What To Do First

If I am a survivor of sexual assault, who can I turn to for help?

The first priority is your safety and well-being. Contact Public Safety immediately at (203) 254-4090. Find a safe place and ask a trusted individual to stay with you. Preserve evidence; don’t shower or brush your teeth and place your clothes in a plastic bag.

If you would like to explore options and receive additional support, Public Safety, as a first responder, will put you in contact with a variety of resources, including our Title IX Compliance Coordinator/Deputy Investigator, Counseling, and/or health care services.

If I am a survivor of a sexual assault, can I call the police?

Yes. Depending on where your assault occurred, you can call the Fairfield Police or State Police (see phone numbers on the back panel). If you were assaulted in another town, or are unsure as to where you were assaulted, Public Safety can help you get in contact with the appropriate agency for support.

If I report an incident to University Public Safety, will the Fairfield Police be notified?

Yes. You can then decide whether to proceed with a complaint or an investigation. Further, Public Safety will notify the Title IX Compliance Coordinator/Deputy Investigator of the reported incident.

What will the Title IX Compliance Coordinator/Deputy Investigator do?

The Title IX Compliance Coordinator/Deputy Investigator will contact you to explain options and resources available on and off campus. Further, the Title IX Compliance Coordinator/Investigator will assist with filing a Title IX Sexual Misconduct Complaint.

Resources

On Campus
- Public Safety (203) 254-4090
- Title IX Sexual Assault Compliance Coordinator (203) 254-4000, ext. 2704
- Title IX Sexual Assault Deputy Investigator (203) 254-4000, ext. 2890
- Office of the Dean of Students (203) 254-4211
- Campus Ministry (203) 254-4000, ext. 3405
- Counseling & Psychological Services (203) 254-4000, ext. 2146
- Student Health Center (203) 254-4000, ext. 2241
- Residence Life (203) 254-4215

Off Campus
- Bridgeport Hospital (203) 384-3566
- Bridgeport Rape Crisis Center Hotline (203) 333-2233
- Center for Women and Families (203) 334-6154
- Connecticut Office of the Victim Advocate (860) 550-6632
- Connecticut State Police (860) 685-8190
- Fairfield Police Department 911 or (203) 254-4800

It is estimated that 1 in 4 women will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Males are the least likely to report a sexual assault, though they make up about 10% of all victims.

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Do I have to press charges?

No. The decision to press charges is entirely up to you. There are three scenarios in which an officer must pursue charges: The first scenario is if the assault occurs against a person under the age of 16. The second scenario is if the assault occurs between two people living together, have a child in common, or are married. The third scenario is if an assault occurs against a person who is in a dating relationship with the accused.

Can I withdraw a complaint after I have made one?

Yes. You have the authority to withdraw a complaint at any time. If an arrest has already occurred, this request would have to be made through the court. Fairfield Police can assist you with that.

Can I press charges after I have indicated that I don’t want to pursue them?

Yes. You can request charges, even if you have previously indicated that you do not want the police involved or if you have told officers you don’t want an arrest. Keep in mind that if there was evidence that would have helped prove the case, that evidence may no longer be available. Fairfield Police will do everything in their power to collect any remaining evidence and conduct a comprehensive investigation. It is recommended that, if you are unsure if you wish police action, that you contact Public Safety or Fairfield Police for documentation only. The officers at that time can discuss with you any evidence that would be of value. This evidence could be collected at that time for preservation. If you later decide to withdraw the complaint, your property will be returned to you.

Do I have to go to the hospital?

No. The decision to go to the hospital is entirely yours. The benefits of going to the hospital, however, should be considered. At the hospital you will be able to receive medical care and advice and be informed of the medication and treatment options available to you. Counseling services will be provided to you and you may choose to have a sexual assault examination. This examination will attempt to collect any evidence such as hair, skin cells, blood or fluids that may remain on your body and which may assist in the identification or conviction of a suspect. It will be performed by a trained doctor or Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE).

This process is an important step in the investigation and should be considered if you wish to pursue an arrest or if you are uncertain. This evidence will be preserved at the Fairfield Police Department until you have reached a decision. Fairfield University will pay for your cab ride to and from the hospital if you do not have a car.

If you choose not to be seen at the hospital, the Student Health Center can provide you with a gynecological examination and information about medication and treatment options. Additionally, counseling services are available through Fairfield University’s Counseling & Psychological Services at any time.

Does the examination cost anything?

No. Any expenses incurred as a result of the sexual assault examination kit are paid for by the State of Connecticut. There may be a charge to your insurance provider for treatment of any injuries.

Will my name be in the paper or news?

No. Federal and state laws protect the identity of survivors of sexual assault. Your name will not be released to the media.

What if I was assaulted days ago and didn’t tell anyone?

You can report the assault at any time to Public Safety and/or the Fairfield Police.

What if I suspect a “date rape” drug was used?

Tests are available at the hospital that can detect the presence of date rape drugs in your blood and urine. Although these drugs leave your body quickly, tests can detect the drugs as far as 72 hours after they are ingested.

What will happen at court?

If an arrest is made, which means that “probable cause” was established to prove the incident happened in the manner you have reported, a prosecutor will be assigned the case. You will work directly with the court in terms of scheduling and progress of your court case, which is separate from the student conduct process at Fairfield University.

What if I want to talk to someone at the Police Department unofficially?

Feel free to call the Fairfield Police Department Detective Bureau at (203) 254-4840. All of the detectives are specially trained in sexual assault investigations. If you are more comfortable speaking to a female detective, there are currently several female detectives who can assist you.

As a complainant, what else can I expect?

A full description of the University’s policies and processes for dealing with sexual assault and sexual misconduct can be found in the Student Handbook: www.fairfield.edu/studenthandbook.

While not a complete list, the following is offered as a highlighted list of what a complainant can expect:

• All instances of sexual misconduct will be treated seriously and complainants will be treated with dignity and respect. Reporting options and resources for support will be offered to complainants.

• When complainants report and choose to pursue action against alleged assailants, acts of sexual assault/misconduct will be investigated and adjudicated by appropriate criminal and/or University authorities.

• A complainant who has filed a complaint of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense within the meaning of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the respondent, will be notified of the outcome of related University discipline proceedings. The complainant and the respondent must respect the privacy of all involved.

• If reasonably available, complainants will be afforded the opportunity to request immediate on-campus housing relocation, transfer of classes, or other steps to prevent unnecessary or unwanted contact or proximity to an alleged assailant. The provision of such accommodations does not constitute a determination of responsibility, but rather is offered to assist the complainant.

How do you help a friend who is a survivor of a sexual assault?

If your friend shares with you that they have survived a sexual assault, it’s important to keep this information private and refer them to get help immediately. You can ask trained Resident Assistants to assist you with the referral process. They can help you talk to your friend about all of the options and resources available, both at Fairfield University and in the greater community.