



University Counselling Service

Sexual assault and rape

Introduction

Many personal decisions are made and problems solved through discussions with friends or family, a College Tutor or Director of Studies, a Nurse, Chaplain, colleague, line manager or a GP. However, at times it is right to seek help away from one's familiar daily environment. The University Counselling Service exists to meet such a need. Seeking counselling is about making a positive choice to get help by talking confidentially with a professionally trained listener who has no other role in your life.

Who are the Counsellors?

The Service is staffed by a team of trained and accredited counsellors and therapists. The counsellors are all experienced in helping people from many different backgrounds and cultures, and with a wide range of personal and work issues.

Some of the counsellors who work in the Service are Associates, in the late stages of their counselling training. Their work is carefully supervised within the Service. Please let us know if you would prefer not to be seen by an Associate.

Contact us

University Counselling Service
Student Services Centre
Bene't Street
Cambridge
CB2 3PT

Tel: 01223 332865

Email: counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk

Web: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk

Sexual assault and rape

You might be reading this because you have experienced a sexual assault, rape, sexual abuse or another form of sexual violence. If so, you may have mixed feelings about what happened, and whether you want to tell anyone, including the people closest to you. Some people are very certain that they want to report what has happened, while others may be less sure. Decisions can also change over time so confusion about reporting is not unusual.

How should I feel?

No two experiences are the same. It is not unusual to experience a delay in emotional response to what has happened, or for emotions to change, sometimes quite frequently. If you have been subjected to a sexual assault you may feel:

numb	confused
afraid	angry
guilty	ashamed
depressed	powerless
lacking confidence	

It can feel destabilising and any part of your life can be affected. Your eating and sleeping patterns can be disturbed; it can be hard for you to concentrate, affecting your ability to do your academic work. As sexual violence is inter-personal it is not unusual for it to have an effect on your relationships with others. Not everyone will experience all these feelings, or to the same degree, and there is no right or wrong to how you feel.

Whatever you feel about what has happened to you, it is important for you to know that if you have been subjected to rape or sexual assault it is not your fault.

What to do after a rape or sexual assault

If you have experienced sexual harassment and/or sexual violence, there is support available from University of Cambridge and other organisations.

The University document 'Rape & Sexual Assault: Information for students' https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/sexual_assault_disclosure_students_2017.pdf has specific guidance for students who have been raped or sexually assaulted, including information on things you might want to consider to help you make an informed choice about what to do. It covers issues such as being in a safe environment; time limits that apply for gathering forensic evidence, testing if drugs have been given, emergency contraception or anti-HIV medication; police procedures; and where to find support, both within the University and the wider community.

Reporting what has happened

If you want to report an incident immediately, particularly if the incident has just taken place or you are in danger, call 999. Alternatively, you can call Cambridgeshire Constabulary on 101. It's possible to ask to speak directly to the Rape Investigation

Team, but it may take longer to speak with them. The operator will be able to advise you who is available at the time. The Police's priority is safeguarding and this will determine what action they take.

Another option, particularly if you are unsure whether you want to report the incident to the Police but would like to retain this possibility, is to go to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Huntingdon (details below). It may be possible to arrange for a taxi to be paid for you by your college. Staff at the SARC, known as The Elms, will be able to talk through different options with you and can store forensic evidence until you make up your mind about reporting. Should you choose to do so, they, or you, can make a report anonymously.

Whether you choose to report to the Police or attend the SARC, you might want to go with a friend or family member as it can be a lengthy and difficult process.

Sexual assault & harassment advisor

The Sexual Assault & Harassment Advisor (SAHA), based in the University Counselling Service, is able to provide emotional and practical support to anyone who has been raped, sexually assaulted, or harassed, whether recently or in the past. They are able to help you explore reporting options and can support you through the process itself, if you decide to report an incident. Help can also be provided to access other available support services.

If you are unsure whether something that has happened might be sexual assault or harassment, you are welcome to access the service to explore this with the SAHA.

You can arrange an appointment to meet with the SAHA by completing a pre-SAHA form: <https://forms.counselling.cam.ac.uk/titanium/wcmenu.aspx> or

can contact the SAHA by email: sexual.assault.advisor@admin.cam.ac.uk

Some facts

Many believe that there is a greater risk of sexual violence from a stranger but, in fact, the vast majority of sexual assaults are committed by someone the person knows.

Unwanted sexual attention amongst the student population is not uncommon. Sexual violence affects students from all backgrounds, sexualities and gender identities. A YouthSight survey ⁽¹⁾ conducted in 2015 found that 1 in 3 female students had experienced some form of sexual assault or abuse, with 1 in 20 having experienced unwanted and inappropriate touching or groping, or feeling pressurised into sexual activity. The survey also found that 1 in 8 male students reported groping or unwanted sexual advances.

⁽¹⁾ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11343380/Sexually-assault-1-in-3-UK-female-students-victim-on-campus.html> - 14 January 2015

The University is dedicated to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming, inclusive and diverse community that nurtures a culture of mutual respect and consideration. Behaviour that amounts to harassment or sexual misconduct is not tolerated within the University community. The University launched Breaking the Silence, a zero tolerance campaign around sexual misconduct, in 2017. Much information can be found on its website: www.breakingthesilence.cam.ac.uk/. There are also student-led campaigns regarding consent, including CUSU-run workshops in colleges and CUSU's women's campaign, Cambridge for Consent: www.cambridgeforconsent.com/

Further support

You don't need to be alone with your feelings and it is important for you to have support and understanding. There are a number of agencies that are able to help you, including:

- The University Counselling Service: <https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/>

- Nightline: <http://cambridge.nightline.ac.uk>

Tel: 01223 744444 or 01223 367575
(7.00 pm – 7.00 am during full term)
- Cambridge Rape Crisis: <http://cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk/>

Tel: 01223 313551,
Helpline: 01223 245888, Thurs 7.00 - 9.30 pm, Sat 3.00 - 5.30 pm, Sun 10.00 am - 12.30 pm (times may change) email: support@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk
- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/>
- Survivors UK (for men): <https://www.survivorsuk.org/>
- Cambridgeshire Sexual Assault Referral Centre (Huntingdon): <https://www.theelmssarc.org/>

Tel: 0800 193 5434 (24 hour helpline)

Available Self Help Leaflets 2021-2022

Anger Management
Anxiety and Panic
Asserting Yourself
Concentration - a CBT guide
Coping with Exams
Depression
Eating Disorders
Effective Communication and Managing Conflict
General Information for Students
General Information for Tutors
Grief and Bereavement
Homesickness
How to be Mindful
Insomnia
Intermitting
Loneliness
Managing Alcohol Consumption
Parental Separation and Divorce
Perfectionism - a CBT approach
Phobias - a CBT approach
Post-Traumatic Stress
Procrastination
Self-Esteem
Self-Harm
Sexual Assault and Harassment Advisor
Sexual Assault and Rape
Simple Relaxation
Transition to University
What Is Mindfulness
Worry - a CBT Approach

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