prepared by UCI Campus Assault Resources and Education (CARE), 2012
<http://www.care.uci.edu/files/UCISexualAssaultProtocol1.pdf>

Sexual Assault Response
St. Francis Xavier University, 2012
https://sites.stfx.ca/health_centre/sites/sites.stfx.ca.health_centre/files/Sexual%20Assault%20Response.pdf

Sexual Assault Policy and Procedures
Saint Mary's University, 2008
<http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/6-2003SexualAssault.pdf>

Sexual Assault Emergency Response Protocol
Sarnia-Lambton
<http://www.sexualassaultsarnia.on.ca/EmergencyResponseProtocol2006.pdf>

Sexual Assault Response Protocol Guidelines
Ontario Association of College & University Housing Officers
http://oacuho.com/files/Sexual_Assault_Response_Best_Practice_102610.pdf