



# Protocol Guide for Coordinated Community Response Teams

National Organization for Victim Advocacy (NOVA)  
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## Introduction To This Guide

Campus Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Teams are designed to help campuses establish goals, evaluate response, and envision effective ways to address domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking (DVSAS). Any CCR Team member can use this guide as a step-by-step tool in either creating or assessing their campus DVSAS protocols.

This document uses the terms *victim* and *survivor* interchangeably to respect the different ways individuals self-identify and to acknowledge the complexity of personal experiences.

### What is a Protocol?

Broadly, a protocol is a departmental action plan for employees to respond to a situation. This guide will focus on response to a disclosed incident of DVSAS, but protocols exist on campuses for a multitude of reasons. There are many different varieties of protocols which may be public or kept internal within a department, such as law enforcement/campus safety or the health center. Protocols can either be a component of a larger policy or exist as a stand alone. One way to differentiate between policies and protocols is that protocols are often easier to change than policies. Policies set the bar for an institution, whereas protocols set out specific steps for each department to accomplish their role. There is often a rigorous stakeholder process required to modify policies, while protocols may be simpler to amend. Campuses are encouraged to work with their general legal counsel and other administrators to ensure any protocol meets state and federal law requirements. Given that almost every department will be impacted by DVSAS, assessing protocols is an integral tool in maintaining a consistent and coordinated response.

The CCR Team should assess the DVSAS protocols of CCR Team members including Residence Life, Title IX/Conduct, Campus Law Enforcement/Safety, Health Center, Campus Counseling, and Campus Advocacy/Victim Services. However, casting a wider net of protocol assessment could include a range of departments beyond those primarily considered “DVSAS Responders.” Students who interface with these departments may not initially present themselves as DVSAS victims, but these harms may eventually surface as the root of their conflict.



Departments who interface less with survivors may not have considered how to handle a DVSA disclosure, including whether the information provided is accurate and trauma-informed, or when to contact other departments. These departments could include International Student Services, Athletics, Financial Aid, Multicultural Student Services, Veteran's Services, Disability/Accessibility Services, Academic Affairs/Dean's Offices, Academic Advising Staff, Student Engagement/Student Life, Faculty Advisors, and Behavioral Intervention Teams/Students of Concern Committees.

Community providers, such as local law enforcement and community victim service providers, play a crucial role in protocol assessment. Involving them ensures that campus and community protocols are aligned, facilitating a smooth transition between service and options available on campus and in the community.

## Why Assess and/or Develop Institutional DVSA Protocols?

There are many reasons to invest in protocol review and development. The following examples highlight the critical importance of regularly reviewing and strengthening protocols.

- **No "wrong door."** By aligning all protocols, no matter where a victim of DVSA goes for support or help, they will receive accurate and consistent information. Other departments may have outdated contact information; may not be aware of changes in the law or policy; and/or may not fully understand how a newly formed position/responsibilities impact the way parties are accessing the services they need and the administrators they contact, all of which may hinder survivor support and response.
- **Shared protocols can deepen relationships and build understanding.** If protocols are not shared with other departments, administrators may not understand the reasons behind specific actions. Assessing within a CCR Team allows for conversation without the urgency of an immediate "case," giving members an opportunity to be informed of the "why" behind certain actions without the pressure to answer for an on-going incident.
- **Protocols may need updating.** There are always changes to consider when there are new institutional leaders, state or federal law changes, campus policy changes, or best practice shifts.

## PROTOCOLS FOR STUDENT COMMUNITIES

Openly evaluating protocols can improve responses with different populations on your campus. Consider maintaining multiple points of entry for student communities to ensure services are fully accessible, such as cross-referrals between departments (e.g., victim advocacy, disability services, law enforcement/campus safety, and student unions).

### Ground Rules for Protocol Assessment

As with any work done by the CCR Team, it is important to ensure any foundational principles are clear before the process begins.

Remind members of the CCR Team what values were created at the inception of the team. All feedback should be constructive and solution-oriented. Each member's comments must be treated with respect, members may not speak over each other, and everyone should be open to new perspectives that may not reflect their own experiences or opinions.

Departments who have internal protocols that are not publicly published may have some concerns about sharing protocols with a wider audience. Before starting, establish agreements about how the initial protocol information will be shared, such as limiting the distribution to only CCR Team members. The objective is to create a safe space for professionals to discuss the internal perspective of the steps within the protocol. Remind members who may be reluctant to share their protocols that it can help prevent un-informed critique after a DVSAS incident because members are aware of the rationale behind it.

Each department should be allowed to present their protocol to the group. This allows each department an opportunity to highlight specific professional requirements and standards that are incorporated into the protocols that other members may be unaware of.

As the CCR Team works through each protocol, it can be an opportunity for members to ask questions, provide feedback, and deepen understanding of the response process itself. Teams should set this expectation early on, so departments are aware that comments could range from protocol specifics to the nature of the response. Remember that this is an opportunity for growth as well as constructive criticism! Members may highlight new services that could be offered, streamlining or sharing responsibilities, or how to better coordinate between campus departments and community victim service providers. There could be feedback from populations on campus that departments had not heard from before or simple changes that could make a significant impact on improving access to services.



## REALISTIC TIMELINES

Establish realistic expectations about the timeline. Typically, protocol evaluation can take up to a year or more! Assure members that each process will be given plenty of time for discussion and exploration.

## Areas for Protocol Evaluation

While every department has their own responsibilities, a CCR Team evaluation should create a few consistent elements within each DVSAS protocol. Areas for protocol evaluation could include expectations for:

- Assessing medical needs and safety risk;
- Explaining confidentiality and reporting responsibilities to survivors; and
- Collaborating with victim service advocates to ensure continuity of care across campus and community partners.

It is recommended that DVSAS protocols be created to address specific actions. For example, a **DVSAS Victim Services Protocol** may detail how to coordinate with on- and off-campus victim service providers or, a **DVSAS Report and Response Protocol** may describe the steps the department takes when someone discloses to an employee.

### Medical Needs and Safety Risk

Protocols could potentially address if an administrator should ask about the survivor's medical needs or imminent safety threats. While some departments would not be expected to assess safety risk, making everyone aware of the potential need will ensure administrators are mindful of the bigger picture for survivors.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Inviting local law enforcement and community providers to your CCR Team will not only create a relationship but allow providers to give the campus realistic expectations for how to help a survivor access services. For instance, there may be a specific campus liaison to contact versus calling a 24-hour hotline.

## Privacy Requirements and Confidential Options


Clearly detailing what the survivor can expect regarding privacy is one of the most important aspects of responding to a disclosure. Protocols should clarify who, if anyone, within the department has confidentiality or privilege. They should also specify who is required to report DVSAS disclosures to other campus administrators like the Title IX Coordinator, Clery Act Officer/Coordinator or a supervisor. Additionally, the protocol should detail what information will be shared and with whom. Protocols should clearly state that administrators must explain their confidentiality requirements as soon as possible in the conversation – preferably before any details of the DVSAS incident are shared.

**Example application:** A protocol could require an administrator to state their confidentiality requirements before taking any action for the campus community member. This serves as a reminder for employees to disclose their responsibilities before obtaining any specific information from the campus community member.

## Victim Services

Understanding when to involve a victim services advocate is another element that enhances consistency and understanding between departments, and better coordination of services for the victim. Departments should determine the appropriate time to notify the advocate - either on-campus victim advocates or off-campus community providers - of a potential need for services. It is vital to consider who will be responsible for making the call to the advocate, as this helps ensure the survivor receives a supportive and smooth transition to advocacy services.

**Example application:** A supportive and smooth transition could include an offer to make a phone call immediately to check if an advocate is available to speak with a survivor or walk with the survivor to meet with the advocate.



Confidential





## TESTIMONIAL FROM A CAMPUS CCR TEAM

"Recomiendo que...las universidades a siempre partir desde la autodeterminación de las sobrevivientes de DVSAS en el proceso de obtener servicios. En nuestro campus, desde el CCRT elaboramos un diagrama o infografía...que incluye todos los recursos en el recinto y en la comunidad; pero antes de iniciar parte de la premisa de qué quiere hacer la persona sobreviviente en ese momento. ¿Quiere hacer una querella? ¿Necesita servicios de acompañamiento? ¿Quiere ver opciones de albergue? Siempre dejando saber que si no es el momento en su proceso de buscar algún tipo de ayuda, estarán disponibles estos servicios cuando la persona esté lista para hacerlo."

"I recommend that...[universities] always begin from the standpoint of the survivor's self-determination in the process of obtaining services for DVSAS. On our campus, our CCR Team developed a diagram or infographic...that includes all the resources available on campus and in the community. But before anything else, it starts with the question: What does the survivor want to do at that moment? Do they want to file a report? Do they need accompaniment services? Do they want to explore shelter options? It's always made clear that if it's not the right time in their process to seek any type of help, these services will still be available when they are ready."

**Jennifer Oliveras Del Río, Universidad de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras,**  
NOVA Campus CCR Advisory Committee

## Communication of Rights and Policies

Any time a DVSAS survivor interacts with a campus resource, there is no certainty that they will be informed about all available services and support on and off campus. Establishing clear protocols can help ensure that students, staff, and faculty receive timely information on how to access resources online or whom to contact with questions or for support. Many different states have enacted campus victim rights laws specifying what information must be communicated to survivors. Establishing clear protocols can clarify who is sharing specific information, preventing every administrator from overwhelming the survivor. Protocols ensure that each department is clear about what information should be shared during their interaction. Each department that interacts with survivors should include in their protocol a reminder of what rights and responsibilities must be communicated by the assigned personnel.

### Example applications:

- The employee alerts the survivor that another person will reach out with information.
- Campus safety personnel discreetly give a small card with online rights and resources to a survivor.
- Residence life staff informs students that the information will need to be reported to a supervisor and the Title IX office, but the conversation will not be shared with anyone else.

## PRIVILEGE, CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Protocols are a good way to remind employees of the differences between privileged, confidential, and private communications. Each department should clearly state what privacy category their employees have and encourage them to inform students so they can make informed decisions.

## Delineating When Employees Must Elevate a Disclosure

For departments with multiple tiers of decision-making, protocols are a good way to delineate when a DVSAS disclosure must be communicated to a supervisor or other decision-makers. For instance, Resident Advisors often receive many DVSAS disclosures, but are not provided with as much in-depth training as Resident Directors, making the Director a pivotal person to be involved early in a DVSAS disclosure process. Protocols can create specific indicators to ensure employees know the appropriate time to contact their supervisors. One of the benefits of involving a supervisor is that they can reduce the individual's feeling of needing to handle the disclosure on their own. This also provides an opportunity for employees to debrief their response to the disclosure with their supervisor.

## Determining Future Protocol Assessment

CCR Teams should maintain a list of DVSAS policies and protocols and establish a plan for future evaluation. Teams could decide on a specific schedule for reassessment or when certain events make a new assessment necessary, such as changes in state or federal laws, personnel changes, elimination of a position, or a change in leadership that fundamentally changes the CCR Team direction. Any protocol assessment is also an opportunity to review and elevate language accessibility and identify translation needs.

In addition, for protocols to be effective they must use clear and simple language instead of technical or legal terms. Using plain language improves understanding for staff whose primary area of expertise is not DVSAS.



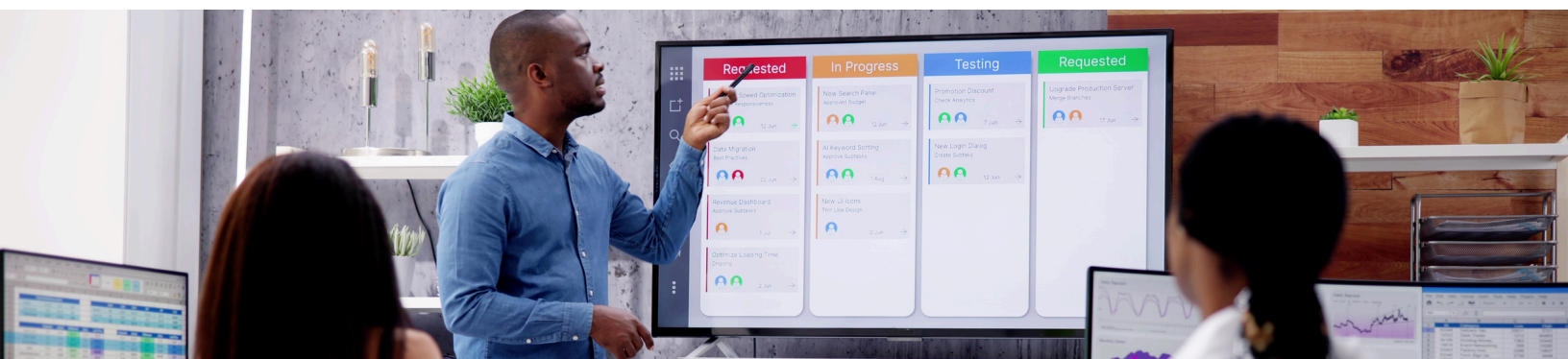
# Training and Communicating Shared Protocols

After a lengthy assessment process, it is recommended that CCR Teams determine if training is necessary. Protocol training events can increase trust among various campus departments and survivors. These trainings can also offer an opportunity for departments to align their objectives through clear and consistent messaging, which can reduce duplication, confusion, or unintentional breaches of confidentiality. For larger departments or those with more detailed protocols, additional training may be required to ensure employees are informed and up to date with evolving legal standards.

CCR Teams should evaluate who will be responsible for designing and delivering the training, focusing on efficiency and consistency in messaging. Instead of assigning a separate trainer to each department, it may prove to be more effective to have a single trainer visit all departments. This trainer can provide a comprehensive explanation of the CCR Team assessment process and highlight the important updates to each department's protocols. The training frequency should consider the turnover rate within departments and include regular refreshers to ensure everyone remains aware of the process.

## Example applications:

- Annual cross-training for all CCR members, with scenario-based practice and role playing.
- Debrief sessions after complex cases to refine protocols.
- Accessible protocol repository (secure online portal) so team members can reference procedures at any time.







## TESTIMONIAL FROM A CAMPUS CCR TEAM

"We train all of our newly hired staff and faculty regarding protocols but also use it as an opportunity to discuss the things that the protocol doesn't address (e.g., giving the survivor choice, making sure the conversation is had in an appropriate place, not making promises we can't keep, affirming statements, trauma-informed practices, answering questions). This has allowed our staff to build their self-efficacy around disclosures and decrease the risk of re-traumatization."

**Emily Pike, Niagara University**  
NOVA Campus CCR Advisory Committee

## Additional Resources

In the Appendix that follows, you will find sample campus protocols, flowcharts, agendas for CCR Team meetings and training, and even more resources.

## Contact Us

[www.trynova.org](http://www.trynova.org) | [campusTA@trynova.org](mailto:campusTA@trynova.org)





# Appendix

## Sample Protocols

City University of New York (CUNY). (2025). [CUNY Protocol Guidelines for Residence Life and Student Housing Staff Addressing Allegations of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence for CUNY Student Housing & Residence Life.](#)

Colorado State University Police Department. (2020). [Domestic Violence Policy.](#)

University of Georgia. (2015). [UGA's Sexual Assault Response \(SAR\) Protocol.](#)

University of Oregon. (2014). [Residence Life Sexual Assault Protocols.](#)

U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). (2025). [Model Protocol for Prosecutors' Offices Regarding Testimony of Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking.](#) Retrieved from [Prosecutor Guide.](#)



## Resources for Developing Protocols

The resources listed below contain a few brief highlights about the contents and what may be most helpful for your CCR Team.

End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI). (2021). [Protocol Development Guide: Creating a Multidisciplinary Protocol for Alternative Reporting Options](#).

Provides an overview of other types of reporting (alternative, online, third party). Policy considerations are focused on law enforcement and would need to be adapted for the campus context. See p. 12: When to bring in an advocate.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). (2025). [Protocols and Guidelines for Sexual Assault Response Teams](#).

A helpful reference for community partnerships, or if you collaborate with a Family Violence/Family Justice Center or Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).

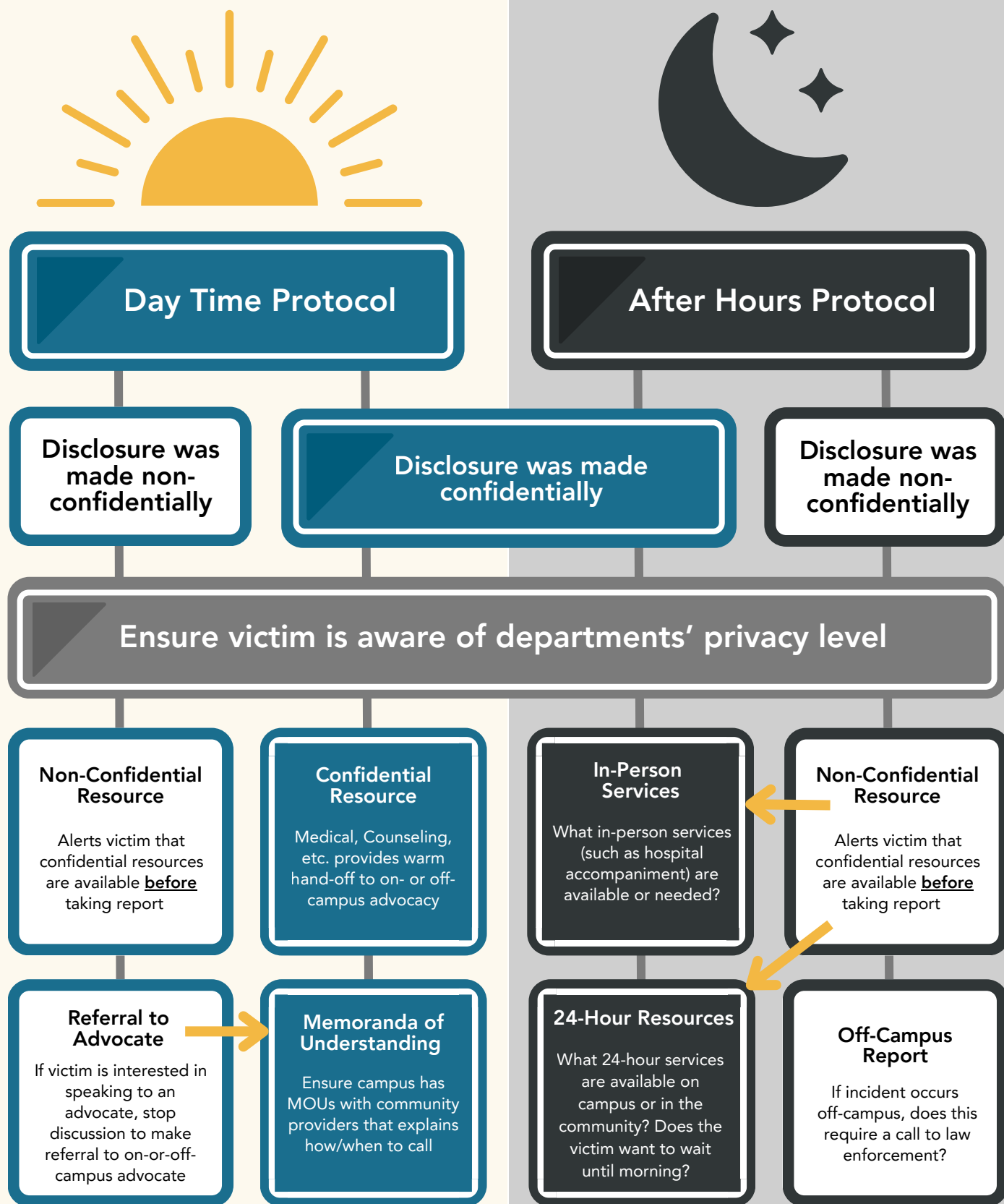
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV). (2021). [Transforming Ohio Campuses Toolkit: Protocol Development](#).

A comprehensive guide for protocols on college campuses, which can be adapted based on your state laws and mandates.

Ohio Sexual Assault Task Force (OSATF). (2005). [Model for Sexual Assault Community Protocol](#).

Can be used to generate questions and deepen understanding between on-campus advocates, other confidential offices, and community victim services partners.





## Sample CCR Team Meeting Agenda

The following agenda contains suggestions for structuring a 75-minute CCR Team meeting where you will discuss DVSAS protocol reviews, updates, and/or development.

### **Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)**

After a brief connection activity, provide space and context to make sure CCR Team members understand why they have been invited to the meeting to discuss the topic of DVSAS protocols. Select a key leader on your CCR Team to provide guidance as to which protocol you are working on, why it is important, and how this protocol review pertains to everyone's work.

### **Set Ground Rules (5 minutes)**

See [Ground Rules for Protocol Assessment](#) for ideas.

### **Planning and Discussion (50 minutes)**

This will be the majority of the meeting time. Create a schedule of protocols you will review, update or develop and decide the frequency (monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, etc). Together with your team, set expectations about what work needs to be done to prepare for each review. Provide structure for the discussion, and allow sufficient time for questions and feedback. Consider breaking up into smaller groups to foster more opportunities for conversation.

### **Action Items and Next Steps (5 minutes)**

Assign responsibilities for follow-ups, timeline for updates, and schedule the next review session.

### **Closing Remarks (5 minutes)**

Summarize the discussion, decisions, and thank everyone for their contributions.





## Sample Protocol Training Agenda

**Adapted from Niagara University**

### **Facilitators**

Title IX Coordinator and at least one other CCR Team member, such as OVW Campus Program Project Director, CCR Team Chairperson etc.

### **Audience**

Campus employees, new hires, or training for individual departments

### **Training Sequence and Topics**

#### **1. Overview of DVSAS**

#### **2. Why does this matter?**

- Provide statistics, discuss impact and importance of this work.
- Make a connection with student retention.

#### **3. Response Protocol and Reporting Options Chart**

- Private vs confidential definitions and designations; Explanation of who falls within these categories on campus.
- Walk through your campus' reporting options chart or similar flowchart, which is a visual guide to explain the options a student has to report.
  - Confidential resources on and off campus
  - Title IX (and employee obligations to share with Title IX)
  - Making a report to law enforcement

#### **4. What does "Making a Report" actually mean?**

- Typically just means sharing information. Not as intimidating as policy may make it seem.
- Title IX Coordinator explains what they need from staff when reporting and how they should share that information (e.g., phone call, email).

#### **5. How Title IX can be helpful**

- Share what accommodations can look like.



## 6. How to handle a disclosure

- Consider creating a “Before a Disclosure” statement to give to employees during our training to help them navigate these conversations and ensure they disclose their privacy status before a disclosure takes place.
- Provide tips to keep in mind (e.g., transparency, believe them, don’t ask too many questions, remind them about amnesty policies if applicable, don’t make promises, encourage medical attention if applicable, report, and offer support).

## 7. Confidential victim services

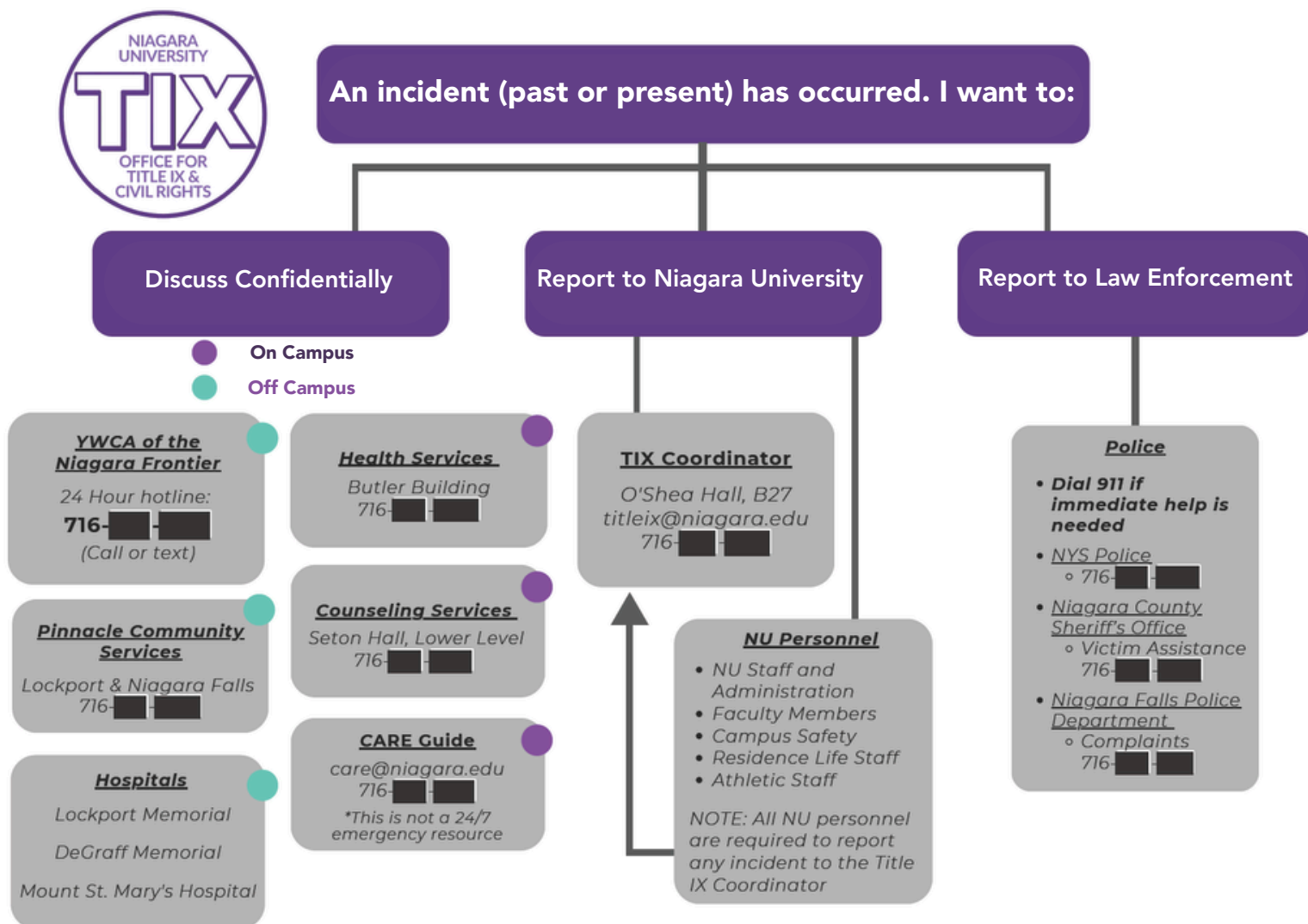
- Who provides this service?
- How can they be contacted?
- What services do they provide (e.g., counseling, advocacy, transportation to the hospital, hospital accompaniment, etc.)?



## Sample Flowchart

### Niagara University

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCE & REPORTING OPTIONS



## Ejemplo de Flujograma

### Universidad de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras

Nadie te puede obligar a hacer una divulgación que no desees hacer.

## Servicios para sobrevivientes de violencia de género

La Universidad de Puerto Rico tiene servicios de apoyo para sobrevivientes de violencia. Comuníquese con Siempre Vivas Metro al (787) 764-000 ext. 83503, 87424.

¿Quiero contarle a alguien lo que me pasó?

Si

No

Está bien. El momento correcto para buscar ayuda es cuando tú lo decidas.

Exploremos cuál es la mejor opción para ti. ¿Qué necesitas?

#### Denunciar

Hay diversas formas de reportar o denunciar. Desde recoger información hasta procesos legales.

#### Seguridad del campus

Orientación sobre medidas de seguridad, servicio de escolta, identificar al agresor en los predios. (787) 773-1750

#### Título IX

Querrela formal o informal en la universidad, notificación anónima al agresor para detener comportamientos y asesoramiento sobre tus derechos. (ext. 83278)

#### Hospital

Realizarte un safe kit. No tienes que hacer una querrela al momento, pero tener la evidencia te puede ayudar si decides tomar acción legal en el futuro.

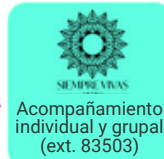
#### Policía y tribunales

Realizar una querrela. Expedir órdenes de alejamiento y protección.

#### Apoyo

Existen servicios de apoyo psicoemocional, académico y legal gratuito para lograr tu bienestar.

#### Psicológico y emocional



#### CUSEP

Servicios psicológicos (ext. 87680)

#### Lineas 24/7

#### Línea PAS

Línea de prevención de suicidio y crisis 9-8-8

#### Casa Julia

Servicios a sobrevivientes de violencia doméstica (787) 548-5290

#### CAVV

El Centro de Ayuda a Víctimas de Violación (787) 765-2285

#### Taller Salud

Servicios de orientación a sobrevivientes (787) 697-1120

#### 939-CONTIGO

Orientación y ayuda para sobrevivientes de violencia de género (939) 266-8446

#### Académico y estudiantil

#### DCODE

Servicios psicológicos enfocados en rendimiento académico (ext. 86500)

#### Procuraduría Estudiantil

Derechos de estudiantes, mediación de conflictos (ext. 86601)

#### Decanato de Estudiantes

Orientación sobre servicios disponibles (ext. 86000)

#### Otros

#### CIAV

Servicios de asesoría y apoyo legal (787) 999-9595

#### Ayuda Legal PR

Educación y apoyo legal gratuito (787) 957-3105

#### Centro Salud y Justicia

Ayuda para sobrevivientes de violencia sexual 787-337-3737



Basado en el modelo de Scripps College. Ilustraciones realizadas por Laura García. Versión 1. Rev. 15 de mayo de 2025.



## Sample Flow Chart

### University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus

