

PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

Collecting and preserving evidence is important even if you choose not to report the incident(s) at this time. Saving text messages, photos, clothing, and emails can help if you decide to make a report to the University or to a law enforcement agency at a later time.

In the event of sexual violence, you may want to preserve any DNA evidence left on your clothing or body. If you do choose to go to the hospital for an exam and to have evidence collected, avoid showering, brushing your teeth, or going to the bathroom until you've gone to the hospital.

Recording and logging information such as dates and times of incidents can also help you create a safety plan should you sense the conduct will happen again. As you document each incident, you may find there are patterns or events associated with the conduct. It may be helpful to keep a notebook or journal on hand but you may want to find a safe space in which to store it. Taking screenshots on your phone or photographs can provide a time stamp for many forms of unwanted contact, attention, or conduct.

Browse the titles below to learn ways you can preserve evidence, regardless of your decision to report the incident(s).

Discrimination

It is important to document the discrimination as best you can. The following examples can help anyone you choose to report the incident to provide support and appropriate follow-up action.

- Record names of people who are involved or who have witnessed the conduct
- Keep a record of dates, times, and location of the incidents
- Keep a record of the unwanted behaviors and contact you are experiencing
- Save any relevant emails, text messages, voicemail messages, social media contact (including friend requests), letters, and notes
- Document any adverse actions taken against you
- Document the impact of the discrimination (e.g., how are you feeling, how is the behavior impacting your work)
- Keep copies of any performance evaluations or reviews you have received
- Document the steps you took to address the incident(s) including the people you've spoken with

Harassment

Harassment is a type of discrimination that occurs when verbal, physical, electronic or other conduct is based on an individual's protected status and creates a hostile environment or a form of harassment referred to as "quid pro quo."

- Record names of people who are involved or who have witnessed the conduct
- Keep a record of dates, times, and location of the incidents
- Keep a record of the unwanted behaviors and contact you are experiencing
- Save any relevant emails, text messages, voicemail messages, social media contacts (including friend requests), letters and notes
- Save copies of any form of communication or messaging that you may have sent to the aggressor

- Document how the conduct made you feel (e.g. scared, unsafe, threatened)
- Document any adverse actions that were taken against you; keep copies of any performance evaluations or reviews you received
- Save any related medical bills or police reports

Stalking

Preserving evidence is important in situations involving stalking behavior. Stalking is repeated, unwanted attention significantly serious to cause fear or to create a hostile, intimidating, or abusive environment. Considering this, any evidence associated with the unwanted attention should be preserved.

- When the harasser follows you or contacts you, write down the time, date, and location
- Keep all forms of communication and documentation including text messages, emails, letters, notes, receipts, and social media contact
- Save voicemail messages on your phone and do not delete your phone's call log
- Keep a record of dates, times, and locations in which the activities or conduct occurred
- Photograph any activities or contact that you can; if you receive gifts or notes, if there is damage done to anything you own, take photographs and save the pictures in a safe place
- Document how the conduct made you feel (e.g. scared, threatened, unsafe) and include any context that may provide additional clarification
- Save copies of any form of communication or messaging you may have sent to the harasser
- Click here to download a stalking incident and behavior log (http://www.victimsofcrime.org/docs/src/stalking-incident-log_pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=4)

Interpersonal Violence

Interpersonal violence encompasses a broad range of abusive behaviors committed by a person who is or has been a romantic or intimate partner, a spouse or partner of the same or different sex, a family member, or a cohabitant, roommate, or household member. The range of abusive behavior can include physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions. Collecting this information can help anyone you choose to report the incidents to provide support, safety plan, and take appropriate follow-up action.

- Log times, dates, and locations of abusive incidents and any witnesses who were present
- Save copies of medical records, hospital visits, police reports, and protection orders
- Keep records all forms of communication with the aggressor including but not limited to: text messages, social media contact, emails, letters, handwritten notes, and voicemail messages
- Save copies of any relevant phone records, credit card statements, account information, and receipts
- Photograph and save pictures of any physical injuries such as bruising or scratches

- Save pictures of any damage done to your physical property such as furniture or a vehicle
- Document any contact the person the accused has with people you are close to (this third-party contact might be one way the person is trying to contact you)

Sexual Violence

Everyone responds to sexual violence in different physical and emotional ways and it's hard to know what to do, how to feel, or where to go after it happens. If you are in immediate danger or seriously injured, call 911. Your safety is important.

Going to the hospital or Campus Health Services does not mean you have to talk to law enforcement. You will be given the option to have evidence collected by a specially-trained nurse depending on how much time has passed since the incident. Forensic exams and evidence collection services can be obtained up to 5 days after an assault. You can still receive other medical services, testing, and care regardless of the amount of time that has passed.

- Before you go to the hospital: avoid taking a shower, bathing, go to the bathroom, brushing your teeth, changing clothes, or combing your hair
- If you do go to the bathroom, save the toilet paper you use in a paper bag and bring it with you to the hospital
- If you do change your clothes, bring the clothing you were wearing during the incident with you to the hospital
- Do not clean up the location where the incident occurred or move anything the aggressor may have touched
- Photograph and save pictures of any physical signs of the incident such as bruising damage to physical property
- Save copies of any communication you received from the aggressor including, but not limited to, text messages, social media contact, emails, letters, and notes
- Save any receipts that may show times or locations in which the aggressor was present
- Document any interactions you have had with the aggressor before the incident(s)
- Save voicemail messages on your phone and do not delete your phone's call log
- Keep copies of any medical records, bills, or police reports associated with the incident(s)